schools—thrive on building a community that loves being together. That looks forward **expectantly** to every opportunity to gather together.

**1TH 1.9-10** ~ *For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and 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 delivers us from the wrath to come.*

**EX:** The Thessalonians didn’t just worship out of habit. They didn’t just gather together out of ritual. They gathered together happily as **an expectant people**—every time they gathered they looked forward, excitedly, to the **second coming of Christ**.

**AP: Are we the same? Is church just a place we go and a thing we do? Or is it who we are?** Our closest relationships and our greatest excitement should come from the gathering. And our greatest hope and eye should be towards the return of Christ!

**1PT 1.3-9** ~ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,****4****to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,****5****who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.****6****In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,****7****so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.****8****Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,****9****obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

**CONCLUSION**

**ILL—Moving to TN** (once I met Erin and decided to move to TN, everything changed; I wasn’t planning on being an Illinoian in TN anymore; I was going to actually be a Tennessean!) And that meant something—I had to collect all the paperwork—get a new license and license plate. And I had to change how I filed taxes (needless to say, that was a welcome change)!

When we become Christians, we aren’t simply taking on a title. We aren’t simply choosing to occasionally dedicate some of our time to Christ and His church. We are to completely change—we are to become an **elect**, **exemplary**, **enthusiastic**, and **expectant** people!

**1PT 2.9-12** ~ *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.****10****Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.* ***11****Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.****12****Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*

**INVITATION**

#481 [EXP-NTPE] **Who are We?** 1TH 1.1-10

01/23/2023 PC \_\_ Pchd

**QUESTION:** What should Christ’s church be like?

**TRN TO 1TH 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

**ILL—Trouble of IL Residency** (moved to TN, initially, in 1998 for college; kept IL residency; wasn’t a big problem, until it came time to vote; ran into all sorts of trouble trying to vote remotely) After that November, I was frustrated, but I guess it made sense. While I lived in while I was in college, I still thought of myself as an Illinoisan. I still planned to live in IL. So, it really didn’t make sense to change anything. I didn’t really view myself as a Tennessean—I was a northerner, down to the bone. I wanted to live among Tennesseans while still being a northerner—a **“Yankee”**.

**BACKGROUND**

**THESSALONICA/History/Current City and Origin of Church**

The Thessalonian church was one of the rare congregations that largely had their stuff together. And so, in many ways, these letters are letters of encouragement. Paul pointed to the Thessalonians as an example of the kind of people to be—the kind of church to emulate.

Today, many people take on the name of Christian—but they don’t take on the image of one. Instead, they’re like me—living among Tennesseans, but not actually being a Tennessean. But that isn’t how God desires us to be: in the world and of the world—rather, He said, *“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.*[***16***](http://biblehub.com/john/17-16.htm)*They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”* **(JN 17.15-16)**

We know what it means to be a northerner, a southerner, a Tennessean or Illinoian. **But do we know what it means to be a Christian? What should Christ’s church be like? Who are we?** For the answer, we turn to Paul’s word to the best example of the 1st Century church in **1TH 1.**

**BD1: An Elect People (vs.1-4)**

**ILL—Getting the Kids in Private School** (decided with the changes we’re seeing in the culture, we needed to send them to a private school; we budgeted, but then we were told that they needed to review the kids to see if they’d approve them) This surprised me at first! After all, I’m used to public schools; if you live in the right area, you make the cut! But then I realized—the school wanted to cultivate a particular culture—they wanted to be made up of **an elect people**.

**1TH 1.1-4** ~ *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.* ***2****We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,****3****remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.****4****For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,*

**EX:** What an amazing message this would be to the people of Thessalonica. After all, they were used to the idea of the Jewish people being God’s chosen people. **But that didn’t apply to them, right?**

**AC 15.16-17** ~ *“‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it,* ***17****that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things****18****known from of old.’*

Paul revealed that, just as God had chosen the Jewish nation, now, he had chosen His church! This didn’t mean that God chose Paul, and not Herod, individually. This didn’t mean that they didn’t have a say in the matter. But just as God’s people in the Jewish nation were special and **elect**, so were the people in His Church!

**EH 1.3-6** ~ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,****4****even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love****5****he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,****6****to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

**AP:** How encouraging this is to all of us! We aren’t just an afterthought—an add on after the Jewish people rejected Christ. Instead, we are a part of God’s divine plan—adopted into His family through Christ! The church isn’t made up from the people that we choose—but rather, the people that God has chosen—people who show their love for Him in their obedience of His word.

**JN 14.15** ~ *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*

**BD2: An Exemplary People (vs. 5-7)**

**ILL—Applying to the Music School at ISU** (I’ve always loved music; thought I might be a music teacher; ISU was known for their education program) So, I went down, planned out my audition, and I completely bombed it. Needless to say, I didn’t selected. They were only interested in the best of the best—an **exemplary people**.

**1TH 1.5-7** ~ *because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.****6****And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,****7****so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.*

**EX:** Here, Paul points out how **exemplary** the people of God were intended to be. It wasn’t enough to just bear the name of Christ—both Paul and the rest of the evangelist team were **exemplary** in their faith and dedication. And wonderfully, the church in Thessalonica copied that:

**1TH 2.13** ~ *And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.*

We may not be the best singers here. We may not always have the best lessons. But as a people, Christ’s church is expected to be made up of **the best of the best**—people who are trying their hardest in all they do. In their worship, in their education, and in their service! We wouldn’t accept someone as a coworker who was only giving 10% or 20% of their best effort. The same is true of one another in the work of God—we need to be giving it our all!

**2CR 8.1-8** ~ *We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia,****2****for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.****3****For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord,****4****begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—****5****and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.****6****Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace.****7****But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.* ***8****I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine.*

**AP:** The Macedonian churches here—that included the Thessalonians. They were an example in everything—how they served, how they loved, how they gave. They lived as an **exemplary people**—and that’s what God expects of all people in His church!

**2TM 3.12-15** ~ *Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,****13****while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.****14****But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it****15****and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

**BD3: An Enthusiastic People (vs. 8)**

**ILL—Alumni Organizations** (every few months, I get something from Freed and Union; they’re looking for people who want to “share the good news” of the school) The fact is, the school grows best when people who went there proclaim the good news about it. The school is looking to cultivate **an enthusiastic people**. And the same is sought of His church!

**1TH 1.8** ~ *For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.*

**EX:** You couldn’t walk the streets of Macedonia and Achaia without hearing about the church in Thessalonica. They were excited and **enthusiastic** to spread the word of God. They loved to tell everyone about what God had done for them. They loved to tell the story and spread the message of their church home.

**AP: Is this true about us? Are we excited at the idea to proclaim the message about the church and about His gospel? Do we jump at the change to invite and to proclaim? Or do we hide?**

**RM 12.11-12** ~ *Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.****12****Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.*

**BD4: An Expectant People (vs. 9-10)**

**ILL—Opening Day** (recently had a ribbon cutting; I wish I could have been there; it’s fun to get together with the families; over time, we all become close--friends) That’s by design! Small schools—whether talking about colleges or primary