

I Thess. 1:1 The Finding of a Church

Thessalonica is one of the cities Paul visited during his second missionary journey. And the founding of the church there is recorded in Acts 17. There was much opposition to Paul's preaching, but there was also a great display of the Grace and Power of God. Notice what is said in the last part of **Acts 17:6**. "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."

Planting new churches is an exciting work. But it is also, many times, a difficult task, and will only be accomplished with much patience and hard labor. If a new work is going to grow and glorify the Lord, it must have a proper foundation. Paul says in **I. Cor. 3:10**, "According to the Grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."

This church, according to Acts 17:2,3, **was founded upon the scriptures**, and the **preaching** of Paul; that Jesus is the Christ and Him crucified and resurrected is the hope of the world.

A church also must be **founded with the right people**. Please notice in verse one those who had a part in building this church. Paul, Sylvanus and Timotheus. The three men were:

I. COMPANIONS IN LABOUR: V. 1 (It does matter who your friends are) Let's briefly look at these men...

A. Paul was a man of Grace: (He was gracious because he had been graced. **I Cor. 15:10** "*But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I; but the Grace of God which was with me.*"

1. Grace as a refreshing stream: (which had cleansed the filth of the past and satisfied the burning thirst of an unsatisfied heart.)

2. Grace was a beautiful garment: (It covered all his defects and deformities) (as the garments Glorified and beautified the High Priest, even so was Paul's Grace in the perfection of Christ.)

3. Grace was a mighty power: (Grace was a mighty force that electrified Paul's whole being. It made him strong.)

- a. to suffer
- b. serve
- c. sympathize

B. Paul was a man of Godliness: (The man who knows the Grace of God becomes like the God of Grace.)

1. Godliness prepares the way for usefulness: (God could use Paul because Paul was in touch with God) (A Godly man is one who is walking in habitual communion with God.) (Paul possessed God and God possessed Paul.)

C. Silvanus was a helper: (This title for Silas places him in Great company. Because **Psa. 46:1** says, "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*")

1. He stood with Paul during persecution: Acts 16: "*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God.*" (One man encouraging another.)

2. He was helpful to other believers: Acts 15:32: "*And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.*"

D. Timothy was faithful:

1. Faithful to the word of God: II Cor. 1:19: "*For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.*" (There was no blowing hot and cold air with the same breath.) They did not preach on thing one time, and knock it down the next.

2. Faithful to the work of God: (He was devoted to his work.) **Rom. 16:21:** "*Timotheus my workfellow,*" **I Thess. 3:2:** "*And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ.*"

- a. There was no insubordination.
- b. He was under the control of the Holy Spirit.
- c. He laboured in the yoke of Christ.

In these three men can be seen three Great Graces:

1. The love of God shining upon Paul made him glow with a Holy passion for Christ.
2. Hope like an anchor kept Silas steadfast in his testimony for Christ.
3. Faith like an armor covered Timothy

I. Thess.1:1 The Finding of A Church II

In our last study we looked at the people the Lord used in finding the church at Thessalonica, and the foundation that was laid. Tonight I want to look at the position of the church. Please notice!-----

I. THE CHURCH IN GOD THE FATHER AND IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:

A. Their position: (In God the Father)

1. As His creatures: (They are dependent upon God for their natural life.) Ill. Paul at Athens: **Acts 17:24-28:**
“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being;”

2. As His children: (As creatures we are said to be in God, but as His children, we are “IN GOD THE FATHER.”)

a. We have redemption: Col. 1:13,14: *“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”*

I Peter 1:18,19: *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”*

b. We have relationship: (In God the Father)

1. As Father, He provides: II Peter 1:3:

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness...”

2. As Father, He protects: Psalms 28:7-9 *“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.”*

c. We have a Habitation: Psalm 91:1 *“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”*

d. We have a Home: John 14:2 *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”* (1. Rest) (2. Refreshment)

II. IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: (The full title of the Lord is given here, and this full title connects His authority with His manhood and Glory.)

MANHOOD

A. His Person: (Jesus) We are identified with Him in His manhood. **Hebrews 2:17** *“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”* **V. 16** *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”*

AUTHORITY

B. His Power: (Lord) **Hebrews 7:25** *“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”*

GLORY

C. His Preservation: (Christ) **John 1** *“...sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:”*

D. Our Position: (In the Lord Jesus Christ) **Colossians 3:3** *“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”*

1. We are to yield to His commands

2. We are to yearn for His companionship

E. Our Power: We are in Christ and He in us.) One is the counterpart and consequence of the other; just as the iron being in fire, and so the fire is in the iron.

I. Thess. 1:1 The Finding of A Church

Part III

In our recent studies in verse one, we've mentioned the companions who laboured in the finding of this Church. And the church's position on being in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Tonight I want to look at the couplet of blessings that Paul desires for those in the church at Thessalonica.

