**1 Thessalonians**

**“The Comings And Goings Of Christ In His Church”**

**I.) Vs. 1-4 Introduction:**

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**The Book of 1 Thessalonians**

**“The Comings and Goings of Christ in His Church”**

**1: 1-10**

**“The Power of the Gospel”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Thanking God For His Work**

**III.) Vs. 5-7 The Power of the Gospel**

**IV.) Vs. 8-10 The Testimony of a Changed Life**

**I.) Intro.**

When you consider the spread of Christianity to the known world the arrival of Paul to Thessalonica was perhaps the greatest turning point. In 1980, leaders from all over the Western world attended the First Global Conference on the Future. The chairman of the conference opened saying: “*The bad news is that the end of the world is coming. The good news is, not yet.*” Years earlier, in 1972, a group of international industrial leaders and thinkers, called the Club of Rome, suggested six proposals that humanity must put into effect if we are to survive the first proposal was: “*The survival of this planet necessitates new forms of thinking that will lead to a fundamental revision of human behavior, and, by implication, of the entire fabric of present-day society*.” Simply put, “***If we cannot discover how to change people, there is no hope for saving the world from ultimate collapse***.” Thank God He is in the people changing business!

This letter was written to a church that Paul founded in a city named Thessalonica that had under gone just such a change. A Greek city, (today called Salonika), that was originally called Thermai which means “Hot Springs”. It was a prosperous city of some 200,000 built on a harbor s located on the Egnatian Road that linked East to the West a “Free City” in that it had no Roman troops. The story of Paul’s arrival there is found in the book of Acts chapter 16 - 17:

“*After Paul’s first missionary journey with Barnabas and John Mark there arose a dispute over John Marks faithfulness. Paul decided to go with Silas when they came to Derbe and Lystra they met Timothy a young believer and took him with them going through the region of Galatia where we are told that “they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia.” They came instead to Troas where Paul received a vision from a man from Macedonia asking for them to come over to help them. So they got on a boat and sailed across the Aegean Sea landing at Neapolis, then walked to Philippi. There they met a lady named Lydia and led her and her house hold to Jesus. A church started in her house until some false charges were made whereby Paul and company were beaten and jailed. God used that to lead the jailer and his family to Christ. They stayed there long enough to encourage the new believers in Philippi then left and walked 100 miles to Thessalonica. In Thessalonica Paul preached 3 Sabbaths in the synagogue and had great success among the gentile converts to Judaism, but not among the Jews. they attacked the house that he was staying and dragged out a guy named Jason taking security from him they released him. Paul and Silas took off to Berea, where the Jews and Greeks both received the Word until the Jews from Thessalonica found out and went to Berea to stir up trouble. They sent Paul away by boat (without Silas and Timothy) to Athens were Paul preached on Mars hill and waited for his two friends. When they came to Paul he was so concerned for the church in Thessalonica that he sent Timothy back to encourage them with his love. When Timothy returned and told Paul of their wellbeing he wrote this letter and a short time later he wrote 2 Thessalonians*.

This letter (perhaps Paul’s earliest was written when Paul was most likely about 18 years old in Christ) is a praise report at the health of a church that he had only founded in three weeks. Deep in doctrine, covering all the major doctrines but of great importance in this letter is the “*work of the gospel*” in the life of the believer. At the end of every chapter Paul mentions the Second coming of Jesus. It is apparent that the church was confused as to what the rapture meant and what it should produce in the life of the believer. The eminent return of Christ should produce in our lives:

* 1. ***Comfort and encouragement***: We shall both escape the wrath to come as well as be in His presence, (chapters 1-2, 4).
	2. ***Holy and blameless life***: We are to set apart our “body soul and spirit” for His glory knowing that soon we shall be with Him, (chapters 3, 5).

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Thanking God For His Work**

Vs. 1 When Paul wrote this letter, Silas (or Silvanus) and Timothy were with him. Silas we are told in Acts 15 was a leader among the brethren in Antioch and in 2 Corn. 1:19 we read that he was a “*faithful preacher*”. Timothy, was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother, both his mother and grandmother were devote believers as he had been instructed in the Word since childhood.

 Paul identifies the church as geographically as well as spiritually, they were living in Thessalonica but they were: “***IN*** *….God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* That means that *it was not our idea, it was* ***His*.** The church is not about what we intellectually believe or a door you go through once a week. It’s about a relationship founded in Gods reaching out to you through His Son. 17 out of the 27 books that make up the N.T. contain the words Grace and peace as an introduction. This was a typical Greek greeting but with the words of being IN God give you the basis of your grace. Paul also uses the typical Jewish greeting of “peace”. Many people are trying to find peace in their lives, but you will never come to peace with yourself or others until you begin to appropriate God’s grace in your life.

Vs. 2 Paul always found something good to encourage the church before he exhorted it to change. Paul thanked God ***for*** the Thessalonians he did not thank the Thessalonians as he knew that it was God that was at work in them.

Vs. 3 Remember that this is a church only a few months old yet Paul thanked God for 3 things:

1. **Work of *faith***: Verse 9 tells us that they had turned from idols to the living God. Our faith is not just words it is visible in a changed life, from serving idols to serving a living God. One author put it this way, “***Those whom God chooses, He changes***!”
2. **Labor of *love***: Their labor produced love which caused then to “*serve the true and living God*” (verses 9). Our service will not be out of constraint or obligation it will be out of love. Religion is busy doing things but ought of obligation not devotion.
3. **Patience of *hope***: Our patience of hope is in, “*Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God our Father.*” Faith that works will be seen in our labor of love which will enable us to be patient in hope as we “*wait for His Son from heaven*.” Saints, we can have patience because we have hope in Christ, His coming is certain not just wished for.

But did you notice that the, “***faith hope and love***” is clarified by Paul as “***Faith that works***”, “***love that Labors***” and “***hope that endures***”? What possess us as changed people is active not passive!

Vs. 4 Paul calls them, “*beloved brethren*” because they are elected by God. God is not willing any should parish so He sent His Son to die for the sins of the whole world, that whoever would believe in Him would not parish but have everlasting life. ***Election is God knowing the whosoever are***! How do you know if you are elected? Repent and trust in Jesus and you are clearly chosen! If I don’t want to and you die that way then you were not chosen!

**III.) Vs. 5-7 The Power of the Gospel**

Vs. 5 The Word of God is not about making you feel better it is about making you more like Jesus! The Gospel is powered by God the Spirit and it is He that makes it powerful to change a dead life into a new creation. Paul says the evidence of the truth of what they preached was seen in their own lives for they too had been transformed by the Gospel!

Vs. 6 The Thessalonian believer had become imitators of Paul and his fellow believers. These guys had received the Word in much affliction, yet with joy from the Holy Spirit. Receive the Word of God meant that they were going against the popular way of living.

Vs. 7 Not only were they imitators of Paul they themselves became ones to imitate! They had been Christians only a few months and already they were ones to follow.

**IV.) Vs. 8-10 The Testimony of a Changed Life**

Vs. 8 These young Christians were examples to follow their changed life made them evangelists. The phrase “*sounded forth*” is literally to blow a horn and we see that they we are not blowing their own horn, as they were too make music for Jesus. Everybody knew that they were believers by the way they lived and what they said. Evidently the whole region was talking about the Lord because of the change that had taken place in their lives.

Vs. 9 The whole area knew their testimony that they had at one time served idols. An idol is not just some statue I people serve the idol of popularity, or the idol of materialism or the idol of pride! Saints, have we turned from that dead thing to serve the living God? Do others see that in your life? Notice the order as Paul says that they:

 A.) First they turned to God.

 B.) Then they turned away from idols.

 C.) Lastly they served the true and living God.

There is a correct order in this as we first turn to God, then we turn from idols, finally we turn to serving the Lord. Sometimes this all happens at once other times it takes some time.

Vs. 10 They had turned to God, forsaken the former life and even served the Lord now they were learning to wait for the Lords return. When we have an attitude of expectancy we will be a holy church!

