

THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH

I Thess. 1:1-10

ALL THE BASIC components that our Lord JESUS wants in a church were found in the Thessalonian assembly.

It Was an Energetic Church (1:1-3)

For their get-up-and-go, Paul and his companions gave thanks to God for the Thessalonians.

We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (v3).

It Was an Elect Church (1:4)

Paul reminded them that God *loved* them and that He had *chosen* them. The two go together. When we *love* someone, we naturally *choose* them. That's how we end up getting married.

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you (v4). Jesus bluntly told His disciples, “*I chose you, you did not choose me (John 15:16).*” *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).*

God's love for believers runs from eternity past, with no beginning, to eternity future with no end. For unbelievers, who die without faith, it's a different matter. God's love for them has a beginning and an end. It's a temporary love. It's a dying love. God's love for them begins at birth and runs out at death. It's only for this lifetime.

There is no love in Hell—God's love, man's love, angelic love or any other kind of love conceivable.

God had "*chosen them to salvation,*" Paul tells them in the Second Epistle, chapter 2 v13.

It Was an Exemplary Church (1:5-7)

- ***Paul's Example To The Church (vv 5-6)***

Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (v5). Paul's preaching was Holy Spirit anointed. Anointed preaching is consecrated preaching.

It is the anointing, or unction which makes the word of God “*quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.*” The anointing makes the Word penetrate deep down into the spirit of man. Read also I Corinthians 2:5.

Paul’s personal lifestyle was also anointed. In chapter 2: 10, Paul reminds the church: *You are witnesses and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe.*

- ***The Thessalonian Example To The World (vv 6-7)***

You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit (v6).

They were committed to following Christ in spite of all the hardships and severe suffering. The Thessalonians didn’t have it easy. Acts 17 tells us somewhat of the opposition they experienced.

And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (v6).

They set a godly pattern for everyone else, including believers. Because of it, they got the highest praises from Paul. No other church received the praises the Thessalonians received by the apostle Paul.

It Was an Evangelistic Church (1:8-9)

The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere (v8).

Their message was simply an echo of God’s truth. An echo always repeats what was originally spoken. God has put His voice in us—the Holy Spirit. He doesn’t want us to create our own words. He wants us to echo His truth.

There had been a wide diffusion of the faith on their part. Hyperbolically speaking, people everywhere, seemed to have heard that they had they turned from idol-worship (v9).

It Was an Expectant Church (1:10)

They waited for Christ’s return from heaven and His rescue from the coming wrath (v10). Later in this letter, Paul used the expression *God did not appoint us to wrath (1 Thess. 5:9)*, to refer to God’s deliverance of His people in the context of the wrath to come upon the world in the last days.

The sense behind the expression “*the coming wrath*” is that it is already on the way. It is as near as can be. The world is on the brink of disaster. It’s evident! We are living in perilous times.

This description of the coming Savior may be understood in 2 ways.

- 1) He delivers us from the eternal punishment of our sins. On the cross He endured the wrath of God against our sins. Through faith in Him, we have the value of His work imputed to our account. Therefore, there is no condemnation for us because we are in Christ.
- 2) But He also delivers us from the coming period of Judgment when the wrath of God will be poured out on the world that has rejected His Son. This period is known as the Tribulation and Jacob's trouble.

God takes the rejection of His Son seriously. We are told in 2 Thess. 2:7-10 what shall happen to the Christ rejecters—*When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.*

Thank God the believers will be raptured out before the judgments from God come down to earth.

*Oh, blessed Hope! With this elate,
Let not our hearts be desolate;
But strong in faith and patience, wait
Until He come.*

*A modified version of Harold L. Willmington's outline, from
THE OUTLINE BIBLE, Tyndale, 1999.*