

## **Lesson #1: I Thessalonians 1:1-10**

### ***1. 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.***

In the salutation portion of the letter, Paul introduces himself and his associates (Silvanus and Timothy). The letter's immediate destination is to the church in Thessalonica. He writes the letter under the mutual relationship that they have under God: the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Grace is the unmerited favor of God that is lavished upon his elect. The grace of God should bring upon His elect an internal spiritual joy that withstands the arrows of suffering in this life.

- The meaning of "peace" is often lost to us in the Western World. It is a Jewish concept (shalom) that is concerned with the wholeness and soundness of the person; it is a prosperity that is focused upon spiritual things. It is Paul's desire to wish joy and wholeness upon the church in Thessalonica.

- There is a significance regarding the order; there can be no true peace without first God extending His grace which wipes away the sins of man.

1. Can an unbeliever have wholeness/peace with God on his own ability?

2. How do unbelievers try to find this peace without Christ?

3. Do you lead your life with the peace of God or are you pursuing other things to give your soul rest?

***2-3. We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention [of you] in our prayers; 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,***

2-3. - Paul would insist that Justification is by faith and not by faith and works, but we see here that works is something that is *produced* from faith. He gives thanks for the faith that has brought forth its fruit of good works.

- The word that he uses for love is "Agape." Agape love is best understood when it is shown in contrast to "eros." Eros has two principle characteristics: it is a love of the *worthy* and it is a love that desires to *possess*. Agape, however, is not a love of the worthy and it is not a love that desires to possess. It is a love that is given without regard to *merit*, and it seeks to give freely.<sup>1</sup> Agape is God-type of love

---

<sup>1</sup> Morris, Tyndale, I Thessalonians, p. 43.

- Steadfastness (endurance) is inspired by hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. This hope is not a passive wish but one that is active and certain that it will come to fruition one day.

4. Paul mentions their faithfulness, love, steadfastness, and hope in Jesus Christ, but to whom does he give thanks for all of these things?

***For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,***

4. Paul outlines for us the familial relationship individual Christians have horizontally and vertically. We are brothers with one another (horizontally) and we have been given birth by our mutual Father (vertically) – God Himself

5. What is this new birth called?

- We are inseparably tied together due to our relationship with our heavenly Father.  
- In the Old Testament, election was primarily understood in the context of a nation, but in the New Testament, it is *individual* and *personal*. The walls of ethnicity have been broken (John 3:16) and God chooses his elect from every nation, tribe, and tongue

6. How should recognizing that your salvation was determined by God's choice and not yours affect you?

***for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.***

5. If verse four tells us that they are chosen, verse five tells us *why* Paul thinks this is true. It was because of the proclamation of the gospel. However it was not eloquence in the presentation that made it effective but it was given power by the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit that brought *conviction* of the gospel's truth to the souls of the elect

7. If it requires the Holy Spirit to bring conviction upon the hearer of the gospel, what does this mean for us as we proclaim the gospel?

***You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,***

6. The Thessalonian believers followed the example of Paul and his companions. They received and believed the gospel among suffering and *joy*

- Paul reminded the church that believers will undergo much tribulation and suffering, but they will endure because of the joy and hope Christ offered.

8. Are suffering and Joy opposites?

***So that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 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.***

7-8. Paul takes great delight in their faith and he uses great praise (and hyperbole) to let them know that the news of their faith has gone to “every place.”

- The news of their Christian witness is so *encouraging* to Paul that he says that he has no “need to say anything about it”

9. If Paul were to write a letter about the faith of the American Church, what would he say?

10. If Paul were to write a letter about your faith of CPC New Braunfels, what would he say?

11. If Paul were to write a letter about your personal faith in Christ, what would he say?

***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,***

9. “They themselves” is sometimes understood as Macedonia and Achaia, but it does not need to be limited to them as the word of God’s work in Thessalonica may have gotten out to other regions.

- The news stresses how they turned from idols. Since the Jews were not serving idols, this verse likely indicates that most of the Thessalonian converts were gentiles who had been serving idols.

- Paul notes how they turned from idols to serve the “living” God. Idols by their very nature are dead or non-existent, however, Jehovah is the living and true God.

- Finally, Paul uses the word “serve.” This word really is to “serve as a slave.” Paul in his letters delighted to call himself a servant/slave of Christ

12. What types of idols were you serving before you were converted?

13. Do you find yourself turning back to these idols?

***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.***

**10.** The word “wait” used here means to “wait expectantly.” Paul relays that the news mentions how they are eagerly awaiting the *Parousia* (the second coming of Christ).

- Paul appeals to the evidence of his claims: the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

- The Thessalonians were impelled by the comfort of knowing that Jesus was going to *deliver* them from God’s wrath.

- It is often maintained that the God of the bible is an *inconsistent* God, one that has two personalities. They claim that the God of the Old Testament is a God of destruction, wrath and justice, while He is a meek soft gentle lamb in the New Testament. This verse would seem to argue against a *docile* God.

- The Thessalonians are joyous and relieved because when God comes to display his “wrath” they will be delivered from it. Do you trust and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and follow him as your master or will you have to deal with his *wrath* when he comes back?

### **Conclusion:**

Paul doesn’t seem to address it directly, but its fingerprints are all over these verses.

Salvation comes by hearing the gospel, but hearing alone will not convince and save anyone. The Holy Spirit must be present and active in the soul of the hearer. The Holy Spirit must first regenerate the soul in order for the person to believe.

Once a person is saved by faith (alone) this faith produces works. Faith creates a hope which resides in the soul giving the Christian assurance and confidence in Christ. Finally, once saved from slavery to sin, one becomes a slave to righteousness – God.

Jesus is not just your savior – He is your Lord also. If you have not submitted your life to follow in the manner he has prescribed (the Bible) you have to repent or reconsider if you really have truly come to faith.

