

1 Thessalonians

1 ¹Greetings from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. To the church* of those in Thessalonica, who are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace* and peace be yours.

The Life and Faith of the Thessalonians

²We always remember you when we pray, and we thank God for all of you. ³Every time we pray to God our Father we thank him for all that you have done because of your faith. And we thank him for the work you have done because of your love. And we thank him that you continue to be strong because of your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴Brothers and sisters, God loves you. And we know that he has chosen you to be his people. ⁵When we brought the Good News* to you, we came with more than words. We brought that Good News with power, with the Holy Spirit,* and with the sure knowledge that it was true. Also you know how we lived when we were with you. We lived that way to help you. ⁶And you became like us and like the Lord. You suffered much, but still you accepted the teaching with joy. The Holy Spirit gave you that joy.

⁷You became an example to all the believers in Macedonia* and Achaia.* ⁸The Lord's teaching has spread from you throughout Greece and beyond. In fact, your faith in God has become known everywhere, so we never have to tell anyone about it. ⁹People everywhere are already telling the story about the good way you accepted us when we were there with you. They tell about how you stopped worshipping idols* and changed to serve the living and true God. ¹⁰And you began waiting for God's Son to come from heaven—the Son God raised from death. He is Jesus, who saves us from God's angry judgment that is coming.

Paul's Work in Thessalonica

2 ¹Brothers and sisters, you know that our visit to you was not a failure. ²Before we came to you, people in Philippi abused us with insults and made us suffer. You know all about that. And then, when we came to you, many people there caused trouble for us. But our God gave us the courage we needed to tell you his Good News.* ³When we encourage people to believe the Good News, it's not out of wrong motives. We are not trying to trick or fool anyone. ⁴No, it was God who gave us this work, but only after he tested us and saw that we could be trusted to do it. So when we speak, we are not trying to please people. We are only trying to please God. He is the one who can see what is in our hearts.

⁵You know that we never tried to influence you by saying nice things about you. We were not trying to get your money. We had no greed to hide from you. God knows that this is true. ⁶We were not looking for praise from people. We were not looking for praise from you or anyone else.

⁷When we were with you, as apostles* of Christ we could have used our authority to make you help us. But we were very gentle^a with you. We were like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸We loved you very much, so we were happy to share God's Good News with you. But not only that—we were also happy to share even our own lives with you. ⁹Brothers and sisters, I know that you remember how hard we worked. We worked night and day to support ourselves, so that we would not be a burden to anyone while we did the work of telling you God's Good News.

¹⁰When we were there with you believers, we were pure, honest, and without fault in the way we lived. You know,

^a2:7 But . . . gentle Several Greek copies have "But we became babies."

just as God does, that this is true. ¹¹You know that we treated each one of you like a father treats his own children. ¹²We encouraged you, we comforted you, and we told you to live good lives for God. He calls you to be part of his glorious kingdom.

¹³Also, we always thank God because of the way you accepted his message.* You heard it and accepted it as God's message, not our own. And it really is God's message. And it works in you who believe. ¹⁴Brothers and sisters, you are like God's churches* in Christ Jesus that are in Judea.^a You were treated badly by your own people, just as God's people in Judea were treated badly by the other Jews there. ¹⁵Those Jews killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets.* And they forced us to leave their country. They are not pleasing to God, and they are against everyone else. ¹⁶And they are trying to stop us from teaching those who are not Jews. They don't want them to be saved. But they are just adding more and more sins to the ones they already have. Now the time has come for them to suffer God's anger.

Paul's Desire to Visit Them Again

¹⁷Brothers and sisters, we were separated from you for a short time. But even though we were not there, our thoughts were still with you. We wanted very much to see you, and we tried very hard to do this. ¹⁸Yes, we wanted to come to you. I, Paul, tried more than once to come, but Satan* stopped us. ¹⁹You are our hope, our joy, and the crown* we will be proud of when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. ²⁰You bring us honor and joy. **3**^{1–2}We couldn't come to you, but it was very hard to wait any longer. So we decided to send Timothy to you and stay in Athens alone. Timothy is our brother. He works with us for God to tell people the Good News* about Christ. We sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage you in your faith. ³We sent him so that none of you would be upset by the troubles we have now. You yourselves know that we must have these troubles. ⁴Even when we were with you, we told you that we would all have to suffer. And you know that it happened just as we said. ⁵This is why I sent Timothy to you, so that I could know about your faith. I sent him when I could not wait anymore. I was afraid that the devil who tempts people might have

defeated you with temptations. Then our hard work would have been wasted.

⁶But now Timothy has come back from his visit with you and told us good news about your faith and love. He told us that you always remember us in a good way. He told us that you want very much to see us again. And it is the same with us—we want very much to see you. ⁷So, brothers and sisters, we are encouraged about you because of your faith. We have much trouble and suffering, but still we are encouraged. ⁸Our life is really full if you stand strong in the Lord. ⁹We have so much joy before our God because of you! So we thank God for you. But we cannot thank him enough for all the joy we feel. ¹⁰Night and day we continue praying with all our heart that we can come there and see you again. We want to give you everything you need to make your faith strong.

