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A1047 – November 21, 2010 – 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10
The Testimony Of The Thessalonians

Last week we opened the book of 1 Thessalonians and we want to get thoroughly fixed in our minds from the start the structure of the letter. Without structure we have a hard time remembering what saith the Scriptures. So I've adopted a simple approach to the epistle, and that is to simply let the chapter divisions suffice and assign a theme to each chapter. Chapter 1 is the first S, which stands for salvation. And I'm trying to relate the truths in chapter 1 to salvation. Of course, there are other truths in this chapter and we give them their due attention. But for the most part, and the overall theme of 1 Thessalonians 1 is salvation.

So, let's observe in verse 1 the men who contributed to this letter, not Paul alone, but Paul and Silvanus, who is Silas, and Timothy. These were the three men that visited the city of Thessalonica and through their ministry there, over the course of a couple of months, some Jews, many Gentiles, and a number of the leading women were saved. And so the first salvation truth we see in chapter 1 is in verse 1, **to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**. When an individual believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is placed in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the doctrine of positional sanctification. We were taken out of the world system and placed in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. And once you are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ then you are always in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. You can never be separated from them, which is another doctrine; the doctrine of eternal security.

So we have the doctrine of positional sanctification that we have been placed in the Father and in the Son and we have the doctrine of eternal security; that this position can never be lost. Then at the conclusion of verse one, we

have the third salvation truth and that is how we came to enter into this great position, and the answer is by **grace**, that is unmerited favor, and that there is nothing in man which can satisfy the holiness of God and therefore the solution must come from outside of the human race. As God and man the solution is the Lord Jesus Christ. And secondly, grace in the sense of enablement to believe, because man is dead in Adam he does not have the capability to believe. Therefore God the Holy Spirit must enable a man to believe. The results of God's grace toward us is we have **peace**. Peace with God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 2 we have the doctrine of prayer, "**we give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.**" The point being that as Paul, Silas and Timothy were forced to leave Thessalonica they did not forget about the Thessalonian believers but continually gave God thanks for all of them because it was God who worked with the message as the gospel was preached to bring them to salvation. And so they had a very definite prayer life, a prayer life that was without ceasing and that was stimulated by their remembrance of their works of faith, labor of love and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. These were all visibly manifested. Paul and his associates had seen a definite change in the lives of the Thessalonians since salvation.

In verse 4 and 5 we see a whole string of salvation truths. We've seen the doctrine of positional sanctification, the doctrine of eternal security, the doctrine of grace, and now we come to the doctrine of election. Verse 4, "**knowing, brethren beloved by God, his choice of you;**" that is the doctrine of election, that God is choosy, that God picks certain members of the human race. We covered this doctrine in some detail and tried to make it a little more understandable for you. The key to understanding this doctrine is to understand and keep in focus the Creator-creature distinction. We understand that election is a function of the Creator's sovereignty and faith is a function of creature responsibility. Both are true. God elects to salvation and man believes unto salvation. There is no contradiction.

That gives us four salvation truths in this chapter, but we want to emphasize what Paul emphasizes in verse 4 and 5, and that is, the participle in verse

four **knowing**. The perfect participle of this word means they came to know something about the Thessalonians that was always on God's mind. A revelation of God had occurred about the Thessalonians. Something that could not have been known before was now known; namely that God had elected them. The explanation for how they came to this knowledge is given in verse 5, which now we want to spend more time on since we skipped through it very quickly last week.

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. Now Paul is speaking of a specific kind of knowledge and in this context it is experiential knowledge, knowledge gained by experience and observation because the knowledge that he has of their election came about in the same way that their knowledge of Paul, Silas and Timothy came about. How did they learn **what sort of men** they were? By observing their lives, by watching them. Their knowledge of Paul, Silas and Timothy came about by experience and observation and Paul, Silas and Timothy came to know of their election by experience and observation. Namely, the observation of verse five, that as they preached the **gospel** the **power** of the **Holy Spirit** was made manifest as they were **convicted** of their sin and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is how you know someone is elect. People say no one can know if someone else is elect. But that contradicts Paul, Silas and Timothy because they said that they came to this knowledge through observing people believe. So you can know someone is elect and the way you know that is, you preach the gospel and people believe, at that moment is revealed what was on God's mind about that person from all eternity.

