



1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Why look at 1 Thess? Because it is a letter from a concerned, loving pastor to the young Christians in Thessalonica. It reveals the heart of the apostle for God's church and therefore God's heart for his church also.

Who is Paul writing to? Young Christians in a church he helped to start (see Acts 17).

Why is he writing? To encourage the church to stand firm in the face of persecution, to make progress in their faith and to wait for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Designer clothes carry the mark of their maker so that he can take credit for his work. Whose mark is on the Thessalonian church? Who takes the credit? It is all thanks to God (1 Thess 1:2).

Thank God for a working church

Paul thanks God they are a working church. This is the first mention of faith, love and hope. Like three legs of a stool, they need to be balanced and strong. Faith makes us humble workers, love makes us motivated workers, hope makes us persevering workers.

There is a reward for God's workers (Heb 6:10-11)

Thank God for an assured church

To help his friends be assured of God's work among them, he asks them to look back at what happened when the gospel was preached. If God hadn't been at work, there would be no church (Eph 2:1-10).

They are people that God has chosen (John 15:16). They are people that God enabled to respond (1:6 "welcomed the message, 1:9 "turned to God")

They began to live differently, like the Lord Jesus (1:6). Thank God he assures his people – conversion, changed lives, willingness to suffer, holiness, listening to God (John 10:17-30)

Thank God for a witnessing church

You have an impact on others, either for good or bad. This church became known and became a model to others.

The message rang out like the sound of a bell or the blast of a trumpet. What is the message? Gospel of his saving grace. Matt 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8.

Thank God for a transformed church

They were transformed from idol worshippers to God-servers. Futility of idols is all over the bible (Ps 115:4-8). Thank God he transforms our lives. He gives us new allegiance, new priorities, new focus and a new hope (the return of Christ).

Thank God for working, assured, witnessing, transformed churches. Pray that your church might be like this!



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