**1 Thessalonians 2: 1-12**

**“The Secrets of a Successful Servant”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-6 A Servants Life**

**III.) Vs. 7-8 A Mothers Heart**

**IV.) Vs. 9-12 A Fathers Touch**

**I.) Intro.**

In the first chapter Paul praises the Lord for the work of the gospel in the young lives of the Thessalonian believers. Remember, Paul had only three weeks with them before he was forced to leave. Yet the testimony of the work of the gospel in their lives had grown to the point that more established believers were to imitate them. Why is the gospel more effective in some and not others? Well Paul says in chapter 1 verse 5 that:

1. First it was “*energized by the Holy Spirit*!”
2. Second, Paul and others “*energized by the Holy Spirit*” demonstrated it in much assurance!

Today the focus is upon the keys of how to be a successful instrument for the Holy Spirit to use. A young boy was sitting next to his father in church listing to the pastor teach when the little guy leaned over to his father and asked, “*Dad, what does the pastor do the rest of the week when he is not speaking on Sunday*?” “*Well*” replied the father, “*Pastor is a very busy man he takes care of church business, calls and visits sick people, helps people in need, and he has to take time to rest as well*.” “*You see son talking in front of people is not an easy thing.*” The boy sat there a few moments longer then said to his dad, “*Well, dad listening to him ain’t easy either*.”

**II.) Vs. 1-6 A Servants Life**

Vs. 1 In the first six verse Paul speaks in terms of a servant about the way in which he, Silas and Timothy **served** while they were there in Thessalonica. Saint’s I think that this is a great thing to look for when considering a church to call home: What kind of servant are they? **In the first two verses Paul states what he WAS “*PURE OF HEART*” as a servant**.

1. ***PURE HEART***: Vs. 1 “***For you yourselves know***”: They had firsthand experience of this fact. That’s a bold thing to do as they had personal knowledge of how Paul served among them; in fact they were his fruit in service that his coming and serving was, “*not in vain*.” In Mark 10:45 Jesus said, “*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*.” ***Ministry is not about getting something from the people it is about giving to people to further Gods kingdom not your own***!
2. Vs. 2 “***Even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philipi, we were bold to speak the gospel of God in much conflict***”: Secondly, Paul says that you can tell he was a servant by the way he sacrificed his life to share the word with them. He had been beaten at Philipi yet still came to Thessalonica to share with them. The word “*conflict*” is an athletic term that means a contest or struggle and speaks of a contest that requires dedication and energy.

Vs. 3-6 Paul goes on to state **what he was NOT:**

1. ***PURE MESSAGE***: Vs. 3a “***For our exhortation did not come from ERROR***..” Being on the Egnatian Road, these folks were accustomed to all sorts of false religions who would come through town with false messages to extort something from anyone that would listen. The message was pure because it centered around the Word of God.
2. ***PURE MOTIVE***: Vs. 3b “***For our exhortation did not come from...UNCLEANNESS***: Not only was his message pure his “**motive” was pure** as well. The word “*uncleanness*” speaks of corruption and Paul is saying that this was not a salesman hocking a product. Often people think Christianity is all about trying to coerce people into giving large sums of money. But in verse 5 Paul says that he did not speak using “*flattery as a cloak or mask for covetousness*”.
3. ***PURE METHOD***: Vs. 3c-6 **“... nor was it in guile**”: The word guile here means to “*bait the hook*”. Paul was not trying to trap people into receiving Jesus. The success of the gospel must never depend upon a ***slick presentation***, it is God’s Word in the Power of His Spirit! Paul didn’t need to “*trap people*” into receiving Jesus through an entertaining service. ***His goal was not to see people happy it was to see them Holy***! He goes on to state **three characteristics of his method**:
	1. Vs. 4 ***Not pleasing men but God ...but pleasing God***: Paul’s concern was not what people thought about him, but what God thought of him. The goal of Paul’s method was, “***To Get Out Of The Way***!” Too many teachers today try to be entertainers and the end result is that the listener is entertained by a performer, but they never understand the message!
	2. Vs. 5 **Not manipulating the Word of God...taught in the sight of God**: *Flattery is the art of saying nice things or things that people want to hear in order to get what you want*. In 2 Timothy 4:3 Paul speaks of a time when people will flock to those who tickle their ears. Praise God the Word is not just interested in making people “*feel better*” it’s all about making them look like Jesus!
	3. Vs. 6 **Not seeking self-glory...made no demands**: Paul was not fishing for praise or popularity. He was not in the ministry for ***freebies***, or ***fans***.

Paul described himself as a servant who had a:

* **Pure heart**
* **Pure message**
* **Pure motive**
* **Pure method**

Church leadership must seek to please the master above himself!

**III.) Vs. 7-8 A Mothers Heart**

Paul moves from the perspective of a “***SERVANT***” to that of a “***PARENT***”. I love this as good church leadership not only see themselves as servants but as a ***family***.

Vs. 7 When you think of mothers the first quality that comes to mind is gentleness. The word “gentle” means “*thoughtful consideration*”. The “*servant’s heart*” centers around faithfulness, a **mother’s faithful service is done in love**. In the church: ***Leadership does not just serve the church it “CARES” for the church!*** Paul describes how he cared for the church in Thessalonica both as a mother and a father. First as **nursing mothers**:

* 1. This speaks of a person who has **bonded with her children**. The pastor and leadership must love the body as they do their own children. There is a danger in ministry where we become automatic, and leadership looks more like robots then mothers.
	2. Second, a nursing mother literally ***pours her life into the child***. A mother must make sure that she eats well as what she eats will affects her baby. Leadership must regularly feed on God’s word that they may impart it to others.
	3. Thirdly, Paul use the word “*cherishes*” which means to “*warm*” and it cares the idea of protection as well as holding a child up in your arms close to your heart!

Vs. 8 Paul describes the degree that he poured his love and life into this church, be saying:

1. ***He affectionately longed for them***: This word means to yearn for someone that you are **deeply in love with**.
2. ***He was “well pleased or delighted” to share not only the word but their lives with them***: The word “*well pleased*” means to cause “**intense pleasure**”. Ministry was not a duty but a pleasure for Paul! He was not holding back any part of himself for the benefit of others.
3. ***He says that they had become “dear” to them***: This is the word agape which expresses Gods love towards us. Paul loved them as God loved them.

**IV.) Vs. 9-12 A Fathers Touch**

Here we have leadership from a fathers perspective:

* + 1. Vs. 9 ***PROVIDER***: Paul did not sponge off of them even though as an apostle he had the right to be supported in the ministry. Paul made tents to support his ministry not because he had to, but because he knew that all the other false religions were taking advantage of people. He “*labored and toiled*” day and night to make sure that they had only to enjoy the Lord. Leadership ought to be the first here and the last to leave so that those we care for can enjoy the Lord!
		2. Vs. 10 ***EXAMPLE***: Paul describes three ways in which this was accomplished:
1. **Devoutly**: The word means to “*carefully fulfilling the duties God gives to a person*”. The leadership must be “sold out” or “all in”.
2. **Justly**: This word refers to the integrity of a person. The leadership needs to be the practical example of how to walk with God in everyday life.
3. **Blameless**: Literally, “*unable to find fault*”. Paul’s enemies could accuse him, but it would not stick to his Christ like character.

C.) Vs. 11 ***COMMUNICATOR***: Paul communicated four ways of how they were to live:

1. First it says that what he did was to, “*every one of them*” Which tells us that Paul **ministered to them personally**, “one on one”.
2. Second, he “**exhorted**”: Paul came along side of them to support them not tear them down, but to put the arm around so that they may lean on him.
3. Thirdly, he “**comforted**”: Paul didn’t just share the victory he shared how they could get their own victory. Paul didn’t just make them feel better; he made them want to do better.
4. Lastly he “**charged**” them: This word means to “*testify*” to give guidance and direction. This was the last form of communication not the first!

Vs. 12 Paul’s intent at instruction was that they “*would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory*.” The goal of every church leader is to see the church learn how to “***walk***”, not just profess!

