

A Walk Through 1 Thessalonians

Introduction

Paul was ...

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Chapter 1

'This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May God give you grace and peace. '

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul and Silas and Timothy together sent this letter to the believers in Thessalonica. Beginning with ownership, he reminds the believers that they belong to God the Father, and the Lord, Jesus Christ. These are not Paul's or any other teacher's possession, but are members of God's family. They stand in God's grace, and they live in God's peace.

We do as well. We are not attenders or observers, we are family, and our Father bought us. He soaks us in His grace. We are washed clean, made pure, and we have peace from God Himself. There is no better place to be, and no better situation in which to live.

'We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ. '

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

Apostle Paul and his traveling team are first and foremost prayer warriors. Paul is a messenger sent with the good news of Jesus, yet his work is bathed in prayer. His follow-up is lifting up. He isn't as much about the message as he is about the result in people. He Thanks God constantly. The topics he brings before the Lord are the faith and work of the hearers, their loving deeds, their enduring hope. Transformation happens because of Jesus Christ, and Paul's team is lifting up the hearers so that God might keep shining in all they do. All of this is from Jesus Christ, who is our lord and master!

'We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people. For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you. '

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

We bring the good news. And God shows up. His power, His demonstration in you tells us that indeed, you are also His kids. He loves you. He has chosen you. He pours His Spirit in you with power, giving you full assurance that you are His.

This works everywhere Paul goes. And it works here today as well! Share the good news. Declare healing. Pour Holy Spirit in, and then watch Him work. Amazing!

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'So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord. As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia. '

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

Persecution travels with Holy Spirit restoration. These believers received the message from the Holy Spirit with joy. They were excited to find redemption and restoration to the Father, and gladly embraced it. And they knew the cost, they would suffer for their faith. And they ran full speed to Jesus anyway. They saw how Paul and Silas had done it, and they chose the same race willingly. Now all of Greece is seeing their brave example, recognizing the joy and blessing, and they are running to Jesus too. Count the cost, but receive it and run to Jesus. It's so worth it.

'And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don't need to tell them about it, for they keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true God. And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.'

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

The believers in Thessalonica became known for their faith in God. They turned from idols, and found rescue in Jesus. They now serve the living and true God. And now you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven - Jesus. He is the one who rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgement!

Did you know His rescue of us gives us amazing assurance? We don't fear the idols, and we don't fear the coming judgement. Walking with Jesus brings safety and assurance!

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Chapter 2

'You yourselves know, dear brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not a failure. You know how badly we had been treated at Philippi just before we came to you and how much we suffered there. Yet our God gave us the courage to declare his Good News to you boldly, in spite of great opposition. So you can see we were not preaching with any deceit or impure motives or trickery.'

1 Thessalonians 2:1-3

You can see we are sincere, and we do not hold back. Even when we've been beaten and suffered for our faith, we still come forward and boldly share the great news of Christ. We are not deceivers or tricksters. False preachers cannot withstand the persecution, and they flee. We are driven by Holy Spirit, and we bring Jesus as our Lord, and your hope!

'For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts. Never once did we try to win you with flattery, as you well know. And God is our witness that we were not pretending to be your friends just to get your money! As for human praise, we have never sought it from you or anyone else.'

1 Thessalonians 2:4-6

We tell of Jesus, what He did, and how God gave Jesus as our ransom from sin. God is in the restoration business. He restores us to Him. We don't use flattery or cunning words to share Jesus. We simply tell His story, and Holy Spirit causes repentance and return to Him. Keep telling His story!

'As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia. And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don't need to tell them about it, for they keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true God. And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.'

1 Thessalonians 1:7-10

The RESULTS are in! You've welcomed God's message, and His messengers as well. He has filled your lives with His Spirit, and everyone sees it. Word is getting out! Your joy, and faith are visible, and your anticipation of His coming back soon encourages everyone! THIS is what Christ does - so keep on loving Him! Terrors are gone, and His peace and love propels us forward!

