

# “The Testimony We Want”

## 1 Thessalonians 1:1-4

“The day we find the perfect church, it becomes imperfect the moment we join it.”

— Charles H. Spurgeon

We don't have perfect Churches because the Church is made up of imperfect people like you and I. Even the early Church in New Testament times was imperfect, but God did wonderful things in their midst. Thankfully, though we won't find a perfect Church, Thessalonians will give us practical instructions on how we can become more and more Christlike here at Calvary.

Today we will look at the testimony of the Thessalonian Church. They weren't perfect, but they had a great start, and give us many lessons on what it means to be a great Church.

Thessalonian Background:

- Planted on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey Acts 17
- Stayed for 3 weeks to 6 months (Probably the longer, because he worked and received support to live from Philippians)
- Letter written from Corinth (Traveled from Thes->Berea->Athens->Corinth)
- Issues: Persecution, encouraging testimony, clarification for end times, purity/holiness
- Heaps about the end times timeline, but more about how to live in light of Jesus return! Our testimony in the timeline.

We want a good testimony in the timeline. What is it exactly we want to be said of us?

### **1. WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH OF GRACE (1 THESSALONIANS 1:1)**

#### **A. It all starts with grace. Are we known for grace?**

- i. "...At last I asked if she had ever thought of going to a church for help. I will never forget the look of pure, naive shock that crossed her face. "Church!" she cried. "Why would I ever go there? I was already feeling terrible about myself. They'd just make me feel worse." What struck me about my friend's story is that women much like this prostitute fled toward Jesus, not away from him. The worse a person felt about herself, the more likely she saw Jesus as a refuge. Has the church lost that gift? Evidently the down-and-out, who flocked to Jesus when he lived on earth, no longer feel welcome among his

followers. What has happened?” — What’s So Amazing About Grace? (Philip Yancey)

- ii. *John 1:16–17 <sup>16</sup> And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

## **2. WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH OF PRAYER (1 THESSALONIANS 1:2)**

### **A. Thanksgiving and request. “praying for you constantly”**

- i. "There are parts of our calling, works of the Holy Spirit, and defeats of the darkness that will come no other way than through furious, fervent, faith-filled, unceasing prayer." - Beth Moore
- ii. "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." - Martin Luther
- iii. *Ephesians 6:18 (NLT) <sup>18</sup> Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.*

## **3. WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH OF PRIORITIES (1 THESSALONIANS 1:3)**

### **A. Faith works**

- i. *James 2:26 <sup>26</sup> For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*
- ii. *Galatians 5:6(ESV) <sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.*

### **B. Love labours**

- i. 1 Corinthians 13 is the labour of love defined.

### **C. Hope endures**

- i. There is hopelessness in New Zealand especially in the youth. A new **report by Unicef** contains a shocking statistic - New Zealand has by far the highest youth suicide rate in the developed world. A shock but no surprise - it's not the first time the country tops that table. The Unicef report found New Zealand's youth suicide rate - teenagers between 15 and 19 - to be the highest of a long list of 41 OECD and EU (developed) countries. The rate of 15.6 suicides per 100,000 people is twice as high as the US rate and almost five times that of Britain.”... In 2018 suicide in NZ was highest percentage since recording began.
- ii. *Hebrews 6:18–19 <sup>18</sup> that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. <sup>19</sup> This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,*

- iii. 1 Thessalonians 5:8<sup>8</sup> *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*

#### **4. WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH DEPENDENT ON GOD (1 THESSALONIANS 1:4)**

##### **A. To know you are chosen by God...even if you don't feel like the top pick!**

- i. 1 Corinthians 1:26–29<sup>26</sup> *For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. <sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup> that no flesh should glory in His presence.*
- ii. How to be chosen? “The elect are the whosoever wills, the non-elect are the whosoever won'ts.” - D.L. Moody

##### **B. God is the reason and cause of everything good in our Church.**

- i. Grace: “in God” vs1 // Prayer: “to God” vs2 // Priorities: “Before God” vs3 // Election: “By God” vs.4
- ii. James 1:17 *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”*
- iii. Romans 11:36<sup>36</sup> *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*