**1 Thessalonians 2:13-20**

**“Keep Walking”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 13 Cling To The Word Of God**

**III.) Vs. 14-16 Fellowship With The People Of God**

**IV.) Vs. 17-20 Long For The Presence Of God**

**I.) Intro.**

In an autobiographical section Paul spoke of how Pastor’s and leaders must have a:

* **Servant’s life style**
* **Mother’s heart of caring**
* **Father’s touch in instructing**

Remember Paul only had three weeks with these Christians and although that had a great start their faith was beginning to be severely tested through persecution. What were they going to do now that Paul was gone? One of my Bible College teachers told me on the first day of class that these three things were keys to endurance in the Christian life:

1. **Life is not fair**: We surprised when we go to get into the car and it won’t run. Life by its nature has twists and turns which we can’t anticipate. So instead of getting bummed out, remind yourself a head of time that “*life is not fair*”!
2. **People are weird**: We all know weird people, we work with them; they drive on the same roads as we do, eat at the same restaurants. They may even pastor the church you go to. The truth is sometimes we act weird towards others! The next time someone does something weird towards you remember this simple truth, “*people are weird*”.
3. **Love covers a multitude of sins**: This is the one thing that will enable you to have **perspective** when “*life’s not fair*” and “*people are weird*”. The question is not whether or not life is going to through you a curve ball or when some person is going to act weird. The question is: What are you going to do when “*life is not fair*” and “*people are weird*”? You can’t change the inevitable and you shouldn’t be so surprised about it. All you can do is respond in the Spirit & not in the flesh! Love covers your sins, as well as others!

Paul tells these new Christians how to maintain a walk worthy of God, even when life is not fair and people are weird!

**II.) Vs. 13 Cling To The Word Of God**

Vs. 13a Paul had already thanked God for the work of the Spirit of God in the Word of God for their salvation. ***Now he is thanking God that the Spirit of God still works in the Word of God which will enable them to have a walk worthy of God***. Paul was always in praise towards God. This is one of those things that I think God would have us to be more like Jesus, a continual heart of praise. Paul phrases this thanksgiving about the “Word of God saying, *“..when you received the word of God…, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe*.” It was not only their initial acceptance of the Word of God, but it’s continual “*effective work*”in those that believed*.*

 **Here is the first of three things to do when “*life is not fair*” and “*people are weird*”**:

1. **CLING TO THE WORD OF GOD:** The text says that there are three things that the church at Thessalonica did.
2. **Accept it as from God**: Paul uses two different words for “**received**”, (in the N.K.J. the second word is rendered “*welcomed*”, in verse 13). The first one means to “**accept from another**” this involves the desire to listen. These guys valued the truth enough to check it out. They saw the Word of God as coming from God not man! The way that a Christian treats the Word of God in difficult times will show how he regards Jesus. The Bible says that:
	1. John 1:1, 14 That Jesus is the living Word and according to Heb. 4:12 so is the Bible.

 B.) Matt. 4:4 and John 6:48 both are the bread of life.

 C.) In Ps. 119:105 and John 8:12 both are light.

 D.) In John 14:6 and 17:17 both are truth.

“*The Bible should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. It’s a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure. It’s given to you in life, will be opened at judgment, and be remembered forever*.”

* 1. **Took it to heart**: The second word here rendered “welcome” means to accept it as one’s own! This involves not just the hearing of the ear but the hearing of the heart. These guys did not just listen, they said “*This is truth that we need to make part of our lives.*” Think of it like eating, the first part of hearing with the ears is like chewing the food. You don’t spit it out, instead you swallow so that your body can digest it.
	2. **Apply it their life**: Paul says that the Word of God “*effectively works*”. The word here is where we get our word “*energy*” from and it means to have “*power in use*”. Paul’s point is that the Word of God doesn’t just change how you feel it changes your life! So this is how to cling to the Word of God in difficult times:
* **Value it with your mind.**
* **Understand it with your heart.**
* **Apply it in your life.**

**III.) Vs. 14-16 Fellowship with The People Of God**

Paul lets them know that they were not alone in what was happening to them. People who go through tough times can get a narrow view on life, thinking that they are the only ones going through trials. This can cause us to pull away from fellowship. So Paul let them know that they were not alone.

A.)Vs. 14 They were not taking the lead of going through tough times, in fact it was par for the coarse. The churches in Judea were being persecuted just as they were only for a longer period of time.

B.) Vs. 14b-15 Paul wants them to know that it was their stand in Christ that had brought about the persecution just like the church in Judea as was Jesus! Religion has always been the enemy of a relationship with Jesus.

Vs. 16 No need to worry about all of this as God will deal with those that oppose Jesus in the end. Paul is letting them in on a secret ***when the world comes at you draw near to those who are going through the same thing***. Fellowship with those that love you! The great value of the church is that folks will stand with you, guide you correct you, pray with you. We need each other! Paul does not say, “*You deserve better*!” He comforts them with the fact that they are not alone. Then he tells them that they are part of a greater group of believers called the “*church*”.

**IV.) Vs. 17-20 Long For The Presence Of God**

Vs. 17-18 Paul explains why he has not come back to them personally to comfort them as he calls them, “Brethren”! That’s the way of a calling someone “*family*” He saw them more than just some people he met they were part of his family. To further illustrate this he says that he was “*taken*” from them and the word means to be an “*orphan*”. Paul felt as if his children had been taken from him. **Ah bit it was only in presence not in heart**. That reminds me of a story I heard of a father who was asked how many children he had. His response was startling as he said, “*I have three, two here in the land of the dead and one with me in my heart in the land of the living*!” **All that separation did for Paul was want all the more to be with them.** Does that describe your desire to be with the believers here at Calvary Chapel? I love to hang out with you and when I’ve traveled away from here I can’t wait to get back.

Vs. 18 Paul explains why he did not come, Satan hindered. The word here “*hindered*” means to “*break up the road by putting up obstacles*.” That’s all Satan can do, “*put up road blocks*” but the truth is that even this God uses!

Vs. 19-20 Paul realized that the greatest thing of all was being in the presence of God. No matter what you find yourself going through God is there with you. This church was going through heavy persecution and Paul gives them a heavenly perspective. He says,

“*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming*?” Look at it this way:

**Our hope is** .... *you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.*

**Our joy is** ... *you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.*

**Our crown of rejoicing is** ... *you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.*

Our goal is not to be found in this life, it is to be found in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. There is a little saying that goes like this:

“*If you come to find “happiness” seek it elsewhere. If you want it your own way, I have nothing to share. But if looking like Jesus is what you desire, the cross is waiting come feel it’s fire. It will free you from self! It will turn you from sin! It will fill you with Joy, please come venture in*.”

Saints, if you are going through tough times “*keep walking*”!

* **Cling to the word of God.**
* **Fellowship with the people of God**
* **Long for the presence of God**

***It’s the only way to get to where you want to go!***

**1 Thessalonians 3: 1-13**

**“Standing In The Faith”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Established in the Faith**

**III.) Vs. 5-9 Encouraged in the Faith**

**IV.) Vs. 10-13 Exceeding in the Faith**

**I.) Intro.**

Paul has explained how the church in Thessalonica was born and cared for. He had spoken about the work of leadership through the gospel. Last week he spoke of how the young believers could survive by “**clinging to the word of God, fellowshipping with the people of God and longing for the presence of God**.”

 Sometimes I wonder how much better it would be if the church was more like the insect world. When ants are born they get right to work, they don’t have to change dippers, pick up the little ant messes. No, every ant that comes out from the larvae is equipped immediately for service. There is no trial run. Almost immediately they become fruitful for the ant kingdom. Can you imagine giving birth to a totally independent baby” Where right after birth they say. “*Thanks, for the birth Mom, I’m off to work!*” Paul is going to deal with the work of growing in Christ in chapter 4. In the 2nd letter to the Thessalonians (2:13) Paul says that he, *“...gave thanks to God … because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth*,” In Paul’s first letter he implements some principals so that they would grow, then in the 2nd letter he thanks God for the success of that growth. This reveals that:

1. **God is not interested in you being an infant Christian**: He wants to see you through to maturity! Philp 1: 6 says, “...*He who has begun a good work in you* ***will complete it*** *until the day of Jesus Christ.*”
2. **The same two ingredients that led us to salvation in Christ are also involved in our maturity**, “..*through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”*

 a.) Our growth in Christ is by His Spirit, just as was our salvation! b.) And our absolute trust in Gods truth, (the Word of God)!