Now we want to look first at the word **gospel**, *euaggelion*, it means "good news" and is defined in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 as the death of Christ for our sins and the resurrection of Christ from the grave. So we have a person, Jesus Christ, who is undiminished deity united with true humanity in one person without confusion forever and we have the work of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. Those four things are the content of faith which a person must believe. It is insufficient to talk about a contentless Jesus. Jesus died for your sins and rose again is insufficient unless we define Jesus as undiminished deity united with true humanity. And it is insufficient to talk about a Jesus who merely died, minus resurrection. All four of these elements

must be in a gospel presentation for it to be the gospel. Now the way that Paul preached the gospel to Jews is described in Acts 13 and his method is the historical framework methodology of contextualizing the gospel. He starts with Jews by speaking of the Call of Abraham, God called Abraham, he moves to the Exodus, God set Israel free, he then goes to mount Sinai, God gave them the law, then he moves to the Conquest and Settlement, God destroyed their enemies, then he jumps to the historical event of the rise and reign of King David, God gave David an eternal dynasty, and finally God sent David's dynastic successor, Jesus, and they rejected Him and crucified Him, but God raised him from the dead. And that is essentially how Paul preached the gospel to Jews. He was very persuasive in that he strung together a whole series of OT historical events, things God did and the logical conclusion of that whole series of things God did is Jesus the Messiah. That's how he did it with Jews.

The way Paul preached the gospel to Gentiles is described in Acts 14 and Acts 17 and his method is again to use the historical framework methodology of contextualizing the gospel. But with Gentiles he doesn't start with the Call of Abraham, because that is Jewish history. Instead, he begins with Gentile history and Gentile history begins with Creation, the God who made the world and all things in it, carefully defining the nature of the Creator as distinct from the creature. He then moves to the Fall and the sinfulness of man who worships idols. Then he moves to the Noahic Flood, judgment/salvation and the Noahic Contract that God made from one man, Noah - all men to live on the face of the earth, having determined national boundaries in the hope that men would seek God, though he is not far from each one of us. And all of our lives we Gentiles have been supported by Him and we have depended upon Him without giving thanks. And until the cross of Christ God had overlooked Gentile ignorance, but now He's calling all men everywhere to repent. So your starting point for contextualizing a gospel message for Jewish people is basically to start with Genesis 12 and work your way to the cross. And the starting point for contextualizing the gospel message for Gentile people is basically to start with Genesis 1 through 11 and then come to the cross. This is how you avoid confusion among the two groups in a gospel presentation.

This is what Paul did in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 when he preached the gospel. He says, it **did not come to you in word only**, it was **words** but it was

accompanied by something else, namely **power and in the Holy Spirit** and those are linked, it's the power of the Holy Spirit being referred to. And what's the attribute of power? Omnipotence. God the Holy Spirit is omnipotent and so the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with the word of God and not independently of the word of God to bring people to salvation. You cannot have people come to salvation apart from gospel preaching in conjunction with the power of the Holy Spirit. You can have gospel preaching without the power of the Holy Spirit. And we all know this is true; we've preached the gospel to people and they've heard the words of the gospel, but they didn't believe the words. And the reason they didn't believe the words is because it came in word only, and not word coupled with the power of the Holy Spirit. As the message is being preached He has to insert His power to convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. That's what we call the drawing ministry of God, effected through the Holy Spirit, as described in John 16:8-11. That's one of the things that is going on before a person believes, that has to go on before a person can believe. And when they go on, a new revelation of God is made known in history, namely that the individual that believed is the elect of God. The elect are created in history; always in the mind of God but created in history at the moment of faith. This is the balance that you want to keep between the doctrine of election and the doctrine of gospel preaching. Gospel preaching is not an impotent sorting device. It is the means by which the elect are created.

So we have the gospel preached, some hear the words only and they don't believe, but others as the gospel is preached get the words, in linkage with the power of the Holy Spirit, which convicts them of sin, righteousness and justice, drawing them to faith in Jesus Christ. This is the doctrine of efficacious calling. There is the general call of the gospel which goes forth to many, it's indiscriminate preaching, but as the general call of the gospel goes forth there is the efficacious call of the Holy Spirit which certainly draws some of the individuals to faith in Christ.