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Chapter 3

'Finally, when we could stand it no longer, we decided to stay alone in Athens, and we sent Timothy to visit you. He is our brother and God's co-worker in proclaiming the Good News of Christ. We sent him to strengthen you, to encourage you in your faith, and to keep you from being shaken by the troubles you were going through.

But you know that we are destined for such troubles. Even while we were with you, we warned you that troubles would soon come—and they did, as you well know. That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent Timothy to find out whether your faith was still strong. I was afraid that the tempter had gotten the best of you and that our work had been useless. '

1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

The troupe with Paul continually worried over the troubles going on in Thessaloniki. Paul had to depart there because of the persecution, while the believers continued on in faith. But from a long distance, Paul, Silas and Timothy prayed and hoped the believers would not steal the faith of the believers there. We always have care and concern for our friends who also follow Jesus.

So when they could no longer stand the worry, they sent Timothy north, to encourage, instruct, and strengthen the believers. Caring for our disciples and churches is what we do. Troubles are certain to come, and the tempter will do all he can to upset the faith. But we press on, and we teach others how to do so as well. Holy Spirit is our companion, and guide, and we help others listen and follow too.

'But now Timothy has just returned, bringing us good news about your faith and love. He reports that you always remember our visit with joy and that you want to see us as much as we want to see you. So we have been greatly encouraged in the midst of our troubles and suffering, dear brothers and sisters, because you have remained strong in your faith. It gives us new life to know that you are standing firm in the Lord. '

1 Thessalonians 3:6-8

When our friends come home, they bring news of how the body is faring in other places. Timothy brought news of Thessaloniki and the good growth and enduring faith of the believers there. Those in Athens were greatly encouraged. The work beforehand, and the persecution were worth the pain, because believers were established, and now are thriving! We are one family and we encourage each other always.

'How we thank God for you! Because of you we have great joy as we enter God's presence. Night and day we pray earnestly for you, asking God to let us see you again to fill the gaps in your faith. May God our Father and our Lord Jesus bring us to you very soon. '

1 Thessalonians 3:9-11

We have great joy because of our friends who have followed Jesus. We shared the good news, and Holy Spirit helped them listen and understand. Now they are walking with the Lord, every day, and we

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cannot be any happier! We pray earnestly, that the Lord would keep them, and bring us together with them soon. We hope to help them keep growing in their faith, becoming strong believers. So we declare, "God our Father, bring us together soon!"

'And may the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen.'

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Praying that our Father makes your love grow for believers and everyone. Making our hearts strong, blameless and holy is what He does. And our prayer is He does exactly this in you. Paul's ministry was two-fold: to declare the gospel, and to help people grow in their faith. Let's do both as well!

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Chapter 4

'Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. For you remember what we taught you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor— not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. Never harm or cheat a fellow believer in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. '

1 Thessalonians 4:1-6

Dear family, brothers and sisters, live for Jesus. Live in a way that pleases Him. He is Lord, and He wants us to be separate for Him in this world. Don't cave in to sexual sin, don't violate your wife. Leave the worldly lust behind, and don't engage like the heathens. We are called to love God, obey Him, and love our own wives too. The Lord does avenge sin, and it's a heavy weight to come under His judgement – don't do it. Love God and love your wife!

'God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. But we don't need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another. Indeed, you already show your love for all the believers throughout Macedonia. Even so, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you to love them even more. '

1 Thessalonians 4:7-10

Live holy lives, obeying God, and loving one another. Keep loving your brothers and sisters. Keep after it. Keep on it!

'Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others. '

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Get busy, trusting God and working hard. Others will observe and respect you. And when you speak, they will trust you and give ears to your words.

'And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. '

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

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So we can know what will happen to the believers who have died. And we don't need to grieve without hope. Grieve yes, but hold on to the promise. Jesus will bring them with Him when He returns. All of them. And so we have hope!

'We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words.'

