

**BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
OUR ELECTION OF GOD
1 THESSALONIANS 1**

Introduction

We mentioned how this was a young Church that was founded by Paul during his second missionary journey that we read about in Acts 17:1-9.

Paul was not in the city very long until he was driven out. He then went to Berea, and left Timothy and Silas there as he went to Athens.

Paul called for Timothy and Silas to get an update on how this young church was fairing in the midst of strong persecution. And praise the Lord they were staying strong in the midst of persecution!

Paul then sent them back with this letter answering some of the questions that those in the Church had.

In the entirety of the letter, we can gather that one of the questions they asked had to do with those who had died in the persecution. They were concerned that those who died were going to miss out on the Lord's return.

Evidently, in Paul's short time with them at Thessalonica, he had a "*prophecy conference*" of sorts and had taught them on the subject of Jesus' return.

So **the return of the Lord** plays a prominent role in this letter! Each chapter has a reference to the Lord's return!

Paul uses this letter to comfort the believers in Thessalonica, and the same effect can be had on those who read it today.

1:2-3 – Even though Paul was not in Thessalonica very long, he still had a deep desire and love for the believers. This shown by his prayers for this Church!

We know Paul was a man of prayer, and he had a lot to pray to the Father about when it came to this Church.

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Paul remembered without ceasing their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope!

In 1:4 Paul mentions a topic that folks avoid today because they are either uninformed or misinformed about it! — The topic of Divine Election.

The debate rages and will continue to rage: did God elect some to be saved and others to be damned?

While we may never fully grasp this doctrine on this side of eternity, understand that the doctrine of election should not scare us, but comfort us!

What is "*election*", as defined by the Word of God? I found one that hits it on the head:

By election we mean that sovereign act of God in grace whereby He chose in Christ Jesus for salvation all those whom He foreknew would accept Him – *Practical Christian Theology, Floyd Barackman*

This does not mean that God forces someone to be saved, or as the 5 point Calvinist would call it—Irresistible Grace.

God does not chose, or elect, certain people to be saved against their will; but **He has elected to save all of those who will come by faith believing in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation!**

The Thessalonian believers are an example of how God initiates the salvation process:

- 1. Preaching. (1:5; Cf. Romans 10:13-17)**
- 2. Conviction. (1:5; John 16:8-11)**
- 3. Faith. (1:6; 2:13)** they received the Word.
- 4. Repentance. (1:9)** they turned to God from idols.

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And listen, because **we are elected of God, we cannot lose that election, and therefore cannot lose our salvation!** It was God's to give, and it is God who keeps us, not our good works!

(1 Peter 1:5—“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”)

We notice three characteristics of these Thessalonian believers that should be evident in the lives of God's elect:

I. THE ELECT SHOULD BE AN ENSAMPLE! (1:5-7)

In these 3 verses, we see a picture, or example, of how Church should be every week for each of us! It is also an example of witnessing to our friends and loved ones!

A. The Message Is To Be Relayed! (1:5)

The message of the Gospel of Christ is the central feature of the Church! It is what we are to be about!

(1 Thessalonians 2:1-12)

We must not be guilty of hindering the message with a **bad attitude, or with wrong motives, or with poor preparation!**

Listen—What people think of us **does matter** because we are God's ambassadors! God's representatives!

(2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

That doesn't mean we need must have a *"professional"* demeanor or presentation – it means that we are to **fully give ourselves over to God and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work through us!**

It should be a combination of **our words and our behavior**—our words are powerless without our actions being behind it!

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Our actions are to back up our words and MUST do so!

God is the author of the message! The Gospel of Christ is the Power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth!

(Romans 1:16)

His Holy Spirit within us is the source of our power!*(Acts 1:8)*

He is the provider of the results! *(1 Corinthians 3:6)*

But He has chosen to use us! **(2:4)**

The Message Is To Be Relayed...

B. The Message Is To Be Received! (1:6)

Became followers – shows that they received the Gospel, were converted, and became disciples or learners!

Notice that they received the message ***in much affliction and with joy***. Persecutions and afflictions can and will come when we determine to **follow Christ for salvation and live godly!** Remember what Paul told Timothy in *2 Timothy 3:12*—“*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*”

But we can go through those afflictions **with joy in the Lord** through the Holy Spirit that lives within us from the moment of our conversion!

But it takes faith to receive the Gospel, knowing that you will still have tough times to go through, and maybe even tougher than before. But when we do, the Holy Spirit gives us JOY!

C. The Message Is To Be Re-lived! (1:7)

Paul said in the previous verse that he was their example, and they then became an example to other believers.

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We are all a walking billboard for the Lord – so, what kind of advertising are you for the Gospel?

Philippians 1:27–30

WE SHOULD BE AN ENSAMPLE!

II. WE SHOULD BE ENTHUSIASTIC! (1:8-9)

Paul commended this Church because they were enthusiastic about spreading the Gospel wherever they went!

Paul, in essence, is saying, *"I don't need to teach you guys anything about witnessing, because you've got that down! Everywhere I've gone in this region, someone from your Church has already been there and told people the gospel."*

The emphasis of this Church was spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ anywhere they could.

I am afraid that, by and large, many in the Church today have lost that enthusiasm to spread the Gospel!

I'd venture to say that the vast majority of those who call themselves Christians have never led a soul to Christ and do not consistently witness for Christ! Very few are involved in the consistent ministry of evangelism of any kind!

When it comes to this subject of witnessing, many no doubt think, *"I give to missions, I've done my part."*

But we cannot *"hire"* someone else to do our part in our community that we live in. The missionary in Brazil cannot reach your neighbor, co-worker, etc.

We need to be enthusiastic about spreading the Gospel as we go!

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(e.g. Begin small by making a commitment to personally hand out one tract a day!)

WE SHOULD BE AN ENSAMPLE!

WE SHOULD BE ENTHUSIASTIC!

III. WE SHOULD BE EXPECTANT! (1:10)

Because they experienced true salvation, they were now living with the expectation that the Lord would be returning for them one day.

There is a wrath to come (7 years of Tribulation), but we know that as believers we have been delivered from that wrath!

2 Corinthians 1:10–“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;”

Colossians 1:13–“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”

We are to live our life expecting the Lord to return for us at any moment.

Conclusion

We can be comforted today knowing that we are elected by God the Father through the faith we have in His Son Jesus!

If you are LOST – Realize that Salvation is possible for you through faith. Will you come? You can win God's election!

If you are SAVED – Let me ask:

Are you an ensample? (A model; example sample)

Are you an enthusiastic example?

Living out the gospel and sharing it with others?

Are you living in expectation of the coming of the LORD?