***So we grow by the Spirit of God at work in the Word of God making us mature as the children of God***!

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Established in the Faith**

Vs. 1 “*Therefore*” is one of those linking words in the Bible that links this section with the section before it. Paul had just spoken of how he and his team had to leave and was hindered by Satan from returning to make sure that they were growing in grace. Paul did two things to ensure their growth in grace.

1. Vs. 1-4 **He sent Timothy**: Paul sent a qualified servant of God to **fellowship** with them. This reveals several things concerning Paul’s plan to see that the church was going to grow.
	1. Vs. 1 Paul was into to people, not numbers. He was not just about getting people in the door he was about caring for those once they were in the door. So much so he was willing to be left alone in Athens and the word he uses to describe this means to be “*bereaved*”, to be left alone at the death of a loved one. Though Paul had some huge crowds there in Athens, he felt as if he was widowed!
	2. Vs. 2a Second, it reveals the character of person we ought to be. As Paul calls Timothy:
2. **Brother**: Timothy was a brother, he was like minded he had gone through persecutions and had trusted Christ through them.
3. **Minister**: This word here is deacon. Timothy was a man who because of his nature in Christ when he saw something that need to be done he had to do it.
4. **Labor**: Timothy was a team player! There was no job too small for Timothy and he had no problem in the role of an assistant. He was involved in whatever way he could to get people to follow Jesus!
	1. Vs. 2b The plan of Timothy was to cause growth in the church. The plan had two parts:
5. To establish you ... concerning your faith: This word “*establish*” means to support or to “*set fast*”. Timothy came to first to set the church firm in their faith. According to verse four one of the truths that Timothy brought to them was that life is not fare and people are weird. Timothy did not first encourage or comfort them. No he first made sure they were applying the Word of God in their lives!
6. Encourage you concerning your faith: Timothy “*comforted*” them, but he did so concerning their faith ***not*** their situation. What was happening to this church was not their fault yet he encouraged them to stay the course!

 d.) Vs. 3-4 The outcome of Timothy’s ministry was **twofold**:

1. Vs. 3a That they would not be shaken by the afflictions: The word “*shaken*” or “*moved*” means to wag the tail. The Jews were the ones that had caused the persecution against the Thessalonians but now they were coming to them saying, “*You poor things, why don’t you just renounce Jesus and become Jewish?*” Timothy seeks to establish them to stand on the truth and not **sacrifice obedience to the truth of the Word of God for comfort**!
2. Vs. 3b-4 They would see the afflictions as an appointment not an accident: Timothy desired ***that they would not see the situation and circumstances as accidents but instead as appointments***. The first reaction most have to difficulties is, “*Why is this happening to me*?” Saint’s, what you are going through is not an accident it is an appointment. In John 16:33 Jesus said, “*In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*.” In James 1:2-4 we ought to, *“...count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing*.” God allows trials to come upon us to mature us.

**III.) Vs. 5-9 Encouraged in the Faith**

Vs. 5 The words “*for this reason*”, imply that Paul wanted to know whether or not the enemy had ripped them off. God was using the trials to deepen their walk with Him, while Satan was attempting to use the same trials to draw them away from God. Saints, if you are going through some tough stuff, the choice is up to you: You can either draw near to God or you can do your own thing walk away from him. When Paul was there they had responded to the gospel with a profession of faith, but the proof of that profession was to be seen in what they did when things got tough!

Vs. 6-9 Paul not only sent Timothy for fellowship, he sent them this letter based upon Timothy’s good report. This letter of encouragement is the Bible!

a.) Vs. 6 Paul calls their news, “*the gospel*” or good news to him because the very thing he had been concerned about, “*their faith*” was growing.

1. Their faith was growing because they had “*good remembrance*” of Paul because they ***still regarded what Paul taught as truth***.
2. They not only regarded it as truth they were applying it as “*their love was obvious*.” No body had been able to rip them away from the love of the Lord as it was seen in their love for each other.

b.) Vs. 7 The praise of the Church in Thessalonica applying the Word was just what Paul needed during his own difficulties. There is nothing more encouraging to a Bible teacher then to hear that people are applying the Word of God in their lives as a result of the teaching. It makes the difficulties easier!

c.) Vs. 8 Paul felt as though his wellbeing was tied to their practice of the truth! The Bible is not just a good idea or good advice it is a living book that will change your life if applied. 2 Tim 3:16 says, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for* ***doctrine****, for* ***reproof****, for* ***correction****, for* ***instruction*** *in righteousness*,”

* **DOCTRINE tells us what is right**
* **REPROOF tells us what is not right**
* **CORRECTION tells us how to get right**
* **INSTRUCTION tells us how to stay right**!

d.) Vs. 9 Paul says here that He thanked God for their application of the Word of God. The most useful tool in applying the Word into your life is to PRAY IT IN! The outcome of this will by peace and joy. To Grow in grace you need: **Fellowship, the Word of God and Prayer**!

**IV.) Vs. 10-13 Exceeding in the Faith**

 Vs. 10 Paul says here that he prayed for them night and day for **four things that would cause them to grow**:

1. Vs. 10 ***Perfect*** what is lacking: The word here means to “*mend nets*”. Paul prayed that they would continue to adjust their lives to the Word of God, so that nothing would fall through. Our lives in Christ are constantly changing and we will need more adjusting to His will!
2. Vs. 11 ***Direct*** our way to you: Paul desired to continue to feed these young Christians the Word of God. We will never arrive a point where we will know all that there is in the Bible as such there will always need to be a hunger for the Word.
3. Vs. 12 ***Inject*** love abounding: We can see growth the easiest in our actions towards others. Paul is careful here to say not only that we ought to love fellow believers but every one even those who are persecuting or hurting you. **The truth is we will never mature past our ability to love others**!
4. Vs. 13 ***Erect*** hearts in holiness: Paul prays that their conduct would be in line with the Word of God. Notice here that it is the return of Jesus Christ that ought to motivate us to a holy life! Where a person is applying the Word of God there will be stability, love and holiness. These will provide complete assurance in His presence.

 **1 Thessalonians 4: 1-12**

**“A Walk That Pleases God”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-3a Walking In His Will**

**III.) Vs. 3b-8 Walking In Self Discipline**

**IV.) Vs. 9-10 Walking In Love**

**V.) Vs. 11-12 Walking To Win**

**I.) Intro.**

In First Thessalonians Paul covers their past, present and future. He reminded them how they became Christians and how to maintain their walk with the Lord. Next week Paul will address their future and how that should influence their present. Today, Paul brings up the present; twice in these 12 verses he speaks to them about their walk. It is fact one of Paul’s favorite subjects in all of his letters. ***The Christian life begins with a step a faith, which must lead to a walk of faith***. Paul uses the word walk 31 times in his letters using several Greek that can be rendered “walk” in English.

* One word means to “**march in rank, to conform in virtue and holiness**”, Paul uses that word only four times.
* Another word means “**to move all around**” and is the preferred word that Paul uses as he uses it twice in this passage as well as some 33 other times.

I find it interesting that when Paul is speaking of a “*walk*” that pleases God he **doesn’t use** the Greek word that means to “*march in some ordered perspective*”. Instead he uses the word for “*walk*” in the Greek that means “***freedom of movement***”. Saints a walk that pleases God is not “*rank and file marching around*” it is about a “*life of freedom*” that is only found in obedience to Gods Word!