“Grace unto you, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul uses these words GRACE and PEACE in all his epistles except Hebrews. And in his letter to Timothy and Titus, he adds the word MERCY, thus forming a trio of blessings that we might say represents **love in action**. For Grace is love bestowing its favors upon the undeserving; Mercy is love receiving the penitent, and Peace is love in communion with the believer.

Please notice how these two blessings are coupled together. Grace and Peace. They are also in the correct order because Grace must always precede Peace. If we **know Grace**, we **know Peace**, but if we have **no Grace**, then we have **no Peace**.

1. Grace is the cause of Peace, and Peace is the result of Grace.
2. Grace is the root of Peace, and Peace is the flower of Grace.
3. The Peace of God is known, as the Grace of God reigns in the heart.
4. Peace is the result of communion with Grace.

NOTE: David Brainerd said, “Filling up our time with and for God is the way to rise up and lie down in Peace.” So filling up our time with God is the way to PEACE.

- A. Keep God in your Business Life.
 - B. Keep God in your Home Life.
 - C. Keep God in your Church Life.
 - D. Keep God in your Social Life.
 - E. Keep God in your Private Life.

5. Peace and sin will not live together: (When Samson slew the lion, there came honey out of it. So by slaying sin, the honey of Peace will run out of it.)

MESSAGE

I. The Power of God's Grace:

A. It removes the barriers of sin that kept God from the sinner; and the sinner from God.

Col. 2:14 *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”*

B. It reconciles the sinner unto God. **II Cor. 5:19** *“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”*

C. It refines the Christian like a fiery furnace refines silver. **Mal. 3:3** *“And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the son of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”*

1. He will burn up all that is **unholy, unhealthy, selfish, pride.** **NOTE:** He is able to make us yield the nine-fold cluster of the Fruit of the Spirit.

II. The Passport of God's Grace. (Gives us the authority to enter the King's Treasury.) **Col. 3:3** *“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*

III. Our Purchased Peace. **Col. 1:20** *“And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.”* **NOTE:** The meaning of the word “peace” is suggestive. It signifies that which binds together. Sin had severed man from God and God in justice must punish sin. So Christ as our Mediator, has the power to meet our **liabilities** and bear our **penalties**.

IV. Our Protecting Peace. **Phil. 4:7** *“And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

A. This peace comes to those who are

1. Not anxious about anything;
2. Prayerful in everything;

3. And thankful for all things
- B. This peace of God will:

1. Keep the heart from fear;
2. The mind from doubts;
3. The thoughts from wandering;
4. The imagination from impurity

V. Our Personified Peace. Eph. 2:14 “*For he is our peace,*” (It’s not merely what we receive, but Whom. It’s not only peace from Christ, but Christ as our peace, that we possess.)

I Thess. 1:2 Pillars In The Church

I want to preach tonight on the thought, “Pillars In The Church.” I am referring to those spiritual endowed gifts that **strengthen, support and stabilize** the church.

We find when Solomon built the temple, he raised up two pillars before it. **II Chr. 3:17** “...one on the right hand and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz.” These pillars are suggestive of strength and beauty.

1. (So there are two things that will give power and ornament to the temple of our being: They are Thankfulness and Prayerfulness.

2. By confiding in God through prayer, we shall be strong in Him.

3. And consecrated to God, we shall surely express our thankfulness to Him.

4. Praise and Prayer are like two buttresses to the Christian life. Prayer is the voice of a quickened one who makes known his petition to God: And Praise is the sacrifice which believers offer up to God for the blessings received and good bestowed.

5. David said in **Psa. 55:17** that he would pray three times a day: “Evening, morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice.”

6. But the Psalmist in **Psa. 119:164** said he would praise the LORD seven times a day: “Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.”

7. Please notice Paul does not praise God for personal blessings; neither are his prayers on his own behalf.

8. He is thanking God for his blessings on other people.

9. Neither is he praying for himself, but others.

a. We can thank God for the gift of Christ. **II Cor. 9:15** “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

b. We can thank God for victory. **I Cor. 15:57** “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

c. We can thank God for triumph. **II Cor. 2:14**

“Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.

1. Thanking God for others is **healthful**. It indicates a good state of the soul.
2. We cannot thank God for the success of others because of jealousy.
3. If we envy the success of others and become jealous, we are out of touch with God! **Ja. 3:16** *“For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.”*
4. Thanking God for others is **helpful**. It is nourishing food for many virtues, and a powerful antidote to many vices.

10. Prayer for others **expresses** a right state of soul in the pleader. (It is difficult to pray for someone and be at odds with them.) **III. Abraham and Lot.**

11. Prayer for others **empowers** and increases our spiritual influence.

12. Prayer for others **expands** our sympathy.

I. They Support The Spirit: II Cor. 1:3,4 (READ) Others can be comforted by our prayers.

III.: Bro. Steve Goolesby: (Sorrowful spirit, broken, grieved, suffering.)

