

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **What Every Church Should Be 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 Part 4**

We are continuing our study of 1 Thessalonians. We are examining chapter one and exploring the topic, WHAT EVERY CHURCH SHOULD BE.

First of all, we have discovered that every church should be an elect church. In other words we should be striving not to fill our buildings with people but with true disciples. And certainly the Thessalonian church is an example of this.

Let us read **1 Thess. 1:1-4** “**Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. (2) We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; (3) constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father. (4) knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you.**” Or as the KJV reads, “**Knowing, brethren beloved your election of God.**” When Paul looked at the Thessalonian Church he saw the church not just filled with people but with true disciples. He saw a church filled with the elect of God. We not only see that every church should be an elect church but they should also be an exemplary church.

In **V. 5** we saw that they were exemplary in the way that they received the word. “**For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction .**”

In **V. 6** we saw that they were exemplary in the way they followed their leaders , “**You also became imitators of us and of the Lord having received the Word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit.**”

And finally we saw in **V. 7** that they were exemplary in the way that they encouraged other churches. “**so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.**

What else do we learn from the Church of Thessalonica concerning what every church should be? Every church should be an enthusiastic church.”

#### AN ENTHUSIASTIC CHURCH

What do I mean when I say, “an enthusiastic church.” Let us read **V. 8** “**For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.**”

In **V. 5** we saw how eagerly they had received the Word. But they were not only exemplary “receivers” but they were exemplary “transmitters.” What does the verse tell us? “**For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you.**”

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The word “sounded forth” means “to trumpet.” Certainly if you are familiar with the trumpet you will know that it is not a subtle instrument (Have someone blow a trumpet). It is not difficult to discern when a trumpet is blowing.

Obviously these were bold people. They were like blaring trumpets. They were a people who were as eager to proclaim the word as they were to receive the word. Are you a trumpet of the “truth”? Are you trumpeting the truth to your family? Are you trumpeting the truth to your friends? Are you trumpeting the truth to your co-workers? Someone here might say but I don’t think we should be blowing our trumpet. Certainly we should not be blowing our trumpet or in other words “tooting our own horns” as the pharisees did in **Mt. 6:1-4**. But this is not what Paul is saying. We are not to blow our trumpet but rather we are to trumpet the truth. EACH BELIEVER AND EACH LOCAL CHURCH MUST RECEIVE AND TRANSMIT GOD’S WORD.

Churches are suffering because Christians are unwilling to do this. Churches are suffering because they are unwilling to minister the truth in love as **Eph. 4:15** tells us that we are to do. Each one of us need to feel responsible for the ministry of the truth. If this church is going to grow stronger you must grow stronger in this area. There are people that have been professing Christians for years who are either unable or unwilling to take up this role. Don’t let yourself fall into this trap. This church needs you to know the truth and to minister this truth to other in love.

Certainly the scriptures are clear that we are to minister the truth in love. And certainly the passage we are now looking at would fall within the parameters of the teaching found in **Eph. 4:15** but it would appear that it has a more narrow application in chapter 1. The “word” that they had received is identified as the gospel in V. 5. They had eagerly received the gospel and now they were eagerly proclaiming the gospel. Of all the truth contained in the scriptures there is no more important truth. There is no more glorious truth. There is no more essential truth than the gospel. Why? Because it is the power of unto salvation. Paul in **Rom. 1:16** said, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes ....”** How did I pass from death to life? How did you pass from death to life? It was through believing in the gospel of Christ. It was by believing that Jesus in fact was God’s Son. And that he died for our sins just as the scriptures has said and that though being entombed for three days, he rose from the dead just as the scriptures said. I believed that and put my trust in him alone for my salvation and was saved. Everything that I consider good in my life at this time, is in my life because of the gospel of Christ. If there is any truth that we as Christians would be trumpeting more than any other truth it would be the truth of the gospel.

And certainly we see this being true of the Thessalonians. They had been saved approximately a year, but their witness was filling all of Greece and even beyond. Look at the rest of **V. 8**. **“For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia (northern part of Greece) and Achaia (the southern part of Greece), but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth.”** Remember that Thessalonica was on the Ignatian Highway. People were going all over the world from there. And everywhere people went, they were taking the gospel message which had been proclaimed to them by the members of this little church. We may not ourselves be able to take the gospel message to the farthest ends of the earth, but it may be that those we share the gospel with might.

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When individuals leave this church to move to other areas of the country and the world there is a sense of loss. We miss those who have fellowshiped with us and who have labored with us. But there is also a sense of joy when we realize that those who are leaving us who have come to Christ in this fellowship, and who have been equipped in this fellowship will now be able to trumpet out the truth of gospel Christ in new places.

It is the responsibility and privilege of each local church to share the message of salvation with the lost world. At the end of each of the four Gospels and at the beginning of the Book of Acts, there are commissions given to the church to evangelize. We find these commissions in **Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21; and Acts 1:8.**

Many congregations are content to pay a staff to do the witnessing and soul-winning. But in New Testament churches, the entire congregation was involved in sharing the good news. Certainly this was true of the Thessalonian Church so much so that Paul says at the end of **V. 8** “**so that we have no need to say anything.**” This is an incredible testimony to the fervor of this church when someone like the Apostle Paul could say what he just said.