**II.) Vs. 1-3a Walking In His Will**

Vs. 1 The word “finally” doesn’t mean he is finished, it means that Paul is going to speak about the practical application of “*establishing your heart blameless in holiness*”, (verse 2:13). I notice Paul tells them five things in verse 1 then they need to know if they are going to have “*hearts established in holiness*”:

1. **Brethren**: First, whatever he has to say from here on out is qualified by the fact that they are believers in Jesus. Paul is not asking them to do something that they are not capable of doing, he is asking them to be what they are as a Christian!
2. **We Urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus**: Walking to please God is not an option it is a necessity that grows out of a healthy relationship with God. Paul begs them and exhorts them in the “*Lordship of Jesus*”. This reveals us that **the lack of spiritual growth in a believer life is always a “Lordship” issue**! Some people will respond to the gospel message that emphasizes **Jesus as Savior**, because no one wants to go to hell. But **He is not your Savior if He is not your Lord**!
3. **That you should abound more and more**: Thirdly, Paul uses the word “*abound*” and in the Greek it describes a bud of a flower coming into full bloom. The flower is starting to open to reveal the beauty of their Christian life, but he didn’t want them to stop but to allow it to come to full bloom. The Christian life is designed to come into full bloom it ought to pick up speed as we go along.
4. **Just as you received from us how you ought to walk**: Fourthly, Paul tells them that they had already been instructed on how to walk so now he was only telling them to keep going.
5. **To walk and please God**: Lastly, **It is our growth in His grace that pleases Him. Folks, it’s not your profession of faith, or what you say you believe that pleases Him**. Are you? Right now are you closer to Him then when you first made your profession of faith? Has there been a study growth towards Jesus? *“Does all your life please God*?”

Vs. 2 The word “*commandments*” is a military term that means “*orders handed down from the superior officer*”. These were not suggestions they are commandments from the Lord Jesus. Many things would clear up if we just applied this in our lives!

 Before we were Christians our main interest was to please ourselves. **As Christians our main interest is to please God not ourselves**. ***Our first question ought to be, “Does this please God?”*** You cannot have the benefits of being a Christian and live only to please yourself.

Vs. 3a You can go to any Bible book store and o see books on the “*will of God*” but right here we are told that the will of God is. Its concern is for us to always center our lives around being set apart. **A life that is pleasing to God is one that is in the Will Of God! And the Will of God for us is, “SANCTIFICATION” or “*to be separate for Gods use*”.**  **This is not the Lord’s hope, He insists on it! It’s His will for your life!** Every believer is already set apart for Gods use, so it is not something that we are attain instead it is a state by which we through His grace live our lives. **If we are not right now living a set apart life for God then according to Paul we are not pleasing Him**! Paul is going to suggest three areas where they need to make sure that they were set apart.

**III.) Vs. 3b-8 Walking In Self Discipline**

Vs. 3b **Abstain from sexual immorality:** The Bible has a lot to say on the subject of sexual relations. The word “*sexual immorality*” is the word where we get our word pornography from and refers to any sexual relationships outside of the marriage covenant. Paul is going to state this principal both in a positive way and a negative way as he lived in a culture that sexual immorality was encouraged. Paul didn’t care that this was seen as normal and good, it is Gods will that people be sexually pure. Sex was designed both for procreation as well as pleasure, but Satan has corrupted this making sex outside of marriage what people want. There is no mention of why Paul says this to these believers as such this was to prevent them from going in the wrong direction to start with.

1. Vs. 4 **Positive**: Knowing how to possess your vessel in sanctification on honor. The word vessel here can both refer to our own bodies or your spouse. In either case the idea is to so control our lives sexually in a way that please God.
2. Vs. 5 **Negative**: Not in passion and lust like the Gentiles who do not know God. Believers living to please God we are not to be driven by our lust! Marriages that are based upon lust will not last! *You should find someone who is attractive but the most important feature in not whether they turn you on, it is whether they are turned on towards the Lord*!

Vs. 6 Paul says to not live a separate life to God in the area of sexuality will cause social implications as well as spiritual ones and God will judge those who disregard this.

Vs. 7-8 Paul here lists **two reasons** for his statement:

1. Vs. 7 **It is your call**: If you are a believer then this is what God has called you to. We are not called to be unclean but rather to be Holy even as He is holy! Sexual immorality is inconsistent with who we are now in Jesus! Paul said in 1 Cor. 6:9-12 that we “*should glorify God in our bodies and in our Spirit, which are the Lord’s.*”
2. Vs. 8 **To reject it is to reject God**: Now this is a universal truth, if you reject the counsel of God’s word then you are not rejecting man’s opinion but Gods. Being a believer is never an excuses for sin, for we are called to holiness. A holy walk involves being self-disciplined which means that we want what He wants to the denying of pleasing our flesh!

**IV.) Vs. 9-10 Walking In Love**

Vs. 9-10 Paul tells them that what pleases God is to walk in love. They were already walking in love towards one another but here he tells them to that they need to increase more and more in this. Our nature determines our action! He tells them that they are already enjoying success in this area and to continue to blossom in the area of love. Perhaps those people who get under your skin are there to enable you to grow in your love towards others? *We are not called to love people based upon their deserving it we are called to love folks because it is part of our new nature in Christ*!

**V.) Vs. 11-12 Walking To Win**

Vs. 11-12 Lastly Paul tells them that they ought to walk in a way that please God and be an example towards those who do not know Jesus. We ought to walk in a way that wins others and Paul tells how that is done.

1. **A quite life**: Literally a life that hold its peace. Instead of protesting this or picketing that we are to ***live out what we believe by doing two things***:
	1. **Mind your own business**: Don’t put your nose into a place where it does not belong. Taking care of me is a full time job as get into enough trouble without trying to fix the world. If I would only put as much effort into allowing the Lord to fix me as I do the world I would be far better off!
	2. **Work with your own hands**: Mind your own store. Keep busy, an idle mind makes for a troubled heart! We ought not use God’s blessing upon our life to make us lazy. Some of these Christians had left their jobs and were sponging off of other Christians.

Vs. 12 As we do this we not only walk properly with the Lord we also do so towards those who are not believers. There you have it who are you pleasing?

**1 Thessalonians 4: 16b-18**

**“Just do it”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 16b-18 The Comfort of Being Caught Up**

**I.) Intro.**

In 1990 this article appeared in the L.A. times: CLEVELAND — A woman finished her first marathon Sunday after mistakenly entering the 26-mile Revco-Cleveland Marathon instead of the 10K event in which she had intended to compete. “*I thought the marathon had already started*,” said Georgene Johnson, 42, of Akron. “*So I just took off with the rest of the pack.*” Both races had the same starting lines but four miles into the race, she realized something was wrong because the turnaround point was nowhere in sight. She ran up to a male runner and asked, “*This is the 10K, isn't it*?” She was then told she was running in the marathon. She said she, “*felt so dumb that she just stood there and started to cry.*” She even asked a police officer to drive her back to the starting line to compete in the 10K but the officer didn't have a patrol car. She thought about quitting but right in front of her was a man running and on the back of his shirt was the Nike phrase, “*Just do it.*”***So she did!*** She finished her first marathon in 4 hours, 4 minutes, good enough for 83rd place in the women's division. She was asked some time later about her experience and said, “***This isn't the race I trained for. This isn't the race I entered. But, for better or worse, this is the race I'm in.***” How about it saint’s has your Christian race of 10K turned into a Marathon? Well Paul has some “*Just do it*” words for you to keep you in the race!

**IV.) Vs. 16b-18 The Comfort of Being Caught Up**

On a side note let’s deal with Israel’s feasts and how they relate to a Pre-Tribulation rapture of the church. This is one of those areas where godly people disagree: “*Will the rapture happen before the tribulation period, during the tribulation period, or after*?” Both 1 Cor. 15 as well as this verse speaks of this trumpet or shofar being blown at the rapture. I think this gives us a clue as to when the rapture will happen. According to Lev. 23 there were seven Holy “*convocations*” or sacred assemblies the Lord gave to Israel. The word “*convocations*” literally means “*rehearsal*”. ***These seven feasts were to be a rehearsal for the real thing.*** As you look at them they fall upon certain months of the Jewish calendar.