II. They Support The Sick: Ja. 5:13-15 (READ) (He will be saved {delivered} {raised up} {and forgiveness of sins.})

III. They Support The Sitting: Heb. 12:12 “Wherefore lift up the hand which hang down and feeble knees.” **III. Elijah, I Ki. 19**

IV. They Support The Staggering

I Thess. 1:3 Three Graces In One

On last Tuesday night we looked at a three fold blessing in the first chapter of Revelation. Tonight here in Thessalonians we find three Graces that are divinely at work in our hearts to produce Christian service.

Thomas Adams once said, “As the three principal colors of the rainbow – **red** – **yellow** – and **blue** representing **heat, light and purifying power** – supply in their combination all the other colors. So, by a sort of moral analysis, Faith, Hope and Love lie at the foundation or enter into the composition of all other Christian excellencies. (**Faith – Hope – Charity**)

1. **Faith** says I labour in full confidence that I shall finally accomplish all that I would.
2. **Love** says I delight in my work and therefore will not slacken in my efforts until I secure all I desire.
3. **Hope** says I can wait patiently for all I joyfully anticipate.
 - a. Faith looks Back
 - b. Love looks Up
 - c. Hope looks Out
 - d. Faith is a **telescope** that enables us to see the unseen realities of the Kingdom.
 - e. Love is the **tie** that binds us to our Lord with cords that are stronger than death.
 - f. Hope is the **traction** that causes us to live as strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
 - g. Faith makes us **work: Ja. 2:18**
 - h. Love makes us **willing: II Cor. 5:14**
 - i. Hope makes us **wait: I Thess. 1:10**

NOTE: These three virtues are the activity of Grace within us.

First of all I see in this verse:

I. The Ministry of the Church: (Your work of faith.)

A. Faith and Works Are Inseparable: Ja. 2:18 *“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”*

1. Our works give **evidence** to our faith.

2. The ministry at work **edifies** the body of Christ.

Eph. 4:11,12 *“And he gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”*

3. Our works are **examined** by the Lord:

Rev. 2:2 *“I know thy works”* Ephesus

Rev. 2:9 *“I know thy works”* Smyrna

Rev. 2:13 *“I know thy works”* Pergamos

Rev. 2:19 *“I know thy works”* Thyatira

Rev. 3:1 *“I know thy works”* Sardis

Rev. 3:8 *“I know thy works”* Philadelphia

Rev. 3:15 *“I know thy works”* Laodicea

II. The Master In The Center: (Labour of Love)

NOTE: Please notice where Love is positioned here. Right between Faith and Hope. Faith and works is an earthly thing. Hope is a Heavenly thing. And Love is right between the two as a mediator and intercessor, just like Jesus.

A. His Love For Us Is the Motivating Factor: I Jn. 3:10

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation (mercy seat) for our sins.

II Cor. 5:14 *“For the love of Christ constraineth us.”*

NOTE: Please notice the word “work” refers to our occupation, while the word “labour” means task or hard work.

1. The efforts of our love: (Puts itself to inconvenience for the sake of others.) **Illus.: A certain Samaritan.**

2. The eagerness of our love

3. The effects of our love

4. The enemy of our love: (a cold heart)

5. The expectation of our love: (Do we labor and not expect to reap?) **II Thess. 3:13** *“But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.”*

III. The Marvel of His Coming: (Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ)

A. His Appearing: Tit. 2:13 *“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”*

B. Our Appearance: I Jn. 3:2 *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

I Thess. 1:4,5 NAILING IT DOWN

I believe we can faithfully and truthfully say, that both Paul, and the believers at Thessalonica, had made their calling and election sure. If all we had were the verses before us, it would be sufficient evidence to prove that point. But every verse in the chapter seems to be attached to the previous verse, making them a string of priceless pearls, leading us up to verse 10 where they are waiting with great patience, the return of the Son of God. They're giving evidence to their perseverance of the faith. They were steadfast and unmovable in the work of God.

In verse 4, Paul said, **“knowing.”** They have personal knowledge and assurance of their election. This they had because of two things:

1. Their reception to the gospel: **vs. 5-6**
2. their responsibility to the gospel: **v. 6 and following.**

The second word in our string of pearls is **“brethren.”** This word indicates union by birth. Paul recognizes and realizes their spiritual relationship.

Then that lovely word, **“beloved.”** A very endearing word denoting affection and acceptance.

