

1 Thessalonians: Standing Firm

Lesson 1 “Resounding Faith”

I. Background - This church was founded on Paul’s second missionary journey after he left Philippi. Thessalonica is a large city in Greece. Paul taught in Thessalonica for three Sabbaths and was then run out of town by unbelieving Jews.

A. **Acts 17:1-13** Paul came to Thessalonica explaining and demonstrating that Christ had to die and be raised from the dead. The *Greek* word for demonstrate is *paratithemi*, which means to set forth argument. Paul was giving deep understanding of the gospel!

1. Some of the Greeks believed and joined Paul and Silas, but the unbelieving Jews became envious because they were losing control, set the city in an uproar (does that sound like recent events?), and attacked the house of Jason.
2. The Jews claimed Paul and his associates had turned the world upside down. The truth is they were upside down so they couldn’t perceive correctly. This is what religion does to people.
3. Paul left and went to Berea where the people were more fair minded and received the word and searched the scriptures to see if these things were so.
4. Unfortunately the angry Jews followed Paul and his associates to Berea and stirred up the crowds so Paul had to leave town.

B. I gave background to tell you why Paul wrote the two letters to the Thessalonian church. He was with them a short time and they were facing IMMENSE persecution! Paul wrote this letter a few months after he left Thessalonica from Corinth in 51 A.D.

1. Paul to organize these young converts into a community of mutual interest, care, and fellowship.
2. **He wrote to encourage, comfort, and strengthen this church that was facing immense persecution.**
3. Paul wrote to help them understand how to deal with the basics of life: how to relate to one another, the purpose of work even with the return of Christ coming, sexual morality, and various other exhortations.

II. Resounding Faith

A. **1 Thessalonians Greeting** - Paul included Silas and Timothy in the greeting.

1. Paul had a ministry team. Dean Ratdke quote - **Working alone has a few benefits..... but survival isn't one of them.** Nor is productivity or acceleration. We get more done in teams - Moses delegated, *Acts 6* example.
2. This is actually something we do as a church and I’ve instructed our leaders to

do - build teams. We get more done in teams. We'd encourage everyone to get involved serving.

3. Grace and peace from the Father is the message. Many people can't hear God's voice because they aren't on Grace and Peace FM. They are tuned to the fear and condemnation network. Not how God speaks.

B. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-20 The Word of God Sounding Forth

1. **Verse 2-3** Paul was thankful for this church and remembered them. He prayed for them consistently. When the Holy Spirit brings someone to our remembrance we should pray for them and/or contact them if possible. ex: Andrew Wommack
 - a. The work this church did was produced by their faith and love. True work comes out of relationship. Ministry is work!
 - b. Patience comes from hope - this church was heavily persecuted so their hope was Jesus (their vindication by His judgment and then His return).
2. **Verse 4** - Election means to choose. Jesus said in **Matthew 22:14** *many are called, few are chosen*. He said this right after inviting many to a wedding but only a few responded. God doesn't just want to save some. He wants to save all, but only some respond and get to be chosen.
3. **Verse 5** - The message Paul brought wasn't in word only. It had words, but it also had power - **dynamos** - **where we get our word for dynamite from**. While no miracles were recorded in **Acts 17**, it wouldn't be unreasonable to think Paul did miracles when he came to Thessalonica.
 - a. Knew them - saw Paul's character and lifestyle.
4. **Verses 6-7** This church received the word with immense persecution and became an example to those in Macedonia (Philippi) and Achaia (Corinth).
5. **Verse 8** The word sound forth is where get our word echo from. This churches faith echoed or reverberated throughout the nearby regions and the world. **This churches actions were so strong, Paul didn't have to tell others about it. Their deeds spoke for themselves.**
6. **Verse 9** The rest of the world was delaying what God had done to the Thessalonians. Their testimony proceeded Paul's travels and was an invitation for other cities to believe. ex: Corinth, power of testimony - Billy Graham.
7. **Verse 10** Our hope is from Jesus in heaven. He will deliver us from the wrath to come - destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (took out many of the churches main persecutors) and future destruction - hell.

III. Conclusion - Light shines brightest in the greatest darkness! We can shine like the Thessalonian church shined in the midst of the hardship we are experiencing today. The key to doing this is faith and love. Faith comes from the word and it works by a revelation of the love of God. If we'll operate in this kind of faith it will echo throughout the Triad and cause others to believe.