Now, don't be confused by this doctrine of efficacious calling and think of it as men being forced or coerced to believe. That's not what the doctrine of efficacious calling teaches. If you talk to people about how they came to salvation, some will tell you that they did not feel pulled or dragged at all and others will tell you they did feel dragged. But the doctrine doesn't require you to feel one way or the other. It can and does occur both ways. People's

emotions or feelings at the moment of salvation is irrelevant to the doctrine. The doctrine of efficacious calling simply states that as the gospel is preached. There are certain individuals that hear the words, but the words come in conjunction with the power of the Holy Spirit and they are convicted and drawn to certain faith in Jesus Christ. And so we have another salvation truth in chapter 1. Chapter number one is loaded with salvation truths and this is why our first S is salvation.

Today we come to verse 6, to another set of truths about the Thessalonians. **You also became imitators of us and of the Lord.** Now there are many passages in the NT which discuss the importance of imitating the one who through gospel preaching brought us to salvation. I don't know who's preaching you came to Christ through but Paul says that the one who preaches the gospel through which you were saved becomes your father and you ought to imitate your father. It's a truth he derives from the 3rd divine institution of family. It speaks of spiritual family and when you believe and are saved you enter into God's family. And the individual through whom you believed, as they preached the gospel message, you have a close association with this person, so close the Bible calls it a father-son relationship and says imitate that person. Now obviously you don't imitate them if they're not living the Christian life but the general truth stands that less mature believers ought to imitate believers that are more mature than them.

Imitation requires you to observe their lives and their doctrine and live your life in accordance with their lives and their doctrine. This brings about the unity to the faith. But we want to be very careful with this doctrine because Paul was an apostle and new revelation was coming through Paul so Paul gave them an example of how to apply it. Now that the revelation is complete in the NT canon we simply turn to the NT canon and order our lives and doctrine accordingly. And as we do that we become followers of our Lord. And we learn in verse 6, that the Thessalonians, who had observed Paul's doctrine and life had become imitators of Paul's doctrine and life and therefore had become imitators of the Lord.

In verse 6, he goes on to give an explanation for how they became imitators of them and of the Lord. **Having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,** notice the word tribulation, which is a description of the situation in which the Thessalonians lived. It's the Greek word *thlipsis* and this is a word that has caused much confusion. In verse 10

will see another word, **wrath**, and these two words tribulation, and wrath are very important words. Normally when the Christian in our circles thinks of tribulation he thinks of the tribulation, in the sense of the future period of seven years when God pours out his judgments upon the earth-dwellers of the Book of Revelation. Now let me say something about this word tribulation. This word is never used in the Bible to describe that time. And many Christians have been confused because theologians use the word tribulation to refer to this time. And then they read a verse like verse 6, where it says the Thessalonians **received the word in much tribulation**, and they say see, Christians will be in tribulation. And they're right so just understand that the word tribulation is never used in the Bible to refer to that future time of seven years when God pours out his judgments upon the earth dwellers. The biblical term that refers to that future time of seven years when God pours out his judgments upon the earth dwellers is the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord is an OT term first used by Obadiah in the eighth century BC, but also used in Joel extensively and in other OT books and which Paul will use extensively in 1 Thessalonians 5. So, technically speaking the future seven years when God pours out his judgment upon the earth is the day of the Lord and not the tribulation. All Christians face "tribulation" in the sense described in this verse because the word simply refers to affliction; what did Jesus say? In this world you will have tribulation. And all Christians live in tribulation but no Christian will live in the day of the Lord. So the Thessalonians received the word during a period of tribulation. Remember when Paul and Silas had to leave Thessalonica it was because certain Jews had come in and stirred up a riot against Paul and Silas. And so these afflictions surrounded them during their ministry and yet, despite these afflictions the Thessalonians received the word with the joy of the Holy Spirit. Now it would have been very easy for the Thessalonians to watch Paul and Silas and Timothy preach the gospel in the midst of all this persecution and to simply say, "We don't want any of this. You guys say you preach the gospel, the good news, but all we see is its bad news if we believe it because we'll be persecuted." But rather than taking that approach as the gospel was preached God the Holy Spirit overcame these natural responses such that they believed the gospel. Therefore, to receive the word is the equivalent of believing the gospel.