1. **Passover**: Is on the 14th of Nisan or March - April. ***This is when Jesus was killed as the Lamb of God***.
2. **Unleavened Bread**: Is on the 15th of Nisan, again March - April. ***This is when the sinless body of Jesus was buried***.
3. **First Fruits**: Is on the 16th of Nisan. ***This is when Jesus rose from the dead and became the “first fruits” of those who would be risen from the dead***.
4. **Feast of Weeks or Pentecost**: Is on the 6th of Sivan or May - June. ***This is when Jesus birthed the Church***. Notice that there is a big span of months with no feasts. The picture is Jesus has birthed the church and we have been here on the earth being the instruments of His word and grace.
5. **Feast of Trumpets**: This feast occurs on the 1-2 of Tishri or Sept. - Oct. The Feast of Trumpets happens right after the seven weeks of mourning Sefira, (July - Aug.) which was where they remembered that their temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B. C. Oddly enough the second temple would be destroyed in the same month on 70 A. D. The Temple was the place of unbroken fellowship with the living God so when the temple was destroyed Israel could no longer offer sacrifices to God. The feast of Trumpets, “*Rosh Hashanah*”, is the Jewish New Year. It is the festival of celebration and days of joy and holiness. It is “*Rosh Hashanah*” that the Jews remember the binding of Isaac upon the altar and God granting Abraham a Lamb Himself for a sacrifice. ***This is the time frame in succession, the time when the church will be gathered together to be with him in great joy***.
6. **Day of Atonement**: On the 10th of Tishri (September- October) you have “*Yom Kippur*” ***a day when the Jews are given a rest for the affliction, which will take place at the end of the Great tribulation, when Jesus returns to give rest for His people***.
7. **Feast of Tabernacles**: This is the last of the seven feast days on the 22nd of Tishri (September- October). ***This feast is to remind them that God tabernacled among them during the time in the wilderness and of coarse will again do so during the millennial reign of Jesus***.

**Looking at the Jewish Feasts in light of biblical prophecy**; “*All of the feast days have happened up to the feast of trumpets, the rapture of the church which will be followed by the return of Jesus and His millennial reign*.”

As I look at the different views concerning the rapture of the church:

* First it appears that the rapture has to happen before the great tribulation which clearly does not fit the post tribulation position.
* Second the mid tribulation does not work either when you consider Rev. 1: 19 and 4:1. In the Rev 1:19 John outlines the book of Revelation into three specific time frames,
1. The things which you have seen
2. The things which are
3. The things which will take place after these things.

It is after the time frame of the church that John hears a trumpet saying “*come up here*”. The rest of the book speaks of the great tribulation. A fact that is further brought out as the word church appears 19 times in the book but it doesn’t appear during the seven year tribulation period.

 Vs. 16b “***And the dead in Christ will rise first***.” At the rapture of the church those who have died and are in the presence of the Lord will rise first. This does not mean that He will reunite them with their old body, for Paul tells us that in 1 Cor. 15:35 the resurrection of the human body is like the growing of a plant from a seed. The flower is not the identical seed as the plant, yet the seed produces the plant. ***So we Christians shall receive glorified bodies like the body of Jesus***.

Vs. 17 The word’s rendered “*caught up*” in Greek har-PAD-zo and translated into Latin is “*raptus*” where we get our English word ***rapture***. The word carries ***five ideas***:

1. ***To catch away speedily***: It’s the same word used to describe Philip being taken away after he led the Ethiopian to Christ. **When the Lord returns, we who are alive will be caught away quickly, in the twinkling of an eye.** Thus we should live every moment of our lives as if He were going to take us quickly.
2. ***To seize by force***: This speaks of the enemies attempt to keep someone captive. Saint’s it is foolish to allow the world of things to be so captivating as to be seized by force.
3. ***To claim for one’s own self***: Here the picture of the rapture is from the Lord’s view claiming a bride for Himself.
4. ***To move to a new place***: Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for us, so when he comes he is taking us to that place. That’s the picture here.
5. ***To rescue from danger***: Clearly we are rescued form the danger of the wrath of God poured out upon an un-repenting world.

The word “*meet*” means “*meeting a royal person*”. This is an everlasting meeting for we will always be with the Lord. ***The goal of redemption is not just to rescue us from judgment it is to bring us to Jesus***. ***There we will not only be reunited with Jesus but also with those depart loved ones who are in Christ***!

Vs. 18 We are told that these word are to be a comfort to believers. During the great tribulation we know that roughly 3 ½ billion people will die, I suggest to you that these words will offer no comfort for post tribulation believer or even the mid tribulation believers but they sure do offer hope to Pre-tribulation believers!

There is grave stone in an old British cemetery that reads, “Pause, my friend, as you walk by; as you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so you will be. Prepare, my friend, to follow me!” Some guy added a few lines to the epitaph: “To follow you is not my intent, until I know which way you went!” Do you know which we you are going? Are these words a comfort to you?

**1 Thessalonians 5: 1-8**

**“Living In The Light Of His Return”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-3 Characteristics of a thief**

**III.) Vs. 4-8 How Should We Live?**

**I.) Intro.**

Paul wrote this letter to a church that he had founded but was only able to stay with them for three to four weeks, so to encourage them Paul:

 A.) ***Reminds*** them of their **past** faith in Christ, which had been clearly seen by all.

 B.) ***Encourages*** them in the **present** to have a Christian walk that seeks to please God.

 C.) ***Instructs*** them concerning their **future** hope in Jesus.

In each case Paul kept them focused upon the goal of one day being with Jesus for eternity. The goal of the Lord is not to rescue us from judgment it is to bring us to Jesus!

Over the last two weeks Paul addressed two concerns that these young believers had:

 1.) Vs. 13 What happens to those Christians who die prior to the 2nd coming?

 2.) Vs. 15 What about those who remain alive?

In the first 11 verses of chapter 5 Paul contrasts the believers who he spoke of as being “***raptured***”; against those non-believers awaiting the “***day of the Lord***” and how this ought to cause us believers to live today!

**II.) Vs. 1-3 Characteristics of a Thief**

Vs. 1 There are some today within the church who say that the church should not teach on prophetic passages adopting a “Pan Theology” meaning that it will all “Pan out in the end”. Though it is true that everything will turn out as God has ordained clearly Paul was not a “***Pan-Triber***” as had had already had some discussions concerning the end times. They had been confused as to what happened to believers who died but they had a good grasp of the end times as Paul says that concerning “**times and seasons**” they had no need to be further instructed. The phrase appears only three times in the Bible and in each case it refers to God’s plans for Israel in the latter days. The context of the words “**times and seasons”** refers to the “**Day of the Lord**” (verse 2), so the times and seasons that This young church had an understanding of was the ones centered around the day of the Lord. I think everyone wants to know the time of these events, but Paul is not speaking here of a “***day and hour***” and we know this for ***two reasons***:

1. Jesus told us in Matt. 24: 36 “***But of that day and hour no one knows****, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only:* We cannot know what day or hour, but we do know that He is coming again! **As believers we are not focused upon the event when the Lord will come to judge the world, we are focused upon the time when we will be *caught up* together with those who have died in Christ to meet the Lord in the air, thus always being with Him, (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)**. And this can happen at any moment!!!!
2. The words, “**times and seasons**” is two distinct things.
3. “**Times**”: Refers to a ***duration or length*** of time and **not** a ***day or hour***. God has ordained a length of time in which He will both deal with the nation of Israel and judge the Gentile nations. We are told of this both in Daniel and Revelation, of a seven year period called the great tribulation. This church knew this this because Paul had spoken to them about it.
4. **“Seasons**”: A season describes certain obvious characteristics of time throughout a year, (Fall is when the leaves change color and drop, spring is when all the grass turns green and the flowers bloom, etc.). So like the changes in the seasons there will be certain signs or characteristics that will **proceed** this duration of time, as well as certain signs **during** the event its self.

Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 3:1-4 that it would be a time when the people of the church would begin to look more like the people of the world as they would be lovers of themselves and money. They would be proud and arrogant, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. It would be a time when they would not be into the Word of God and instead would follow after false teachers. Jesus to the Pharisees Matt. 16:2-3, *“****You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times***.”

The Lord would have us aware of the events that are coming for two reasons:

* 1. So that we would so live as if Jesus would be taking us to be with Him at any moment.
	2. So we could warn those who do not yet know Him of what awaits, in order that they would come to know Him.

