

Lessons From I Thessalonians

An Example To The Rest

(I Th 1:6-10)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of “Lessons From I Thessalonians.”
 - a. Last week we looked at “Chosen By God.”
 - i. We examined how God chose us to be His children.
 - b. This week we are going to look at how the church in Thessalonica was “An Example To The Rest” of us.
 - a. **I Th 1:6-10** “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. 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. 9 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.”¹
3. The congregation here in Ramona can and should learn from the other congregations we read about in the Scriptures.
 - a. Here is a great chance to see how the Thessalonian church of Christ should be imitated.
4. With that in mind let us look at some worthy examples for us to follow.

I. The Church Imitated Paul & The Lord

- A. Paul wrote...
 1. **I Th 1:6** “And you became imitators of us and of the Lord...”
- B. They imitated Paul as he imitated Christ.
 1. **I Co 11:1** “
- C. Some qualities of God
 1. God is “holy.”
 - i. **I Pt 1:16** “...I am holy.”
 2. God is “perfect.”
 - i. **Mt 5:48** “...your heavenly Father is perfect.”
 3. God is “light.”
 - i. **I Jn 1:6** “...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
 4. God is “love.”
 - i. **I Jn 4:8** “...God is love.”
- D. Thus...
 1. The church here must strive to imitate God in holiness, perfection, light, love...

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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II. The Church Was Receptive Of The Word

- A. Paul wrote...
 - 1. **I Th 1:6** "...for you received the word..."
- B. Like many before them
 - 1. The Samaritans, Gentiles, and Bereans
 - i. **Ac 8:14; 11:1; 17:11**
- C. Notice how they received the Word
 - 1. They received the word with much affliction.
 - i. Even though they knew of the pending persecution they obeyed it anyway in a similar manor to that of the church in Judea.
 - a. **I Th 2:14** "For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews"
 - 2. They received the word with the "joy of the Holy Spirit."
 - i. Even though they knew of the pending persecution their joy over shadowed the pending tribulations.
 - a. **Ac 8:39** "And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing."
 - 3. Their reception of the Word became an example to other churches in Greece.
 - i. If the church in Thessalonica could take on the persecution of the Jews so too could they.
- D. Thus...
 - 1. The church here must strive to always be receptive to the Word.
 - i. When it is convenient and when it isn't.
 - ii. When it is easy and when it is hard.
 - 2. The church here must strive to imitate the determination and joy the church at Thessalonica had.

III. The Church Spread The Word

- A. Paul wrote...
 - 1. **I Th 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."
- B. These brethren spread their joy in the Holy Spirit with others
 - 1. In about six months they had spread the gospel all over Greece.
 - a. Macedonia was the northern part of Greece.
 - b. Achaia was the southern part of Greece.
 - 2. In about six months they had received a good sound reputation "everywhere" Paul had been traveling.
 - a. This is not an easy task concerning the time frame we are dealing with and the limitations on travel.

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- C. Thus...
 - 1. The church here must strive to imitate the evangelistic zeal the church in Thessalonica had.
 - a. They didn't get this far and do this much by waiting on people to ask them if they wanted to study the Bible.

IV. The Church Served Their God

- A. Paul wrote...
 - 1. **I Th 1:9** "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"
- B. Notice that they made a dramatic change
 - 1. They had turned to God from idols.
 - i. This is the idea of conversion.
- C. This dramatic change made their service to God possible
 - 1. They could not serve God and idols.
 - i. They turned away from those things that would draw them away from God.
 - a. **Mt 6:24** "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other..."
- D. Thus...
 - 1. The church here must strive to imitate their dramatic change and dedicated service to God.
 - a. They didn't sit back after becoming a Christian and simply say "I've fought the good fight, it's time for rest."

V. The Church Anticipated Jesus' Return

- A. Paul wrote...
 - 1. **I Th 1:10** "and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."
- B. Notice they were "waiting" for Christ to return
 - 1. There are two things of importance here.
 - i. First they were waiting on Christ and thus had a hope in such.
 - a. **I Pt 1:3-5** "
 - ii. Second they were waiting on Christ but not an inactive waiting.
 - a. **I Th 1:3** "...work of faith and labor of love..."
- C. Thus...
 - 1. The church here must strive to imitate their hope and active anticipation of Christ's return.
 - i. Doing such will allow us to be ready when that day comes.
 - a. **I Th 5:4** "But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief."

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CONCLUSION

1. Never forget how truly young this congregation was yet Paul had wonderful things to say about it.
 - a. They are an example to us today of what can happen when people (the local church) make up their mind to give themselves up totally to Christ.
2. Question: Are we as a congregation willing to learn from the example set forth from the church of Christ in Thessalonica?
 - a. If so let us prove it by our fruit.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**