So what this imitation of Paul and Silas and Timothy referred to was how they received the word in an atmosphere of persecution and in an atmosphere

like that there's not a lot of space for joy, but they did have joy, **the joy of the Holy Spirit**, which is a fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, against such things there is no law. And so the mentioning of them having received the word in much affliction or persecution with the joy of the Holy Spirit indicates the fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit as he worked through their lives in the middle of persecuting circumstances.

And what this produces are the fantastic results of verse 7 and 8. Verse 7 **so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia**. Now if you look at a map you will see we are in Europe. Paul had received the vision from the man of Macedonia, "Come over here and help us." And so Paul, Silas and Timothy went over to Europe to preach the gospel in Philippi and Thessalonica. You'll observe that Philippi and Thessalonica are in this region called **Macedonia**. And the southern portion that includes Athens and Corinth is called **Achaia**. Now think of this, a small number of Thessalonian believers received the word in the midst of tribulation and had become **an example to all believers** in these regions. The Greek word for example is *tupos* from which we get type or typology, the point is that they had become models of the Christian life and how to live as Christians in an environment of persecution. And when I say persecution I mean that some of their fellow believers had been executed after Paul, Silas and Timothy had departed. So this is not light persecution, this is heavy persecution. You'll know when someone's to come marching in your house the next day and take your wife away to execute and take away your kids to execute them. The natural thing to do in a situation of persecution like this is to basically cop-out, you know, "we'll stop living the Christian life for a little while and when the persecution lifts then we'll be Christians again." And that's actually the message of the book of Hebrews. Because he had a whole segment of the Jewish Christian population copping out and refusing to live the Christian life and returning to Judaism, you know just for a little while, so that they would be persecuted and when the persecution lifted they said; now we'll be Christians again. And the whole message of the book is, uh, uh, uh, when the persecution is on that's where you really become a testimony to others, an example to all believers that the word of God is sufficient to get you through the trials and tribulations of life.

In verse 8, he expands, **For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.** In other words, Paul says it's gone even outside of the regions of **Macedonia** and **Achaia!** Notice, **the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you,** this is the description of the trumpet blast and trumpet blasts were used for number of reasons in the Scripture; to warn of military attack, to gather or assemble a city for an announcement, a number of reasons for the trumpet blast, but here he likens their example of living the Christian life under times of stress and difficulty and even loss of fellow believers as being such a tremendous example that it sounded forth like a trumpet blast not only in **Macedonia** and **Achaia, but also in every place that their faith toward God had gone forth.** And so here he extends beyond these massive regions and we have some hints from the book of Acts, in Acts 18 where Paul got this report. Verse 9 shows the fact that Paul indeed did receive a report. So if you turn to Acts 18 we'll see who we think brought the report. When Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians he was in the city of Corinth, down in the region of Achaia, and apparently he received a report from somewhere outside of the district of Macedonia and Achaia about the Thessalonians. In Acts 18:1 we meet one of the famous couples of the NT. "After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. ²And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, ³and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers." So, aha, here's where Priscilla and Aquila come into the NT. Priscilla and Aquila lived in Rome and in the year 50 A.D. Emperor Claudius had had it with the Jews. They were having these fights down in the Jewish ghetto. And what was stirring up fights was a so-called Chrestus and we don't have to think that hard to understand who Chrestus is. You had thousands of Jews living in the city of Rome, in the Jewish ghetto, and some of these Jews were believers in Jesus Chrestus and others were unbelievers and so the Jewish believers were trying to evangelize the Jewish unbelievers. So you have all this argument going on in the Jewish ghetto of Rome over Jesus Chrestus. And the Romans would send their soldiers in to quell the rioting that got started and they'd search for this trouble maker Chrestus and they could never find him. And while Jesus Chrestus wasn't actually there, Jesus Chrestus was causing a problem just not the way that they thought. And so after the Roman soldiers

had quelled about three or four of these riots Claudius said that's it, and he expelled the Jews from Rome. And so out of that you had thousands of Jews scattering from Rome. And here come two of them to Corinth, they hook up with Paul in tent-making and they're giving Paul the report. And part of that report includes news of the trumpet blasts of the Thessalonians, how those believers were handling persecution and continuing daily the Christian life to live in the Lord. So that's why in 1 Thessalonians 1:8, it says **not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has come forth**. Paul doesn't know every place, but he does know is extended beyond Macedonia and Achaia all the way to Rome and this was one of Paul's great encouragements because now he learns that the gospel has already moved 600 miles west of his furthest journey.