Vs. 2 The duration of time known as the “***Day of the Lord***.”, (or the “***time of Jacob’s trouble***”) The phrase appears 26 times in 24 verses in the Bible and **it describes a time when God will judge the nations and will strike those who reject Christ. At the same time God will prepare Israel for the return of Jesus and His reign for a thousand years with His saints**. There are ***three characteristics of this season***:

1. 4: 13-17 “**Caught up (raptured) together**”: Paul told them about the coming of Jesus for His church which will proceed the “*day of the Lord*”. When Paul spoke of the two separate event he used the word “but” drawing a distinction between the rapture and the day of the Lord.
2. Vs. 2 “**Thief in the night**”: This suggests two things:
	1. **UNSUSPECTING**: The world will be unsuspecting of Jesus return and judgment. Jesus said in Matt. 24: 37-38 that at “...*the coming of the Son of Man....it will be like...days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark*” When a thief breaks into your house, you don’t expect it. The “*Day of the Lord*” is going to surprise people the way Peter wrote of in 2 Peter 3:4 saying people will mockingly say “*Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation*.”
	2. **UNPREPARED**: If the power was to go out at night and you need to get up early how would you be able to do so? So to the world will unprepared for His coming. Religious people will be unprepared for His coming because they think they are good enough on their own effort to escape the day of the Lord!
3. Vs. 3 “**A time when people will say peace and safety then sudden destruction comes upon them**”: The signs outwardly will all be looking great. The world will be lulled to sleep by the “*good times*” politically and economically. The word “*destruction*” means utter hopeless ruin.

**III.) Vs. 4-8 How Should We Live?**

Vs. 4 Paul goes from signs of the times happening upon “***THEM***” to “***You brethren***” as he gives these believers 5 guidelines on how to live in light of the soon return of Jesus.

1. Vs. 4 **Be expectant**: Paul says that we are not in darkness that the Day should over take us. We ought to be living ready, living for His return for us! We need to be live in the light of His soon return. Titus 2: 11-13 says, “*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,* ”
2. Vs. 5 **Be you**: Paul calls them here “*Brethren, Sons of the light, Sons of the day.*” Before he tells them what to do he reminds them of “WHO” they are in Christ. He contrasts that with what they are not, “**not of the night or of darkness**.” We should live based upon who we now are in Jesus. Our lives are to be a contrast to that of those in the world as we let His light shine through us.
3. Vs. 6 **Be awake**: There must be a obvious difference between the believer and the non-believer; as they are **asleep** we are **awake**. ***As we see the seasons change don’t put your Christian life into neutral put it into overdrive***!
4. Vs. 6-7 **Be steady**: Paul says that they were to a model of consistency and contrasts this with what the world is. They are morally indifferent and careless about spiritual things. We are to heed Heb. 10: 24-25 “.*.consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*.”
5. Vs. 8 **Be ready**: Literally, “*put your armor on and leave it on*!” Notice the familiar threefold characteristics of a believer, “*faith, hope, and love*”. These are not offensive weapons here because we have already won in Christ and as such we don’t need to advance just stand our ground. The Bible never mentions any protection for your back side because we never retreat!
	1. **Breastplate of faith and love**: The breastplate protects the heart, which is the center of the emotions, intellect and will. Our faith in Jesus and our love for Him will keep our heart right!
	2. **Helmet of the hope of salvation**: The helmet protects the head and for the believer we are talking about our thought life. The hope is not the “*I hope that I will be saved.*” It **means the hope that the knowledge of salvation brings to us**. The reality that nothing will keep us from Jesus, therefore we are free to go for it!

**1 Thessalonians 5: 9-13a**

**“We are family”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 9-11 Not Appointed to Wrath**

**III.) Vs. 12-13a Keys to a Healthy Church**

**I.) Intro.**

Every year around our nation local, state and national leaders do a “*state of the union*” message where the leader speaks of the accomplishments and success of the past year as well as what they hope to accomplish in the new year. Paul’s closing is his “*state of the Church*” address for the newly birthed church in Thessalonica. One of his favorite words in this letter is the word that he uses for the church, 17 times in five chapters Paul refers to these believers as “*brethren*”, or brothers. **It appears as though Paul thinks of this young church as a family**. Even though he and his leadership was forced to leave this newly birthed church only weeks after its conception, he clearly expected its members to function as God ordained. His departure created some unique challenges the greatest was…***who was going to lead this young group***. When I was young my folks would leave my older brothers in charge, which meant instant chaos. They would no sooner walk out the door then we would start fighting. Someone would not want to do his share, while others would not want to submit to their older sibling. That is what this section is all about. Paul puts in order the family unit as a parent would calling back to see how the family is doing. But first he wants to remind them they are all part of the same family.

**II.) Vs. 9-11 Not Appointed To Wrath**

Vs. 9There is a vital truth that we need to realize: **We are on the winning side**! But least we miss understand this we are there not because we are essential to the team’s success, no we are on the winning side because Christ has already made us winners!

 Paul wanted this young church to know that their security is certain. **They were not appointed to the time of the “*Day of the Lord*”**. Instead they had obtained salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ! Dear ones our appointment with wrath, though still deserving, has been canceled. God’s righteous anger towards our sin has been taken care of when we put our faith in Jesus who took God’s wrath for our sins!

Vs. 10 Further more Paul tells them that neither life not death can alter this FACT, if we die prior to the rapture or we are changed in a twinkling of an eye we are going to the reunion party the likes of which the world has never seen before and it will go on for eternity!

Vs. 11 Having stated this FACT Paul declares that we should be building each other up with this truth. I admit that I enjoy watching sports especially improbable comebacks, watching the Griz play this year has been extremely satisfying as practically every game has come down to a last second win. It amazes me to see how one player or one play can change the course of a game. Saints, that’s what the body of Christ ought to be doing with each other. When it looks like all is lost and we are down to our last play, come along side your teammate and encourage them in the truth that they have already WON has Jesus will soon be returning for us! I have noticed that it is far easier and less stressful watching a game when I already know that we have won, ill regardless of how poorly they have played. Knowing the outcome is encouraging!

**III.) Vs. 12-13a The Key to a Healthy Church**

Vs. 12 In every church there is a leadership structure that is in place and even in this church which was only a few months old Paul had already set up a leadership structure. It is interesting to notice the chief characteristic of those that Paul had placed in leadership was that they had “***labored among you***”. Those that serve in positions of authority are those that work and it is the responsibility of the body of Christ to support those who are doing the work. I’m sure that it must have been difficult at times to submit to those who had gotten saved the same time, those who they knew were as flawed as they were. Yet Paul still outlines **three things** that the church should do with regards to the leadership that Christ has placed over them.

1. Vs. 12 ***RECOGNIZE***: The word in the original cares the idea of “**honor or respect**”. Paul tells them that they need to know and respect those who because of their position are over them. Some of the church was struggling with respecting the folks that God had placed over them. Verse 13 makes it clear that their respect and honor was to be based upon their work among them. And that work was based upon their character, as Paul lists ***three duties of good leadership based upon godly character***.
	1. **Labor among you**: This word “labor” literally means to “*feel fatigue to work to the point of being weary*”. These leaders were sold out servants for the benefit of the believers in Thessalonica. So Paul says, “*Honor those who by their character give so much of themselves on behalf of you*.” They were not leaders like many in the world today that expected that their ***position to grant they prestige and privilege***. Far too many political “*civil servants*” are neither civil or servants! But the church is different as those that will be called the greatest of all will be the servants of all. So they are to be respected because of their sacrifice and service!
	2. **Over you in the Lord**: The word means “*to be placed before you like a superintendent of a household as to lead others*.” ***Notice that they are over you but it is in the Lord***? *Paul mentions that they had been placed over the body only after he mentions that they were servants among them*. In the world those that are over people often not the people that labored among them for others benefit to the point that they are worn out. The body ought to honor those folks in leadership that have demonstrated their position by their service.
	3. **Admonish you**: The word means to, “*put in mind*”. *Another characteristic of Church leadership beyond their service is seen in their responsibility to warn others in the church if they were out of line*. They had the tough job of having to confront fellow believers if they were not living as they ought. Nothing is more challenging than to have to confront a fellow believer about an attitude or action that is harmful to themselves and church life. To not confront lovingly is to show that the church doesn’t care! This must be done through the Word of God that reveals that the attitude or action is not right.
2. Vs. 13 ***ESTEEM***: The word means to “*go over in your mind all the qualities of a person and to an admiration in the Lord of them*”. They were to value them “*very highly*” for their works sake. The truth is that any church that functions well does so because of the leadership! God has placed in positions of leadership people that make this church healthy in Christ. They serve with nothing to gain as if they had nothing to lose! If you can’t admire those that God has placed over you in church then either your heart needs to change or you need to change where you fellowship.

