

THE GOSPEL AND ITS BENEFITS

The Gospel Difference, 1 Thessalonians 1:3-10

April 16, 2023

*We continually remember before our God and Father
your work produced by faith, you labor prompted by love,
and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus.
For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,
because our gospel came to you not simply with words,
but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.
Colossians 1:6*

Why not?

Paul, Silas and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you

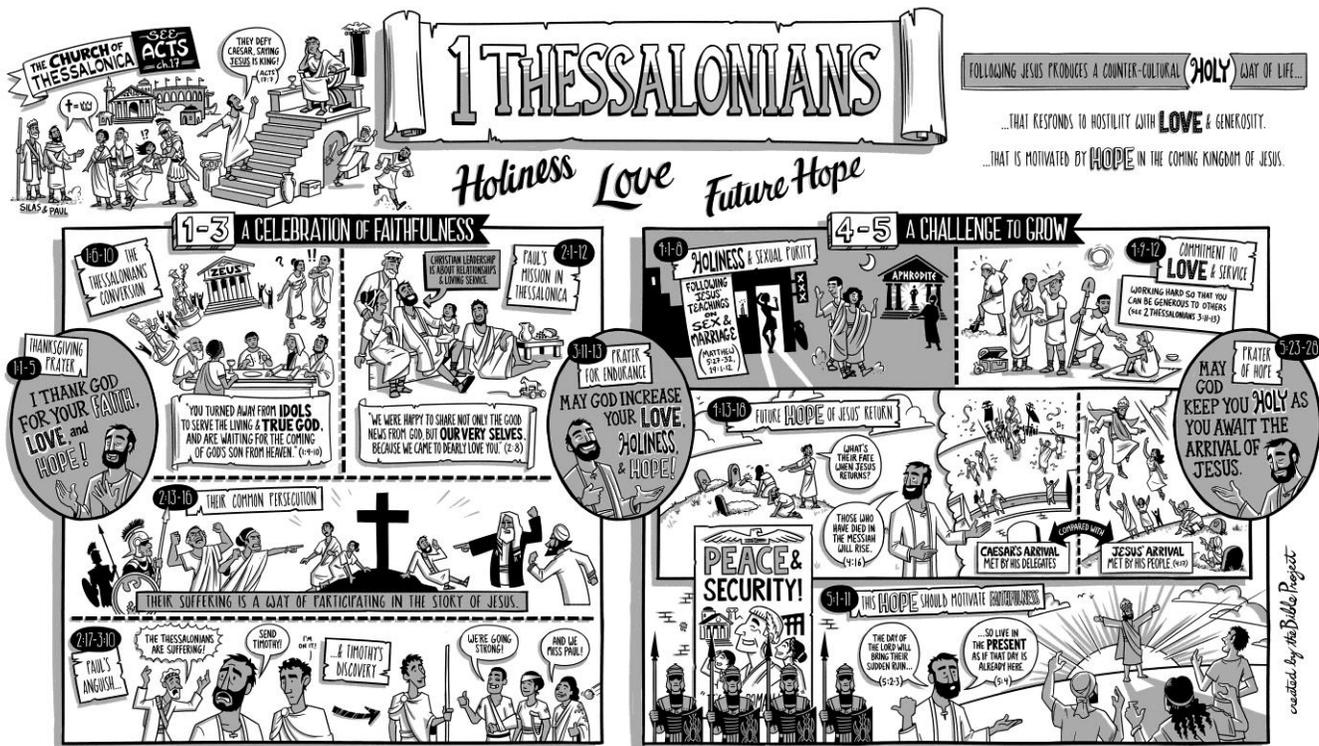
² *We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.* ³ *We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

⁴ *For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,* ⁵ *because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.* ⁶ *You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.* ⁷ *And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.* ⁸ *The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,* ⁹ *for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,* ¹⁰ *and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.*

1 Thessalonians 1

Some have suggested

1. that Paul could not have sounded so “Paulish” this early in his writing. Why not?
2. that the Thessalonians could not yet have experienced “severe suffering.” Why not?
3. that the Thessalonians could not have in four months “become known everywhere.” Why not?
4. that Paul’s teaching about the second coming is too well developed. Why not?



How the cross and resurrection changed the gospel

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”
Mark 15:37-47

When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” he said. ⁴ Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

Acts 17 (see also the important sermons in Acts: 2:14-39, 4:8-12, maybe most importantly 13:16-41, 17:22-31, and the New Testament sermon-epistles)

1. The “good news” has always been that God is breaking into this broken world, but this time is going to be different – God himself is breaking in!
2. The early church made the cross and resurrection the center of their “God is breaking in” story
3. Every chapter in this letter touches on the second coming, the cross, the resurrection and how these build the faith, hope and love of the Thessalonian church

Because the gospel came to us

⁴ For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.

1 Thessalonians 1

1. Not only with words

¹³ And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2

2. Power, the Holy Spirit and a new kind of conviction is the foundation of a transformed life

They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

1 Thessalonians 1 (see Romans 12:1-2;

3. Now is when we talk about how the second coming, the resurrection and the cross

“Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. ²⁷ The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. ²⁸ Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹ When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

³² “We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus

³⁸ “Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.

Acts 13:26-38

4. This gospel makes Paul, Silas and Timothy so sure about God’s love and our election

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hebrews 13

Resources for reading 1 Thessalonians

The poster for 1 Thessalonians can be found at bibleproject.com

Doug's favorite 1 Thessalonians commentaries include

Charles Wannamaker's NIGTC volume (Eerdmans, 1990)

Hendricksen's *Expository Commentary* (Baker, 1955)

Robert Thomas' volume in *Expositors' Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1981)

John MacArthur has a very interesting sermon, "The Ideal Church" at <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/1317A>

Spurgeon has important sermons on this text at www.spurgeongems.org/vols10-12/chs648.pdf ,
<http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols28-30/chs1806.pdf> and www.spurgeongems.org/vols34-36/chs2076.pdf

Alexander Maclaren has commentary on 1 Thessalonians 1 at

https://www.preceptaustin.org/maclaren_on_1thessalonians#faith

Thomas Schreiner has a wonderful essay on the optimism in 1 Thessalonians at

http://www.sbts.edu/documents/tschreiner/3.3_editorial.pdf

R. M. McCheyne has a wonderful short piece on this text at <https://www.monergism.com/gospel-not-word-power-1-thessalonians-15>