So we think in verse 9, **For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you**, that includes reports from people in Macedonia and Achaia, it includes reports from people like Priscilla and Aquila who were kicked out of Rome by Claudius, and perhaps other people from other places. But the whole point is to realize that when we live in an environment of persecution and we don't put aside our Christianity to protect ourselves, we become tremendous examples to the rest of the believers and there's a trumpet blast of our testimony out into the Christian world, which encourages other believers to hold fast in difficult times and to keep living the Christian life despite the afflictions.

So let's continue with the report in verse 9, **for they themselves report about us** and then three things are listed. The first thing is **what kind of a reception we had with you**, that is how we were received by you when we arrived in Thessalonica to preach the gospel. And they didn't have a clear idea of how they were received because they got kicked out of town so quickly but now the report comes and the report is that they were well-received.

The second thing reported was **how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God** and this expression has been murdered by theologians because what they try to do is say this verse describes the salvation of the Thessalonians. How they **turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God**. They say oh, see, that's a description of salvation. Excuse me, but what's the context of verse 8? It's the trumpet blast of their testimony, not salvation. Paul already knew they were saved. He

knew in verse 4 they were elect, he knew in verse 5 they had believed the gospel. So it's no news that they were believers. What is news is their testimony that sounded forth. And the testimony in verse 9 is that the Thessalonians **turned to God from idols**. Now we don't think that's any big deal today. But remember, they were in Europe and things were a little bit different in Europe than Paul had seen in his earlier missionary journeys. When Paul came to Europe he began to face intense, intense idolatry. We know when Paul went to Athens he was provoked to preach the gospel because as he walked around the city, he was observing hundreds and hundreds of idols. Petronius said, "it was easier to find a god at Athens than a man." At Corinth, Paul discusses the eating of meat that had been sacrificed to idols. And we have to understand that these cults were part of society and if you broke off from these cults then you were breaking off from Roman society and so to say that the Thessalonians had **turned to God from idols** is an amazing statement. It was not easy to resist the system of idolatry that they had been in since they were born. So this is not a description of how they came to Christ, this is a description of their testimony after they came to Christ. And Paul is very impressed to say the least about these reports he's hearing. He did not get to spend a lot of time with the Thessalonians, and the time that he did get to spend with them, he taught them and he saw good things but whether they would have completely **turned to God away from idols** was more than Paul expected. And so here Paul receives report that they had turned to God from idols. Note that expression. The turning to, away from is one act not two acts. It's one event not two events. When you turned to God by default you have turned away from idols. So it's an about-face. You walk in one direction, in this case toward idols and you turn 180° the other direction to God, and by default, away from idols. That's the idea of the verb, to turn 180° in the opposite direction.

Just a quick note on the end of verse 9, when they turned to God from idols they also turned **to serve a living and true God**. What's the implication? If the true God is living then what are the idols? They're dead. They just men's imaginations. And we have a lot of creative imagination going on in our society. People may not go around worshiping totem poles but they do go around worshiping trees, they do go around worshiping natural law, they do go around worshiping other people, they do go around worshiping certain political platforms, and they put their hope in these things. And they're false

hopes. So they turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, a great testimony that sounded forth into many areas of Europe.

Now we come to the third thing that was reported about the Thessalonians in verse 10, and here we have a string of truths but the main thing is listed first. **And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead,** who raised him? The true God raised him, **that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come,** or better the coming wrath. So the thing that was noted in the report was how the Thessalonians waited. This is a *hapax legomenon* meaning the word is used only one time in the Greek NT. The word means to keep on waiting up for something. Maybe you had to wait up late sometime in your life for something to happen. When we were kids we tried to wait up until Santa Claus would come. We had great expectations. And that's the essence of this word. The idea is that there is this great expectation that Jesus Christ who ascended to heaven is going to return from heaven. Now, keep in mind that the Thessalonians were under severe persecution, the afflictions were terrible, fellow believers were being killed, murdered in cold blood. And the future didn't look so bright. And so one of the neat things how God provides for us in any and every circumstance that we find ourselves is that He always has the perfect solution. And when you are down and out and the future is dark, life is bleak then what does God start talking about, start reminding us of? The future. How Christ is going to return at-any-moment for us.