Eph. 1:6 *“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”*

We finally come to the word of decision, **“election.”** This word and its form is used several times in the scriptures and means basically the same in each place: to be chosen or selected: **(How are men elected) Neg.**

1. Not by natural means. (It is supernatural.)
2. Not by the power of man's will. (Nor of the will of men.)
3. Not by the efforts of man's works: **Jn. 1:13** *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

The answer is found in verse five, ***“For our gospel came,”*** **Men are called or elected by the gospel.**

II Thess. 1:13, 14 *“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath*

from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul’s knowledge of God’s electing Grace in these believers’ lives can be summed up this way:

1. By his own consciousness, by the manner in which the Holy ghost accompanies the Gospel.
2. By the conduct of those who profess to receive the Christ of the gospel.

I. The Matter of the Message: (Our Gospel)

A. Is the Gospel (verse 5) *Illus.: Paul at Thessalonica. Acts 17:2,3 “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.”*

1. He used the scriptures:
 - a. Opening: to open thoroughly (as a firstborn – pure and precious)
 - b. Alleging: to place alongside food or truth

NOTE: He opened the scriptures as we would a jar of food, and fed them Jesus.

2. He used Christ’s suffering
3. He used the Son (Jesus the Christ)

(Nothing but the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.)

II. The Manner of the Message

A. In Word (Not in word only) **Col. 1:5** *“For the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof ye heard before in the world of the truth of the gospel.”*

1. It was preached faithfully: NOTE: But it came not in word only, but in Power. (Unless the Spirit of God accompanies the Word of God, to render it effectual by His Power, it will be to us a dead letter; and the letter killeth, it is the spirit that giveth life.)

B. In Power: Def: To be able or possible

1. It was preached firmly (with great unction). **Acts 1:8** *“But ye shall receive power.” (Both words the same.)*

NOTE: Paul was called, commissioned and charged by the Holy ghost.

C. In the Holy Ghost

1. It was preached fervently. (It is the eternal Spirit who moves upon the chaos and darkness caused by sin, and brings order and light.

a. **As the Spirit of Power** He draws the unsaved to the Lamb of God.

b. **As the Spirit of Revelation** He is the eye-salve to remove the blindness of the heart.

c. **As the Spirit of Truth** He strikes the sinner with conviction and causes him to fear God because of his sin.

D. In Much Assurance

1. It was preached fully. **Rom. 15:18, 19** *“For I will not dare speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, (ih LIHR ih kuhm) I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”*

a. We have full assurance of understanding: **Col. 2:2**

b. We have full assurance of Hope: **Heb. 6:11**

c. We have full assurance of Faith: **Heb. 10:22**

NOTE: doubt paralyzes. God cannot work through a man in whose soul there is misgivings about the truth.

III. The Man Who Brought The Message

(“As ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”

I. Thess. 1:6-10 The Evidence of Conversion

The verses in our text reveal some of the clearest marks of conversion that can be found in the Bible. According to verse five, Paul had very effectively preached the Gospel to these believers. It had come to them in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.

Immediately the marks of the cross were visible in the lives of these young converts. They had found the truth and the truth had set them free from sin. They had begun a race that would lead through many dangers, toils and snares. But the ultimate reward would be worth every mile of the trip.

I. They Became Followers: v. 6

A. Of the Apostles: (US) Illus.: **Paul – I. Cor. 11:1**
“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”

B. Under Christ’s Authority: (And of the LORD.) **Jn. 10:3,4** *“But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”* **Jn. 10:27** *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:”*

C. Through Much Affliction:

1. Internal anguish: (Because of sin.)
2. External persecution (One of the greatest illustrations in all the Bible to prove these points is found in the life of David.) (Persecuted from without by Saul and Ahithophel, and trouble from within by sin and discouragement.) **But: Jn. 16:33** *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have the world.”* **I Jn. 4:4:** *“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: (**false prophets and the spirit of antichrist**) because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”*

D. With Great Joy: v.6 (There is no greater joy than to follow Christ in our life.) **Eccl. 9:7** *“...eat thy bread with joy...”*

Is. 12:3 “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

Is. 35:10 “...songs and everlasting joy...”

Jer. 15:16 “...thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.”

Job 20:5 ...”the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?”

II. They Became Leaders v. 7 (Ensamples)

NOTE: You will never learn to lead until you have learned to follow:

A. In The Faith: v. 7 (Ensamples to all that believe.)

1. They set a standard of lifestyle. (Illus.: Mrs. Hall and the woman at Curves.)

2. They had great devotion, dedication and determination for Christ.

3. Their love for one another abounded.

B. In The Family: (They became real parental role models.)

1. Wives were submissive: **Eph. 5:22** “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”

2. Husbands loved their wives: **Eph. 5:25** “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”

3. Children were obedient: **Eph. 6:1** “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”

1. Is safety and support: **Illus. Abigail and David.**

I. Sam. 25:28 “I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.”

III. They Became Witnesses: v. 8 “From you sounded out the word of the Lord.”

A. They Sounded Out As An Echo:

NOTE: Like the shot that was heard around the world; Revolutionary war – Lexington or Concord.