

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace [a]from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, 4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. 8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. 9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God



THE FOUNDATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IS THE GOSPEL

- A. The Thessalonian church is a pristine example of an evangelistic church
- B. Evangelism was paramount then and is still paramount today



THE THESSALONIANS EVANGELIZED IN THE MIDST OF A DEPRAVED CULTURE

- A. The Greeks and Romans were polytheistic
 - i. They believed in many gods
 - ii. They believed they needed to keep these gods appeased to keep calamity at bay
- B. They worshipped Caesar as a god
- C. Immorality was rampant
- D. Christianity was illegal



IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, PAUL PREACHES THE GOSPEL

- A. Paul preached for three days at the synagogue
- B. Disbelieving Jews stirred up riots against him
- C. Others however, believed



PAUL DISCIPLES HIS NEW CONVERTS IN THE TRUTHS OF THE KINGDOM

- A. Ecclesia
 - i. The Greek word for church is ecclesia (1 Thessalonians 1:1)
 - ii. Romans used the word as a body of men who discussed the politics of the day
 - iii. By using the word ecclesia, Paul establishes a new governmental order
 - iv. This brought great cultural contrast to this Roman outpost city.



PAUL DISCIPLES HIS NEW CONVERTS IN THE TRUTHS OF THE KINGDOM

B. Kyrios

- i. The Greek word for Lord is Kyrios (1 Thessalonians 1:1)
- ii. It meant Supreme Master
- iii. Paul used this word for Jesus
- iv. The Romans used this word for Caesar
- v. To call Jesus Lord would have meant a sentence of treason in Rome
- vi. This cannot be overlooked. The use of ecclesia and Kyrios would speak volumes to the Romans. Paul is establishing a new government and a new king which should have provoked great persecution.
 - a. What Paul would go on to say communicates to us why he wasn't martyred at that very moment. There was a release of signs of wonders. People were getting healed. Blind eyes were being opened. Instead of the Romans arresting him, they noticed the miracles and left him alone.



PAUL PREACHED WITH SIGNS AND WONDERS (1 THESSALONIANS 1:5)

A. *Our gospel came to you not in word only, but in power. This is how we know your election is sure.*

- a. Paul is not talking about predestination.
- b. He is saying this is evidence that you have received salvation ii. Paul's message came in power.
- a. Dunamis—signs and wonders.
- iii. The message the Thessalonians received came with power.
 - a. It wasn't through hearing a communicative word.
 - b. It wasn't through believing a specific theology.
 - c. It was through the empowerment of the spirit: signs, wonders, miracles, and the presence of the Holy Spirit was made manifest.
 - d. It cannot be understated that this is the reason that Paul was not martyred by the Roman guard in that very moment as he proclaimed a king, other than Caesar, whose name was Jesus.
- iv. The message the Thessalonians received came with deep conviction
 - a. It brought transformation.



THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH MODELS PAUL'S (AND JESUS'S) EXAMPLE (1THESSALONIANS 1:6)

A. *The Thessalonian church became imitators of Paul*

- i. What did they imitate?
 - a. They imitated Paul's sacrificial life to proclaim the gospel
 - b. They risked the loss of their own life and sacrificed tremendously to preach the kerygmatic gospel. Therefore, they spread all throughout Thessalonica the message of a king other than Caesar and a government other than Rome
 - c. Being true to this proclamation, miracles followed their witness as well.

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THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH MODELS PAUL'S (AND JESUS'S) EXAMPLE (1THESSALONIANS 1:6)

- B. *The gravity of their example was likened to a permanent mark of dye. Once dye is added to clothing material, it cannot be washed out or scrubbed away. It is permanent. This church was leaving a permanent mark on the society in which they were evangelizing as well as reproducing themselves in every believer in the region. (1 Thessalonians 1:7)*
- i. The word example could also mean model
 - a. Tupos – to mark with a dye, or to strike a blow upon metalii. They became examples to their entire region
 - a. Macedonia
 - b. Achaia
 - iii. They literally imprinted their understanding of how to witness on other young Christians
 - a. Proclaiming the gospel
 - b. Demonstrating signs and wonders
 - iv. The early churches that Paul established were evangelistic centers that were fueled by the same power in which they came to Christ

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THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH TODAY

- A. *This is the model given to the New Testament church today i. They had a specific message (the gospel)*
 - ii. They demonstrated that message in power
 - iii. They all worked together
- B. Our culture is much like the Greco-Roman world
 - i. Immorality rules the day
 - ii. Explicit drug use is rampant
 - iii. There is an alarming hatred toward God rising

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WE CAN WIN OUR COMMUNITIES FOR CHRIST!

- A. *Where they faced persecution and martyrdom—we have freedom*
- B. *We must not be intimidated by our culture*
- C. *May we make Jesus known*
 - i. The fullness of the gospel
- D. *May we not back off from demonstrating the power of the gospel through signs and wonders.*