

I. Intro/Review

- A. We are in a teaching series on 1st Thessalonians. We are going verse-by-verse through the entire book as a teaching team. Last week, Renae introduced this series.

II. Verse-by-Verse

A. Greeting - (1 Thess. 1:1)

1. “To the Church” - The Greek word translated “church” is ecclesia. This word refers to any formal gathering or group of like minded individuals. What makes this ecclesia special is that it's in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. “Grace and Peace” - Charis – God’s undeserved favor and blessings on you. Shalom – God’s peace, wholeness, and completeness on you.

B. Three Marks of a Genuine Kingdom People (1 Thess. 1:2-3)

1. Work of Faith - Paul points out that he has joy and thankfulness in his prayers for the Thessalonians because he could see the fruit of their faith in their actions and character, not just in their confession. This truth is an absolute bedrock of apostolic teaching and understanding. True faith automatically produces true works of righteousness in one's life.
2. Labor of Love - Though it is the same in kind, the difference between the love that unrenewed man loves with and the love God loves with is vast. One of those differences is that God’s love provokes us to labor through the things which hinder love, and to love regardless of the outcome or reciprocation of love back to us.
3. Persevering Hope - The final marker that Paul gives that causes him to have joy and thankfulness for the church of Thessalonica is they have a true hope in the future promises of God. This hope is so true to them that it causes them to persevere through difficulty and suffering victoriously without diminishing their joy, love, and faith.

C. He First Loved Us. The Foundation of Relationship and its Fruit (1 Thess. 1:4-7)

1. Beloved Brothers and Sisters - Paul now reminds them of, and shores them up on, the pinnacle truth of our relationship with God that keeps us pure and steady in our hearts towards Him. We are and were the beloved from eternity past. He first loved us when we were His enemies. On our worst day of sin, He chose us in Himself to be pure and blameless before Him. Paul tells them they can know this to be true because of the living proof of the giving and work of the Holy Spirit to men who believe.
 1. Proof 1 - The gospel came to them with the tangible power of God in the Holy Spirit, both internally and externally before they believed.
 2. Proof 2 - The Spirit empowered them through faith and in faith to have supernatural love and hope so powerfully that they became imitators of other disciples and of God.
 3. Proof 3 - They were able, through the Spirit, to receive the ongoing revelation of God in the midst of affliction and suffering. Their supernatural ability to endure persecution and suffering with joy and victorious faith, hope, and love caused them to be known and make Jesus known throughout all Macedonia and Achaia.

D. The Internal and External Love Empowered Witness of a Kingdom People (1 Thess. 1:8)

1. The Clearest Most Powerful Testimony of Truth - The Spirit empowered witness of a kingdom people sounds out and speaks for itself. The internal realities manifested outwardly of those who are in God is the strategy God chose through which He will make Jesus known in every nation. There is no substitute or more effective strategy to the Gospel going forward than transformed kingdom people doing life in the presence of the untransformed world.
2. The Spirit Wages War on Sin - As James said, "I will show you my faith by my works." A kingdom citizen indwelt by the Holy Spirit finds themselves in a wild new reality where the sinful things that they once desired and did now brings contempt and disgust to the heart. This does

not mean instant freedom and disengagement with sinful thoughts or actions.

It does mean an instant and ongoing internal battle with sin that carries with it the power and hope to overcome it. Day by day, believers in Christ filled with the Spirit live a victorious life over the flesh that is evident to themselves and to all that know them. The truest tell of the evidence of this reality is not simply the refraining from sin but the serving of the living God.

3. They Wait for Jesus' Return - The final thing that Paul recognizes as a clear witness to the nations is that a true kingdom people put all their hope into the promise of the coming King. When one begins to live for a coming kingdom instead of building their own, it is a clear sign of both their true belief and a transformational supernatural shift in natural humanity.
 1. Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come - Many proponents of the pretribulation rapture will use this verse as an explicit proof text for the pretribulation rapture view. The Greek word translated wrath is "*orgē*" which is found 36 times in the New Testament. When speaking of God's wrath against sin, it is referring to His deep seated and permanent holy opposition to sin that destroys His creation or rebels against His character. In foundational theological passages like Romans 1:18, *orgē* is described as an ongoing, cosmic reality, not of a single moment in time. In other words, to use this passage and explicitly teach that it is referring to a singular moment of time just before the return of Jesus is short sighted at best and just plain wrong at worst.

III. Summary Points

A. 3 Primary Marks of a Kingdom People

1. Faith
2. Hope
3. Love

- B. The Pinnacle Foundational Truth of our Relationship with God is that He First Loved Us. This is not just proven by scripture but also by the way in which we were saved.

1. He came to us in witness of both knowledge and undeniable power.
2. He indwelt us with the Holy Spirit the moment we believed.
3. He works righteousness in us unto the measure and stature of Christ increasingly after we believe. This is so complete that we are able to suffer for righteousness with joy and unfaltering faith.

C. The most powerful and effective witness of the truth of the coming King and His Kingdom is a Kingdom people who live out the lifestyle, character, and realities of the coming Kingdom and wait for it with perseverance.

“Everybody asked, ‘Why, what has happened to these Thessalonians? These people have broken their idols: they worship the one God; they trust in Jesus. They are no longer drunken, dishonest, impure, contentious.’ Everybody talked of what had taken place among these converted people. Oh, for conversions, plentiful, clear, singular, and manifest; that so the word of God may sound out! Our converts are our best advertisements and arguments.” (Spurgeon)