

## Sermon Notes 10/17/21

# “Thank God for Good News”

What good news will you thank God for this week?

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Faith, Love, and Hope

1 Thessalonians 1:3

1 Corinthians 13:13

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Gospel

1 Thessalonians 1:5

Romans 1:16

3. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit

1 Thessalonians 1:6

2 Corinthians 8:1-2

4. Opportunities to \_\_\_\_\_ our Faith

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Colossians 4:2-6



# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 2: October 17-24

## 1 Thessalonians 1

Paul wrote First Thessalonians in AD 51 while he was in Corinth on his second missionary journey. It was only a few months earlier that he went to Thessalonica with Timothy and Silas and converted some of the Jews and many God-fearing Greeks (Acts 17:4). In the first chapter of this book, we see Paul thanking God for the way He was working through these new Christians to spread the gospel.

### Read Thessalonians 1:1-10

1. Who wrote and sent this letter? (1:1)
2. To whom was this letter written? (1:1)
3. What were Paul, Silas, and Timothy praying about in verse 2?

Paul, Silas, and Timothy were getting together for prayer meetings on a regular basis. The text emphasizes both the frequency and the sincerity of their prayers for the Thessalonians.

4. What character traits was Paul remembering about the Thessalonians in verse 3?

Paul describes their faith, love, and hope not just as concepts in the mind or values of the heart, but as actions lived out in real life. Their faith was seen in their work. Their love was seen in their labor. And their hope was seen in their endurance. Jon Weatherly notes,

These three phrases describing the Thessalonian Christians serve several purposes in the letter. As Paul offers thanksgiving, they show that his primary cause for thanksgiving is the Christian lifestyle of the readers. Mentioning their lifestyle at the beginning of the letter also serves as encouragement and reinforcement for continuing in that lifestyle.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jon A. Weatherly, *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), 39-40.

5. How did Paul present the gospel to the Thessalonians? (1:5)

Charles Swindoll writes,

Paul didn't simply deliver a message like a mailman delivers a letter. Rather, the word came with power. Paul entered their homes, their lives, their hearts. The Holy Spirit brought full conviction (1:5). No wonder the message didn't simply enter the minds of the Thessalonians and warm their hearts. No wonder it produced outward works of faith, love, and hope! They had examples of living, active, powerful faith in Paul and his associates, who had embraced them, dwelling among them, pouring themselves into their lives.<sup>2</sup>

6. Who were the Thessalonian Christians trying to imitate in verse 6?

7. What attitude did the Thessalonians have in times of suffering? (1:6)

8. What did Paul say about the Thessalonian Christians in verse 7?

9. What did Paul say about the Lord's message in verse 8?

Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to find out how the church was doing. Timothy came back with good news (1 Thess. 3:5-6). But Paul was already hearing from other people about the powerful testimony of the new Christians in Thessalonica. Mark Howell writes,

Such good news needed to be shared. So from the Thessalonians, "the Lord's message rang out." It thundered forth with great intensity. If the Thessalonians had a church building, people would not be able to pass by and wonder what was going on inside. They could hear it for themselves. The gospel was being preached. Their influence was growing in Thessalonica and the regions beyond. People were talking about their message. Their congregation was not just another irrelevant church on the street corner; they were impacting their world.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Illustrated edition (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2016), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Howell, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2015), 23.

10. What changes did the Thessalonians make when they became Christians? (1:9)

11. What were the Thessalonians anticipating? (1:10)

12. What does Jesus rescue us from in verse 10?

Paul concludes the chapter with a proclamation of the gospel. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus saves us from the punishment our sins deserve. Leon Morris observes,

It is a mark of the centrality of this event that even when Paul is thinking of the second coming, he refers to Christ as the *One whom He raised from the dead*. The New Testament writers, of course, habitually ascribe the work of the resurrection to the Father. It is a mark of his vindication and approval of the atoning work of the Son.<sup>4</sup>

13. How was the Thessalonians' hope visible for others to see?

14. What characteristics in a person would convince you that he or she was a genuine Christian?

15. What are some things that help people to accept the Gospel?

16. What is the difference between presenting the gospel with power and deep conviction, and presenting the gospel without it?

17. How can we maintain an attitude of joy in times of suffering?

18. How can actively waiting for Jesus' return affect our daily attitudes and actions?

19. How can you be a model of Christ-like character to others this week?

20. How can you share the gospel with power and conviction?

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<sup>4</sup> Leon Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 50.