This is the way it needs to be. We have been commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel. When you leave here this morning and go back to your homes and into your neighborhoods and then into your workplaces we need to go as ambassadors for Christ. We need to trumpet the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

WHAT SHOULD A CHURCH BE? THEY SHOULD BE AN ELECT CHURCH. THEIR BUILDINGS SHOULD NOT BE JUST FILLED WITH PEOPLE, BUT WITH TRUE DISCIPLES. THEY SHOULD BE AN EXEMPLARY CHURCH. THEY SHOULD BE AN ENTHUSIASTIC CHURCH WHEN IT COMES TO TRUMPETING THE TRUTH, AND FINALLY THEY SHOULD BE AN EXPECTANT CHURCH.

### AN EXPECTANT CHURCH

Let us read **VV. 9,10** “**For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, (10) and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.**”

Those who had heard the gospel in Achaia, Macedonia, and even beyond were telling Paul and his companions how successful their ministry had been in Thessalonica. Those reporting to Paul and his companions measured that success on the basis of two things.

1) First of all on “How they (the Thessalonians had) turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God” which we see in **V. 9**. To have anything control our lives other than the Lord is to bow before something that is dead. But these Thessalonians had turned from giving themselves to something that was dead, which were their idols, to serve the only true God revealed who was living. And because they did this they satisfied the deepest longing of their souls. But this is not all.

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2) They also measured the success of Paul’s ministry to the Thessalonians on their expectant longing for the return of Jesus. Let us again look at **V. 10** **“And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.”**

Two aspects of the Lord’s return must be distinguished. First, Jesus Christ will come in the air for His church. This is what the Thessalonians are said to be waiting for here in **V. 10**. This event is described in **1 Thess. 4:13-18**. Then after a seven year period called the “tribulation” Jesus returns with the church to establish the millennial kingdom. This future kingdom the Bible tells us will last a thousand years and will be the time when all the promises to Jews will be fulfilled. We see certain events of this time period being described in **Rev. 20:1-10**.

We are to still be doing what the Thessalonians were doing and that is waiting for Jesus to come for us. And just as they were expecting Him to come at any time, the same is true for us today. We are not waiting for any “signs,” we are waiting for the Savior. We are waiting for the redemption of our body, which we read about in in **Romans 8:23-25** where it says, **“And not only this, but also we ourselves, having ht first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body (24) For I hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? (25) But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.”** We also are waiting for the hope of righteousness. We read about this in **Gal. 5:5** **“For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.”**

When Jesus returns we will receive new bodies, (**Phil. 3:20-21**) and we will be like Him ( **1 John 3:1-2**). He will take us to the home He has prepared for us (**John 14:1-6**), and He will reward us for the service we have given in His name (**Rom. 14:10-12**).

A local church that truly lives in the expectation of seeing Jesus Christ at any time will be a vibrant and victorious group of people. Expecting the Lord’s return is a great motivation for soul-winning. In **1 Thess. 2:19-20** Paul said, **“For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming; (20) For you are our glory and joy.”** It is also a great motivation for stable living. In **1 Thess. 3:11-13** it says, **“Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; (12) and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you; (13) so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.”** The hope of the Lord’s return is a wonderful comfort in sorrow. In **1 Thess. 4:13-18** it says **“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. (15) For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. (17) Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. (18) Therefore comfort one another with these words.”** It is also a great encouragement for godly living.

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In **1 Thess. 5:23-24** it says, **“But may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** The coming of Christ is an important doctrine.

### CONCLUSION

IT IS TRAGIC WHEN CHURCHES FORGET THIS WONDERFUL DOCTRINE. IT IS EVEN MORE TRAGIC WHEN CHURCHES BELIEVE IT AND PREACH IT - BUT DO NOT PRACTICE IT, OR IN OTHER WORDS, DON'T TAKE IT TO THEIR HEARTS.

PAUL REMEMBERED HOW THIS CHURCH WAS BORN IN 1 THESS. 1:3 AND HE GAVE THANKS FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTICS: THEY WERE ELECT, EXEMPLARY, ENTHUSIASTIC, AND EXPECTANT. BUT WHEN CHURCHES ARE MADE UP OF INDIVIDUALS, WHEN YOU AND I SPEAK OF THE CHURCH, WE MUST NEVER SAY “THEY.” WE SHOULD SAY “WE.” WE ARE THE CHURCH!!! THIS MEANS THAT IF YOU AND I HAVE THESE SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTICS, OUR CHURCHES WILL BECOME WHAT GOD WANTS THEM TO BECOME. THE RESULT WILL BE THE WINNING OF THE LOST AND THE GLORIFYING OF THE LORD.

WHAT EVERY CHURCH SHOULD BE IS WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE: ELECT (BORN AGAIN), EXEMPLARY (IMITATING THE RIGHT PEOPLE), ENTHUSIASTIC (SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS), AND EXPECTANT (DAILY LOOKING FOR JESUS CHRIST TO RETURN).

PERHAPS IT IS TIME FOR AN INVENTORY.