Now the church today doesn't want to talk about this. It's controversial. So nobody in churches today talks about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ or about the rapture or about the millennial kingdom or about any of these things because it's all just too controversial. And surely that's not so important to the Christian life and it will all just work out. Now the book of 1 Thessalonians is going to challenge that strongly. Here is a group of people who are suffering under fantastic degrees of persecution and at the end of each chapter Paul is going to remind them of Christ return. And the thing that impressed Paul was with this report. They were waiting patiently for the Son of God to return from heaven. That was their daily hope. And it should be the daily hope of every Christian. When we wake up in the morning the very first thought that ought to cross our mind is, "maybe today He'll return." We ought to be looking for him, waiting patiently. Like a child in bed who's waiting for Santa Claus with great expectations we ought to be waiting for

Christ's return with great expectation. We're not waiting because we want to get out of this mess, so to speak, but we're waiting because there is so much more to life than our present life. He has so much in store for us.

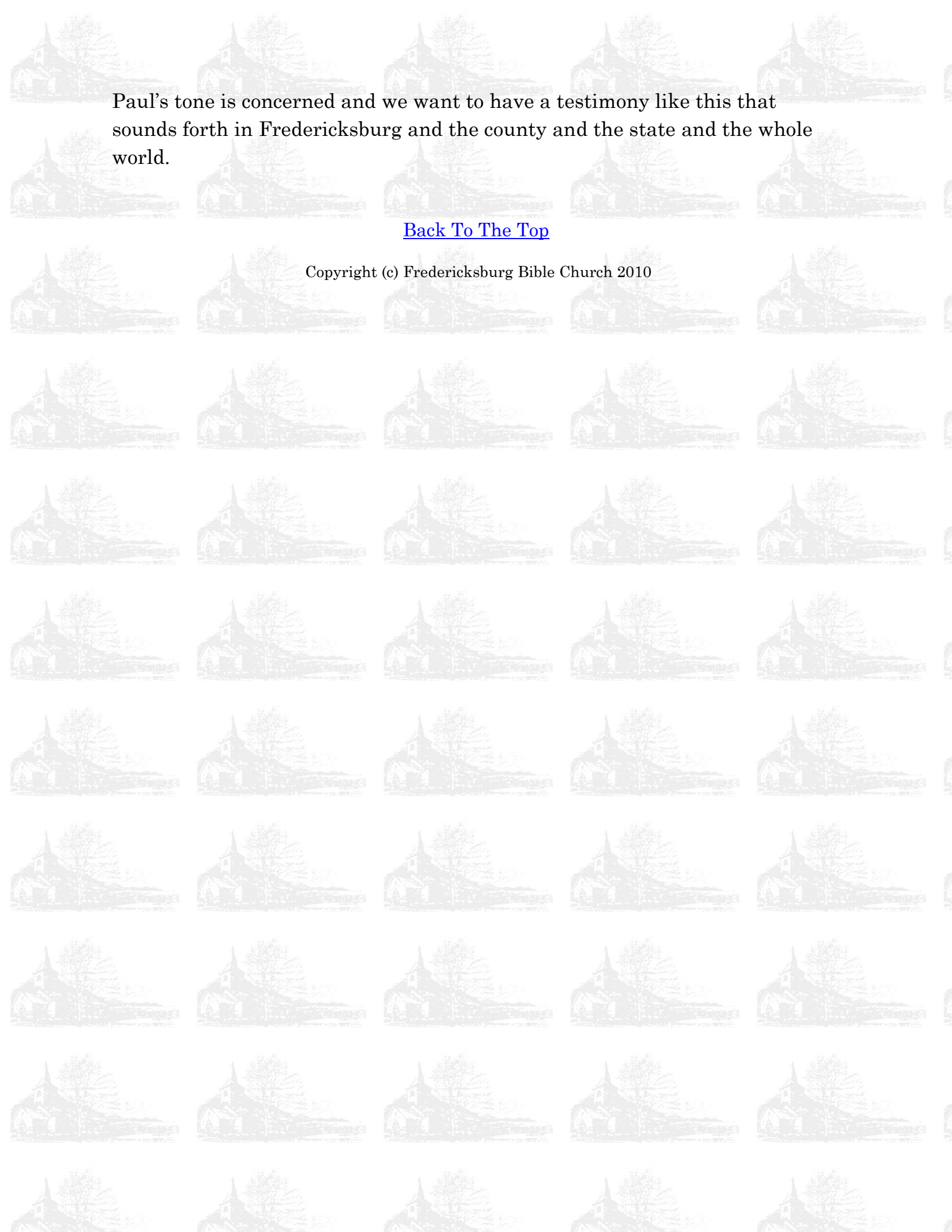
So, Jesus is going to return. And it's our testimony to be patiently waiting for him. People may joke and laugh at us because you're waiting for Jesus? Yeah, I am. What are you waiting for? The next paycheck? Big deal. The unbeliever may not be expecting the day of wrath to come. But the day of wrath is going to suddenly come upon this earth. And they may mock and scoff at this truth, but it is truth. And I'm proud to say I'm waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to return from heaven. Because he's the God of the universe he made promises and one of his promises and John 14:1-3 was I'm leaving, but, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. ²in my father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also." And that is what we are waiting for. Waiting for his return to take us to be with him.

