

BASICS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH: EVANGELISM

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. The church at Thessalonica was a wonderful church... full of people who had an infectious faith and passion for Christ.
- b. First Thessalonians shows that this church had a passion for evangelism ... they had a passion to share Christ with the lost world around them.

II. A CHANGED LIFE-

- a. The greatest evidence that a person has been truly saved... that they have truly believed in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior... is a changed life.
- b. When a person gives their life to Christ... God invades their life... He does a divine work of salvation and grace in their life... that changes their life.
- c. When a person is born again... God gives them a new heart ... a new mind... a new spirit... a new present... and a new future.
- d. Because of what God does in the life of the person who believes in Christ ... their language changes... their lifestyle changes ... their desires change ... their values change... their priorities change... and very often even their appearance changes.
- e. When the Samaritan woman meet Christ... she was changed... when Legion ... the man who was possessed by all those demons meet Christ ... his life was changed.
- f. When Zacchaeus the tax collector meet Christ... his life was changed ... when Saul of Tarsus the persecutor of Christians meet Christ ... his life was changed... and he became the Apostle Paul

- g. When any person gives their life to Christ... their life will change.
- h. Christians are not perfect... but they are different... and true Christians will stay different ... God's work in the life of the true believer is enduring... it does not fade away.
- i. Coming to Christ... believing in Jesus as their Lord and Savior... made a dramatic difference in the life of the Thessalonian believers.
- j. In these verses... we can identify four differences Jesus had made in the life of these believers... they are the same differences Jesus makes in the life of any person who believes in Him.

III. THE CHANGE JESUS MAKES-

- a. #1, When these believers came to Christ... their lifestyle changed.
- b. 1 Thessalonians 1:9 says that when the Thessalonians gave their life to Christ... *"They turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."*
- c. Before these believers came to Christ... they worshiped and served idols... and they were immersed in a pagan lifestyle that was dominated by evil, sin and immorality.
- d. But when they came to Christ... God changed their life... they turned away from their old life of sin... and they turned to the true God.
- e. They began to love, worship, serve and live for the true God...and they began to pursue a holy life... a life that is pleasing to God.
- f. Because of what God does in the life of the person who comes to Christ...they cannot go on living the way they did before they were saved.
- g. *1 John 3:9 "Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, (they can't sin like they did before they were saved) because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning*

(like they did before they were saved), *because they are children of God.*”

- h. #2, When these believers came to Christ... their passions changed.
- i. Before these believers came to Christ... their lives were consumed with idols... and living in sin... they cared nothing for the true and living God.
- j. But after they came to Christ... their life changed... loving the true God... and serving God... and living for Him... became their passion.
- k. There was nothing passive or lukewarm... about the Christian life of these believers.
- l. *1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV) “I remember your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.”*
- m. The Christian life of these believers... consisted of more than just filling a pew.
- n. The true believer in Christ... is born again with a desire and with a passion to worship and serve God.
- o. #3, When these believers came to Christ... their fear of the future changed.
- p. The pagans of the ancient world feared the future ... and they feared death... liked they feared nothing else.
- q. Because of what God had done in their life when they gave their life to Christ... because of the faith that they had in the promises of God ... the Thessalonian Christians did not fear the future... and they did not fear death like they did before.
- r. They knew who controls the future ... and they knew what lays ahead for those who trust in Christ.

- s. *1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) “And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”*
- t. Living with confidence and assurance that Jesus is coming again ... and living with the assurance that death is just a door to the home in Heaven that God has prepared for those who believe... is the difference Jesus makes in the life of the believer.

IV. A CONCERN FOR THE LOST-

- a. These verses describe another difference... that Jesus had made in the lives of these believers.
- b. Before they were saved...the Thessalonian believers had little real concern for other people... outside of their own family and friends... they lived very selfish and self-contained lives.
- c. But after they were saved... things changed... the Thessalonian believers had a burden for the lost... for those who were not saved... they wanted other people to be saved... they wanted other people to know the forgiveness and joy that they had found in Christ.
- d. *1 Thessalonians 1:8 “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place.”*
- e. When a person is born again... they are born again with a desire to see other people saved... that is one of the marks of a person who has been born again.
- f. The Thessalonians had a passion for evangelism... they had a passion to share the saving gospel of Jesus Christ with others.
- g. So from the Thessalonian church... the gospel of Jesus Christ “sounded forth” ... literally the gospel loudly reverberated from this congregation.

- h. These believers not only proclaimed the gospel to the people in their own city... they sent evangelistic teams to proclaim and share the gospel in the provinces of Macedonia... and Achaia... and beyond.
- i. Evangelism... sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with others... was a priority for this church.
- j. Even before there were mission boards... the Thessalonians were involved with local... regional... national ... and even international missions.
- k. The church at Thessalonica... was a great evangelistic church ... it is an evangelistic model for our churches today.

V. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS TO BE INVOLVED IN EVANGELISM-

- a. The Bible makes it clear that it is the responsibility of every believer... to be involved in evangelism.
- b. Every Christian... is to be involved in sharing the saving gospel of Jesus Christ with those who are lost.
- c. The fact is... every Christian can be involved in evangelism...and today I want to share with you how.
- d. #1, Evangelistic Praying... we all have family and friends who are not saved.
- e. We pretty well know...by how they talk and how they live... that they have never given their life to Christ... they bear none of the marks of being born again.
- f. As Christians... we need to be praying for the lost we know... and the lost we don't know.
- g. Every Christian needs to have an evangelistic prayer list... a list of people they are praying for to be saved.

- h. How do you pray for a lost person to be saved?... listen to how Paul prayed for his fellow Jews to come to Christ.
- i. *Romans 10:1 (NKJV) “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.”*
- j. The deepest desire of Paul’s heart was that his fellow Jews would be saved ... and he persistently prayed that they would accept Christ.
- k. It takes no special talent... no special calling to pray for the lost ... all it takes is a deep desire to see lost people saved.
- l. #2, Evangelistic Giving... evangelism is sharing Christ where we live ... we all have that responsibility...missions is sharing Christ where we don’t live... and we have that responsibility too.
- m. The Great Commission commands believers to take the gospel to the ends of the earth... how can we do that?
- n. We can go ourselves... mission trips are wonderful... another way we can fulfill the Great Commission... is by supporting those who go where we can’t go.
- o. That is why we pray for our missionaries... it is also why we give to support those who take the gospel to the world.
- p. One reason why the Lord wants you to give His tithes and offerings ... is so that you can support our missionaries who are carrying the gospel to the world.
- q. We support missions through our Cooperative Program giving ... Lottie Moon... Annie Armstrong... State Missions Offering, etc.
- r. When we pray for our missionaries... and we give to support missions... we partner with our missionaries... and the reward they receive... is the reward we will receive.

- s. #3, Evangelistic Living... the life of every Christian is a witness... either good or bad... to those we come in contact with... and to those around us.
- t. How you live makes an impact on those around you... the Bible says that we are to walk worthy of the One who has saved us... we are to live in such a way... that those around us will want to know the God we know.
- u. The most important possession we have as Christians... is our Christian testimony... we need to guard it and protect it.
- v. Lost people do not expect Christians to be perfect... but they do expect us to be different... they expect us to be consistent ... they expect us to be real, authentic and genuine ... they expect our words to match our deeds... and our deeds to match our words.
- w. We should always be mindful to do nothing... that will compromise our witness and testimony for Jesus Christ.
- x. #4, Evangelistic Inviting... you may not be comfortable in witnessing to someone... but you can invite them to church.
- y. Many people will come to church if you invite them ... and I promise you that when they come to this church... they will hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- z. #5, Evangelistic Witnessing... you may not think you can share the gospel of Jesus Christ with someone else... but you can.
- aa. You don't have to memorize a lot of verses and be a Bible expert... to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with someone else.
- bb. It is good to know how to know Bible verses... and it is good to know how to use the Bible... and a witnessing plan... to witness to and share Christ with someone else... that is something that is good for every Christian to know.

- cc. But there is one way that you can share Christ with someone else... and no one else can do it better than you... and that is by using your personal testimony.
- dd. No one knows better than you how you came to know Christ... in that you are the expert... and you can use your testimony ... you can use the story of how you came receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior to share Christ with others.
- ee. Telling others how Jesus has changed your life since He saved you... is a powerful way to tell others about Christ.
- ff. People can ask you questions about the Bible that you cannot answer ... but they can't ask you anything about your testimony that you can't answer... when it comes to how you gave your life to Christ ... you are the expert.
- gg. Giving your testimony is something that you should practice... you can practice on me anytime.
- hh. Every Christian in every church can and should be involved in evangelism... evangelistic praying... giving... living... inviting ... and witnessing... these are things that we call can do.

VI. CONCLUSION-

- a. Do you have a testimony?... not about where, how and when you joined a church... but where, how and when you gave your life to Christ.
- b. Do you have a testimony... about how Jesus has changed your life?
- c. If you don't have a testimony... if you don't have a changed life... then it could be that you do not have a real relationship with Jesus Christ.
- d. Let your testimony begin today... come to Christ.

- e. The greatest need the world has... is a need to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- f. People need the Lord... let us share Him!
- g. 2 Kings 7 tells the story of an army that had laid sieged to Jerusalem ... soon the people in the city were starving ... in the story there were 4 lepers who were caught between a rock and a hard place... they were not allowed to go into the city and they were surrounded by the invading army... in desperation they decided to go to the invading army and through themselves on their mercy... when they got to the army's camp... no one was there... God had thrown the army into confusion and the army had fled leaving behind all their food... tents ... garments... supplies... everything ... the lepers began eating the food and gathering up stuff... and then one of them stopped and said.
- h. *2 Kings 7:9 (NLT2) "Finally, they said to each other, "This is not right. This is a day of good news, and we aren't sharing it with anyone! Come on, let's go back and tell the people at the palace."*