¹¹We pray that our God and Father and our Lord Jesus will prepare the way for us to come to you. ¹²We pray that the Lord will make your love grow. We pray that he will give you more and more love for each other and for all people. We pray that you will love everyone like we love you. ¹³This will strengthen your desire to do what is right, and you will be holy* and without fault before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy people.*

A Life That Pleases God

4¹Brothers and sisters, now I have some other things to tell you. We taught you how to live in a way that will please God. And you are living that way. Now we ask and encourage you in the Lord Jesus to live that way more and more. ²You know all that we told you to do by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ³God wants you to be holy.* He wants you to stay away from sexual sins. ⁴God wants each one of you to learn to control your own body. Use your body in a way that is holy and that gives honor to God.^b ⁵Don't let your sexual desires control you like the people who don't know God. ⁶Never wrong any of your fellow believers* or cheat them in this way. The Lord will punish those who do that. We have already told you this and warned you about it. ⁷God chose us to be holy. He does not want us to live in sin. ⁸So anyone who

^a2:14 *Judea* The Jewish land where Jesus lived and taught and where the church first began.

^b4:4 Or "God wants each of you to learn to live with your wife in a way that is holy and that gives honor to God."

refuses to obey this teaching is refusing to obey God, not us. And God is the one who gives you his Holy Spirit.*

⁹We don't need to write to you about having love for your brothers and sisters in Christ. God has already taught you to love each other. ¹⁰In fact, you love the brothers and sisters in all of Macedonia.* We encourage you now, brothers and sisters, to show your love more and more.

¹¹Do all you can to live a peaceful life. Mind your own business, and earn your own living, as we told you before. ¹²If you do these things, then those who are not believers will respect the way you live. And you will not have to depend on others for what you need.

The Lord's Coming

¹³Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about those who have died. We don't want you to be sad like other people—those who have no hope. ¹⁴We believe that Jesus died, but we also believe that he rose again. So we believe that God will raise to life through Jesus any who have died and bring them together with him when he comes.

¹⁵What we tell you now is the Lord's own message. Those of us who are still living when the Lord comes again will join him, but not before those who have already died. ¹⁶The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel,* and with the trumpet call of God. And the people who have died and were in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷After that, we who are still alive at that time will be gathered up with those who have died. We will be taken up in the clouds and meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸So encourage each other with these words.

Be Ready for the Lord's Coming

5 ¹Now, brothers and sisters, we don't need to write to you about times and dates. ²You know very well that the day when the Lord comes again will be a surprise, like a thief who comes at night. ³People will say, "We have peace and we are safe." At that time destruction will come to them quickly, like the pains of a woman who is having a baby. And those people will not escape.

⁴But you, brothers and sisters, are not living in darkness.* And so that day will not surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all people who belong to the light.* You belong to the

day.* We don't belong to the night* or to darkness. ⁶So we should not be like other people. We should not be sleeping. We should be awake and have self-control. ⁷People who sleep, sleep at night. People who drink too much, drink at night. ⁸But we belong to the day, so we should control ourselves. We should wear faith and love to protect us. And the hope of salvation should be our helmet.

⁹God did not choose us to suffer his anger. God chose us to have salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰Jesus died for us so that we can live together with him. It is not important if we are alive or dead when Jesus comes. ¹¹So encourage each other and help each other grow stronger in faith, just as you are already doing.

Final Instructions and Greetings

¹²Now brothers and sisters, we ask you to recognize the value of those who work hard among you—those who, as followers of the Lord, care for you and tell you how to live. ¹³Show them the highest respect and love because of the work they do.

Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴We ask you, brothers and sisters, to warn those who will not work. Encourage those who are afraid. Help those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. ¹⁵Be sure that no one pays back wrong for wrong. But always try to do what is good for each other and for all people.

¹⁶Always be full of joy. ¹⁷Never stop praying. ¹⁸Whatever happens, always be thankful. This is how God wants you to live in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹Don't stop the work of the Holy Spirit.* ²⁰Don't treat prophecy* like something that is not important. ²¹But test everything. Keep what is good, ²²and stay away from everything that is evil.

²³We pray that God himself, the God of peace, will make you pure—belonging only to him. We pray that your whole self—spirit, soul, and body—will be kept safe and be blameless when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. ²⁴The one who calls you will do that for you. You can trust him.

²⁵Brothers and sisters, please pray for us. ²⁶Give all the brothers and sisters the special greeting of God's people.^a ²⁷I tell you by the authority of the Lord to read this letter to all the brothers and sisters. ²⁸The grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

^a 5:26 *the special greeting of God's people* Literally, "a holy kiss."

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