

I A Church to Imitate

1 Thessalonians 1

A church takes a risk when it imitates other churches

- Some imitation is good – 1 Th.2:14
- We should imitate Thessalonians – 1 Th.1:7



Acts 17
(2nd journey)
AD 51
Paul received
gifts: Ph.4:15f

1: in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

- “Lord”: Jehovah in OT
- “Christ”: anointed one [*prophet, priest, king*]
- No higher view can be taken of Christ
 - Grace: favor, kindness, God’s gifts (1);
Gn.6:8
 - Peace: prosperity, wholeness. 2 K.4:26

2: thanks to God for you (**without ceasing**)
or (**without ceasing**) remembering (v.3)

- NKJV: making mention of you in our prayers,
3 remembering **without ceasing** your work of
faith [also ASV; NASB; NRSV; NIV]
- ESV: 2 **constantly** mentioning you in our
prayers, 3 remembering before our God and
Father your work of faith
 - Praising God for them also praises them

3: Lord Jesus Christ (v.1-3)

- Remembering . . .
 - Work of faith – faith works
 - Labor of love – love toils
 - Patience of hope – hope endures

4: knowing...

- Lead verb (2): “give thanks”
 - Your election by God (2 Th.2:13)
 - 2 Pt.1¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - 2 Th.2:14 . . . Mt.22:1-14

5-6: how did Paul know they were elect?

5: For... (gospel) ... not in **word** only ... in **power** and **Holy Spirit** ... in much **assurance**

- Ac.17:1-4, some Jews & Greeks believed
- Ac.17:5-8, other Jews & Greeks rejected
- 1 Th.2:14-16, Jews tried to hide gospel...

5-6: how did Paul know they were elect?

5a-6: you became imitators of us and Lord...
having received the word . . .

– 1 Th.2:13

– Hb.6:11; 10:22

7: you became examples

- Model, pattern. (2 Th.3:9)
- Macedonia (N. Greece)
- Achaia (S. Greece)
- Who believe (t.t.: Christians, Ac.2:44)

“First they followed their preachers as a living pattern or example ... they in turn became an example, a pattern for the imitation of other churches” – Eadie

8: for from you...

- Local church taught locally and universally
[Macedonia / Achaia ... AND every place]
 - Receivers (6) become transmitters (8)
 - Sounded forth: of trumpet, roll of thunder –
from Thessalonica to Greece to the world
- 2 Co.8:1-2

9-10: reports of the kind of visit we made
and your response to the gospel

- **Turned** to God from idols [change direction]
- **Serve** the living and true God [all of life is redirected]
- **Wait** for His Son from heaven [ready for His coming, 4:16]

I. Work Of Faith, 3

(The work that faith accomplishes)

What is faith?

- Gn.4, Abel . . . Hb.11:4 / Ro.10:17
 - Based on the Word of God
 - Faith does . . .
- 1. What God says: Lv.10, unauthorized fire is not safe.
- 2. Way God says: 1 Chr.15, cart worked but not God's way.
- 3. Why God says: Ac.19:1-7, immersed, but in John's baptism.

Paul commends their work of faith

Implies the Word

1. Directed them, 6. 1 Pt.4:11
2. Dwelled in them, 8. (Influence)
3. Defined them, 8. People associated them with the gospel.
4. Detached them, 9-10. Turned to God, from idols...

Paul commends their work of faith

4. Detached them, 9-10.

- False religions use gimmicks. 1 K.12
- Walking by faith (Ro.10:17; 2 Co.5:7)

I. Work Of Faith, 3

II. Labor Of Love, 3

(The effort that love produces)

Labor

- “To engage in activity that is burdensome, work, labor, toil” (BDAG). Ga.5:6.
- But 1 Jn.5:3, not burdensome??
 - Song of Sol.8:7
 - Jacob, Gn.19:18, 20
 - Laban, Gn.31:38-42

Same actions, same time, different attitudes.
When love is the motive, labor is light.

Labor

- “To engage in activity that is burdensome, work, labor, toil” (BDAG). Ga.5:6.
 - Jn.14:15, real love obeys
 - Jn.15:12, love is unselfish
- Churches talk about love, then offer naïve people a false gospel.

I. Work Of Faith, 3

II. Labor Of Love, 3

III. Patience Of Hope, 3

(The endurance that hope inspires)

Patience keeps on going.

- “Hope is golden” – Homer.
- Ancients stressed importance of hope (though they had no foundation for it).
- Human hope cannot deliver.

“Other men see only a hopeless end, but the Christian rejoices in an endless hope” (Beenken)

- Lord gives true hope. Tit.1:2.

True hope focuses on Christ and His coming

- Tit.2:12, hope desires and expects life
- 1 Th.2:19, hope for salvation of brothers
- 1 Th.4:13, hope for the dead
- 1 Th.5:8, hope for salvation
 - Hope: “endurance under trial.”

I. Work Of Faith, 3

II. Labor Of Love, 3

III. Patience Of Hope, 3

IV. Result: become example to all

Their example

- Preaching gospel, 7
- Edification, 5:11
- Benevolence when necessary. 2 Co.8

Expecting the Son (10)

(Getting ready for Christ)

- Excitement, 8. [Explains work ethic]
- Example, 7. [People are watching us]
- Evangelism, 8. [Want others to be ready]
- Earnestness, 9-10.