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

Jesus' return will be amazing. Sudden. Unexpected, I expect. Yet this promise is directly from the Lord. Jesus gave it to Paul, who gave it to the Thessalonians, and then to all of us. There's a day coming, and nobody gets left behind - all the believers will be with Jesus in the air. Be encouraged!

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Chapter 5

'Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don't really need to write you. For you know quite well that the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. When people are saying, "Everything is peaceful and secure," then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a pregnant woman's labor pains begin. And there will be no escape.

But you aren't in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won't be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief. For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night. So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk. But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation. '

1 Thessalonians 5:1-8

Be on your guard, be awake. Jesus is going to return - could be today! We don't know the day, but we are absolutely certain He will fulfill His promise. He will return. So live in the light, be clearheaded. We are protected by our faith and love, certain of our salvation. You can have this same assurance too! If you are in Jesus, it's yours. If you are not yet in Jesus, message me - we can help you meet Him!

'For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. '

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

We've been rescued, not condemned. God our Father sent Jesus, paid our ransom, welcomed us, filled us with His Spirit, and eagerly walks with us each day. Rather, we walk with Him each day, both here, and in heaven. Encourage each other, and be encouraged. Living in Him means He has the timing, He knows the pressures, and He leads a path for us with Him. Keep holding on to His hand, and trust!

'Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other. '

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Look at who God has placed as your leaders, and then respect them. Honor them, they are working hard to give spiritual guidance. One of God's great gifts is gifted men and women to lead His church. So lift them up and honor them!

'Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people. '

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1 Thessalonians 5:14-15

Paul is guiding on how to live. Warn the lazy to instead work hard. Encourage the timid who carry the news from God of the universe. Don't hold back! Take very good care of the weak. Shore them up and encourage them. And be patient with every person. Go slow, don't judge. Instead, be helpful. Don't allow vengeance or repaying evil for evil. God handles vengeance, and fills us with a treasure we never deserved. So no retribution! Strive to do good things for others, in fact, for all people. This is how we must live!

'Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. '

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

No matter the circumstance we are in, God's love continues in us, and His hands are still at work. Be joyful! Focus on Him first, then we can deal with what's around us. So we never stop praying. There's a lot around us, and all of it deserves a conversation with our Father. He keeps us. He changes things. He works in other people. Keep praying! And be thankful in all circumstances. Every situation is a place where God is and does work. We belong to Christ Jesus, and this reminds us, be joyful!

'Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil. '

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

Holy Spirit is at work. He does provoke, lead, guide and also rebukes. He gives words of declaration to others, and they speak His words. Listen and discern. Is the word from Him? Even if it's hard, obey Him. Hold fast to what is good. He is building His church, and He is drawing in the world through repentance. And also, skip the evil!

'Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful. '

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Paul pours a blessing over all the believers in Thessaloniki. Our God is the God of Peace. He calms the storm. His rod and His staff comforts and guides, even in the valley of the shadow of death. He makes us holy in every way. He makes our spirit pure and clean, and so we worship Him. He makes our soul right, so our lives are rich and full, and also holy and clean. He makes our body pure and clean, and we are free to live for Him. He keeps us blameless and will continue so until Jesus comes again. He does and will make this happen, for He is faithful. Remember, He calls you, and He is faithful.

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'Dear brothers and sisters, pray for us. Greet all the brothers and sisters with a sacred kiss. I command you in the name of the Lord to read this letter to all the brothers and sisters. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.'

1 Thessalonians 5:25-28

Wrapping up, Paul gives three commands, and a blessing. Pray! Pray for Paul and all who deliver the good news of Jesus! Greet all the brothers and sisters. Make sure each one knows of the personal care from Paul and team. And share this whole letter with each one. The Lord sent it so make sure every believer hears it. May the grace of Jesus be with you. Because of Jesus, everything is forgiven. We got a gift undeserved, and we want every one of you to be fully enveloped in that grace. So we proclaim it over you. And we cover you in the spoken blessing. Grace!