Saints we can all find reasons why we don’t like a particular church and reasons why you shouldn’t make a certain church your home church.

1. A lot of those reasons are based upon ***personal*** preferences….*you want a church where they do only Hymns …. You want a church that only does contemporary music*. S
2. Some of those reasons are ***doctrinal***….you want a church that believes exactly the same way that you do with regards to the “non-essentials” of the faith.
3. Others, are ***cultural***…..you need to be in a church where you understand the language….or the culture needs to be in a way that will facilitate spiritual maturity.

But with that said the importance of finding a local fellowship must have as its end not a place where you can ***COME***….but rather a place that encourages you to ***GO***! Based upon the New Testament letters the early church was designed to equip believers to GO and utilize the gifts and talents to reach a hurting and dying world with the great news that Jesus can transform lives.

* I’m certain that we are not a fellowship that pleases everyone that comes
* I’m certain that we will do things and say things that not everyone will agree with all the time.
* I’m certain that those that lead this fellowship have two great loves and demonstrate it every day: The Lord, and His people!

**1 Thessalonians 5: 13b-28**

**“Keys to a healthy church”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 13b-14a Keys to a Healthy Church**

**III.) Vs. 14b-24 Keys To a Healthy You**

**IV.) Vs. 25-28 Prayer, Fellowship, and the Word of Grace**

We conclude this wonderful little letter we the context of remembering that every chapter ended with a reminder that Jesus is coming back soon for His Church. This finally section is a “***check list***” of items that each Christian and every Church ought to keep handy to ensure that we stay healthy. It is interesting how success within the church today has centered upon size instead of health. That’s not to say that a large church can’t be healthy but it is to say that just because it is large doesn’t mean that it is healthy.

* Saint’s Jesus is coming for His church.
* His kingdom will be established on earth.
* Our earthly life is a gift that will come to an end sooner than we realize.

Because of these facts it is best to adapt that motto of the old poem written by C.T. Studd whose father had been led to Christ by D.L. Moody:

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done *by* Christ will last.**

**II.) Vs. 13b-14a Keys to a Healthy Church**

Vs. 13 ***BE AT PEACE***: Paul gives yet another thing the body of Christ can implement so that they can make the leaderships load a lot lighter; be at peace with each other. The church needs to learn to “*get along*”, take the Lord’s side and bridge the gap by being a “*peacemaker*”. Apparently “*getting along*” was an issue in this church so much so that Paul in verse 14 is going to give list three types of difficult situations and the ways in which to be a peacemaker among them.

* 1. **Warn those who are unruly**: The “*unruly*” person is a word that comes from a military term which describes a person is careless and out of line. It speaks of a soldier who is not in his present rank because of idleness and has neglected their duties. It also describes a person who is so rebellious that they cause disorder. Now the word “*warn*” is the same word as “*admonish*” in verse 12 and it to caution or reprove gently. According to Paul it is not only the responsibility of the leadership to correct someone that is neglecting their duties to the Lord which is affecting others, it’s everybody’s responsibility. Saint’s we are acting as a peacemaker if we see someone in the body that is beginning to slip away, we need to lovingly bring them to the word to correct their idleness.
	2. **Comfort the fainthearted**: The word “*fainthearted*” means the “little souled” and it describes someone that because of their situation or circumstance has quit coming to church. We have all at times been at the end of their ropes and are struggled in our faith. The word “*comfort*” means to, “***get close and speak tenderly to***.” When we in the body of see someone going through tough stuff we need to get close to them and speak tenderly to them. The first part of this is to get close to them! Far too many times the Church looks like Jobs friends who tried to correct him without getting close to him. This will take discernment on our part as we certainly don’t want to encourage sinful and destructive actions by coming close and speaking tenderly.
	3. **Uphold the week**: The context of the week here is to their spiritual state as being week in the faith to the point that they are not able to stand. The word “*uphold*” means to hold up and carries the idea of **teaching someone to walk by way of having them place their weight on you and lean on your balance**. What a great picture of how to handle someone who can’t stand in their faith yet, you let them put their weight on you and you hold them up in the balance of the “*Word of God and the Spirit of God.*”

 The body is to respond not just the leadership in being a peacemaker. If we all take a role in this the church will continue to be a healthy one.

**III.) Vs. 14b-24 Keys to a Healthy You**

Now Paul moves on to ***seven things to make sure you are healthy with before you can help someone else***.

1. Vs. 14b **BE PATIENT**: Notice that Paul say that they need to be patient “*with all*”. The goal of helping others is to see them grow in the Lord and the most important trait you can possess to be a part of change is patience. We can all try each other’s patience, so before you go deal with someone else you better deal with yourself.
2. Vs. 15 **WATCH YOUR MOTIVES**: Paul says that before we check out others hearts we need to check out our own heart. We are not to render evil for evil when we are dealing with someone that has done us wrong. Instead we need to act in a way that pursues good for both. I have noticed in my own life that it is easy to be right on a situation Biblically, yet behave wrongly.
3. Vs. 16 **BE FULL OF JOY**: The only way this can truly be accomplished is from having a heavenly perspective. When dealing with another person smile, make sure your heart is on the eternal perspective and not just the circumstance.
4. Vs. 17 **PRAY CONTINUALLY**: Be constantly in prayer. The word “*without ceasing”* is used in the Greek to describe a hacking cough that is not always audible. We are to be praying in our heart through the situation. The most important person to be praying for is just as much you as it is the other person!
5. Vs. 18 **GIVE THANKS IN EVERYTHING**: Notice that it does not say “*for*” everything. Paul chooses to say here that a thankful heart in the midst of every situation is Gods will for you. You cannot always thank God “***for***” the situation but you sure can thank Him “***in***” the situation for you know Him..
6. Vs. 19-21 **HOLD ON TO THE WORD**: This was before the Bible was complete in fact the letter we are reading became part of the Bible. Paul warns them not to quench the Spirit of God by despising prophecy. There are two types of prophecies:
	1. ***Foretelling***: Which has to do with the future and no doubt spoke of the soon return of Jesus.

 b.) ***Forth-telling***: Which has to do with speaking the Word of God.

They were not to quench the working of the Word of God through the Spirit of God. Instead they are told to hold fast that which is good. We ought to check out teachers by way of the Word of God and not by whether or not you liked what they had to say. Don’t get mad at the Bible teacher because you are convicted by what they teach because if it is the Bible that is being taught it is designed to hit you between the eyes, so praise the Lord.

1. Vs. 22-24 **BE HOLY**: Paul tells them to keep clear of anything that can be called unholy. In verse 23 he goes on to say that it is God who is the one that has set you apart for His pleasure and that it is His complete end to preserve you cause you to be blameless when you see Him face to face. What a comfort, we are all still in this process of being made more like Him which will only be completed when we are no longer in these bodies. The truth of this folks is not based upon our faithfulness but rather on His, (verse 24)!

**IV.) Vs. 25-28 Prayer, Fellowship, and the Word of Grace**

Vs. 25-28 Paul concludes this letter with this benediction and ***four keys to maintain a healthy church***:

1. Vs. 25 **Prayer**: The greatest thing you can do to insure a healthy Bitterroot Valley Calvary Chapel is pray for the church, one another, and especially the leadership!
2. Vs. 26 **Fellowship**: Back in those days that is how you greeted people that you loved to be with. So Paul is exhorting then to, continue in a love relationship with each other.
3. Vs. 27 **The Word of God**: Here Paul commands that this letter be read to all, because it is the Word of God! Folks, a church that departs from the whole council of the Word will never be healthy no matter how large it gets.
4. Vs. 28 **The Grace of God**: All the above will not work if it is done in the strength of man. Folks, we must always be a church that operates in and through the grace of God!