Not only are we waiting for him to take us to be with him but Paul links another truth in with his return. And that is that **Jesus rescues us from the wrath to come**. The verb rescues is the Greek word *ruomai* and in this connection it means to rescue from danger, to keep away from danger. To get the idea hold your place here and turn with me to Matthew 6:13, this is in the sermon on the Mount and were not commenting so much on the content of the sermon of the Mount as to simply look at how this word *ruomai* is being used as a term of keeping one away from danger in opposition to the idea that we would go into the wrath and from within the wrath we would be removed or that we would be preserved through the wrath. No, the idea is that we are kept away from the wrath. And in Matthew 6:13, we have this word used in a parallel sense. "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The word "deliver" is *ruomai* and it means to keep away from evil, not to let us enter into evil and then help us escape or to preserve us through the evil but to keep us away from the evil. And in the same way in 1 Thess 1:10, Jesus rescues us away from the wrath to come. Meaning we won't enter it at all.

Now to see what this wrath is turn to 1 Thess 5. "Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ²For you

yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.” What's the "day of the Lord?" It's the future seven years when God pours out his judgments upon the earth-dwellers. ³“While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly,” not us, “them,” the earth-dwellers,” like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. ⁴But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; ⁵for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.” He's getting into the ethical implications of being a son of the light. If you are a son of the light then live as a son of the light. ⁷“For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.” There's Paul's Trinity of faith, hope and love. And notice verse 9, we've seen that in verse 2, the day of the Lord is coming when the earth dwellers are saying, "peace and safety!" And now we have day of the Lord characterized and our relationship to it declared. ⁹“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.” So are we destined to enter into the wrath? Are we destined to enter into the day of the Lord? Paul says, oh no, we are not destined for that. Rather, we are destined for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ," which in this context is a resurrection body, reception of the resurrection body so that we can live together with him. So chapter 1 of 1 Thessalonians concludes with the statement of the doctrinal fact that Jesus will deliver us or rescue us away from the future day of the Lord. That's the pre-day of the Lord rapture, believers will not enter that day of wrath which is described in great detail in many OT prophets, and in the great NT prophecy of the Book of Revelation.

So that is the conclusion of the report that Paul had received about the great testimony of the Thessalonian believers since his departure from Thessalonica. And it's a fantastic report and one of the hallmarks of the book of Thessalonians is that it is a purely positive report throughout, there's nothing but praise in the book of Thessalonians. And remind yourself that this contrasts radically with the book of Galatians. In Galatians Paul is totally negative. There's nothing but condemnation in the book of Galatians. So there is a total difference between Galatians and Thessalonians so far as



Paul's tone is concerned and we want to have a testimony like this that sounds forth in Fredericksburg and the county and the state and the whole world.

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