

Let's Be Like This Church

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Introduction

1. If you could design a congregation what would it look like? What would the elders, preachers, and members do?
2. Let's take a look at Paul's commendation of the Thessalonian church of Christ.

I. An Energetic Church (vv. 1-3)

- A. They had a "work of faith" (v. 3 see also 2 Thessalonians 1:11).
 1. Why do you think Paul remembered without ceasing their work of faith?
 2. Such working faith is not as common as we would like it to be, so when one sees it, he remembers it.
 3. Don't you remember congregations that are active?
 4. It is amazing how often faith and works are referred to in the same context (James 2:14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26).
- B. Theirs was a "labor of love" (v. 3).
 1. Do you think these Thessalonians ever asked, "Do you have to go to church?"
 2. What must their visitation program have looked like?
 3. What must their Bible classes have looked like?

II. An Elect Church (v. 4)

- A. Calvin has slandered the pure, biblical doctrine of election.
 1. John Calvin preached *unconditional* (arbitrary) election.
 2. That is **not** the election process known by Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30).
- B. We are involved in our own election (2 Peter 1:10).

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 - Election through the Gospel

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The theology of John Calvin contends that before the foundation of the world, God elected certain ones (both angels and men) to be saved, and others to be lost.

There is no biblical basis for this. In the opening remarks of his first letter to the brethren at Thessalonica, Paul makes an interesting comment which helps put this topic into proper focus.

In verse four, the apostle reminds them of their “election.” The original term merely denotes one who has been selected. The nature of the selection must be determined by additional information.

In this instance, the context clarifies the matter. The election was effected through the proclamation of the gospel and these folks’ acceptance of the same.

Underline “election” (v. 4), and “gospel” (v. 5), and connect the two words with a line. Marginally note: *Election is through acceptance of the gospel.*

This is further corroborated by a statement in Paul’s second letter to these same Christians: “... he [God] called you through the gospel ...” (2 Thes. 2:14).

The Bible knows nothing of an arbitrary divine election separate from human responsibility.

III. An Exemplary Church (vv. 5-7)

- A. They were examples to all you believe in Macedonia and Achaia (v. 7).
- B. There seems to have been a perfect match. Paul knew quality, and likewise the Thessalonians knew quality (v. 5).
- C. They became followers of Paul (v. 6).
 1. See 1 Corinthians 11:1.
 2. Though in affliction, they received the Word with joy. Consider their internal as well as external afflictions.

IV. An Evangelistic Church (vv. 8, 9)

- A. By them the Word was spread abroad.
- B. Being a proper example is a very, very effective form of evangelism.
 1. We cannot count on that alone. We need to be able and willing to teach others what they need to know (see 2 Timothy 2:2).
 2. The pattern of Paul was to both show and teach (Acts 20:20).
- C. They turned from idols to serve the living and true God (v. 9).

V. An Expecting Church (v. 10)

- A. The term “wait for” comes from *anameno* and means “to wait for one (with an added note of patience and trust).”
- B. Because of the way they were living, they were ready for the Lord’s return!
 1. Jesus’ life delivers us from the wrath to come.
 2. A picture of this wrath is painted in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.
- C. These Thessalonians epitomize Paul’s words of 2 Timothy 2:8.