

1 THESSALONIANS 1  
1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS



T. M. Moore

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

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## 1 Thessalonians 1: Introduction

1 Thessalonians begins on a high note, with Paul recalling his ministry there and the powerful work of the Gospel. The Thessalonians believed and the change was immediate: faith, works of love, and hoping for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the impact of the Gospel reached beyond the believers in Thessalonica into all of Greece and other places, spreading by natural channels with an excitement that convinced many.

The Thessalonians became an example for the churches and believers in their day. They are an example for us as well.

We're pleased to make this resource available for personal or group study at no charge, and we hope you will find this series helpful in realizing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God.

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## 1 Grace and Peace

*Pray Psalm 29.11.*

The LORD will give strength to His people;  
The LORD will bless His people with peace.

*Read 1 Thessalonians 1.1.*

*Reflect.*

1. In what sense is any church “in” God the Father and Jesus Christ the Lord?
2. Why didn’t Paul just say, “Dear Thessalonians”?

*Meditate.*

We take greetings for granted: “Dear...” The same was true in the Roman world of the apostle Paul. A typical letter of almost any kind would open with a greeting. The sender would give his name, and then mention the name of the person to whom the letter was sent. Then the greeting would follow, usually along these lines: “Greetings and good health.” Not a bad greeting, if you think about it.

But not to be compared with “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

*Grace* is the active agent in every aspect of our salvation. We require grace for everything; apart from the grace of God, we can do nothing. This is true of unsaved and saved people alike, although only the saved can appreciate and grow in that grace (2 Pet. 3.18). The more grace we realize from the Lord, the more His purposes and calling (1 Thess. 2.12) will be realized in us.

Grace is not a commodity, but a divine disposition and initiative of favor, strength, blessing, goodness, and steadfast love, brought about by the Holy Spirit according to the promises of God’s Word. We go to prayer each day to gain the grace we will need for every situation, because without God’s grace, we are helpless (Heb. 4.16).

Where grace prevails, *peace* is the result. We can’t really understand the peace of God (Phil. 4.6, 7). We just have to experience it – that sense that all is well, things couldn’t be better, and we’re in good hands and can relax, no matter the outward circumstances of our life. Peace is what we know in the presence of the Prince of Peace, and this is what Paul was seeking for his friends in Thessalonica.

For Paul, every word mattered, because every word of his letters came by the inspiration of God. In his writing he reveals the will of God for His people. God wants us to know *grace* – more and more of Him and His presence and power for all aspects of our lives. Grace abounding to wretched sinners, that we might be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ and realize the presence, promise, and power of His Kingdom unto His glory.

And unto peace that boggles the mind and leaves us filled with the joy of the Lord (Rom. 14.17, 18). This is the great privilege of all whose lives have been hidden with Christ *in* God (Col. 3.3).

*Prepare.*

1. In what ways do you see the grace of God at work in your life each day?

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2. What does it mean for you that your life has been hidden with Christ in God?
3. How do you expect to see God's grace and peace at work in your Personal Mission Field?

*For to give thanks to God for them is the act of one testifying to how they have advanced in the faith. Not only are the Thessalonians praised by Paul, but Paul thanks God for them, as though God himself had accomplished everything. Paul also teaches them to be moderate in their self-estimation, all but saying that all their growth is from the power of God. John Chrysostom (344-407), Homilies on 1 Thessalonians 1*

*Lord, let me know more of Your grace so that I may...*

*Pray Psalm 29.*

Celebrate, in specific detail, the sovereign grace of God in your life, and seek His strength and peace for your life today.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 29** (*Toulon: I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art*)

Give praise to God, you children of the earth!  
Tell of His strength, proclaim His glorious worth!  
Give to the Lord the glory due His Name!  
Worship in holiness; His grace proclaim!

Over the waters, over thunder's roll,  
God's voice creation's mighty pow'rs controls!  
Cedars collapse at His majestic Word;  
Nations are shaken by our mighty Lord!

God speaks and lightning streaks across the sky;  
By His decree He shakes the desert dry.  
Speak, Lord, and life to beasts and men is giv'n.  
Forests dissolve, and glory rings in heav'n.

Sovereign, the Lord sat o'er the raging flood;  
Sovereign forever rules our gracious God!  
God will His people bless with strength and peace:  
Lord, may Your holy Word to us increase!

## 2 Proof of Faith

*Pray Psalm 51.10-13.*

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from Your presence,  
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
And uphold me *by Your* generous Spirit.  
*Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways,  
And sinners shall be converted to You.

*Read 1 Thessalonians 1.2-4.*

*Reflect.*

1. How many evidences of true faith does Paul cite regarding the Thessalonians?
2. What did Paul pray for the Thessalonians? Why did he tell them he prayed for them?

*Meditate.*

These three verses are packed with Pauline theology. Let's try to organize his thinking about the Thessalonians in a logical and perhaps chronological manner.

First, God *chose* them (v. 4.) The salvation of the Thessalonians began in all eternity past, when God set His love on them in Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 1.4). The doctrine of election is not difficult to understand; we may struggle to accept it, but the Biblical teaching is quite clear. Unless God chooses to set His love on us, there is nothing we, who are dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph. 2.1) and enemies of the Lord (Rom. 5.10), can do to be saved.

Next comes the *faith* these Thessalonians expressed (v. 3), which itself is a work of the Holy Spirit, and, thus, of the grace of God (cf. Gal. 4.6). Faith immediately issued in work, love, and patience. Faith empowers work, enables love, and engenders hope, which focuses on seeing Jesus upon His return (v. 3). All this is done "in the sight of our God and Father" (v. 4), that is, with a view to pleasing Him. And all this – election, saving faith, works and love that sanctify and serve, and hoping toward the coming of Christ – is the work of God's grace, for which continuous thanks and praise are due to our God (v. 2).

Paul says he *knows* that the Thessalonians belong to God the Father and to Jesus Christ because of the *evidence of faith* he has observed in them (v. 4). If we want people to know we are saved, it will take more than just saying so; we need to let faith, focused on Jesus and conscious of living before God, empower us for good works and enable us to love God and our neighbors.

Do you see such evidence at work in you? Apart from such evidence, how can you know that your faith is real and true (Heb. 11.1)? The more we contemplate the grace of God toward us, and live the proof of our faith, the more we, too, will praise and thank Him without ceasing, and thus fulfill our calling to glorify God.

*Prepare.*

1. We're not saved *by* works, but we're not saved *without* them. Explain.

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2. Concerning our salvation in Jesus Christ, we can say that we *are* saved, we *are being* saved, and we *will be* saved. How do you see each of these mentioned in these verses?

3. Do you think believers should pray more for one another? How can doing so increase praise and thanks to God, and give us reasons to boast about Him?

*The participle knowing may apply to Paul as well as to the Thessalonians. Erasmus refers it to the Thessalonians. I prefer to follow Chrysostom, who understands it of Paul and his colleagues, for it is (as it appears to me) a more ample confirmation of the foregoing statement. For it tended in no small degree to recommend them—that God himself had testified by many tokens, that they were acceptable and dear to him. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on 1 Thessalonians 1.4*

*Lord, bring forth in me today abundant evidence of Your saving, sanctifying, and empowering grace, so that...*

*Pray Psalm 51.14-19.*

Pray for the people you will encounter today, that the Lord might allow you to share Jesus' love with someone in your Personal Mission Field.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 51.14-19** (*He Leadeth Me*)

Deliver us, from guilt, O Lord,  
You Who have saved us by Your Word;  
and let our tongues Your mercy bless,  
and sing of Your great righteousness!

*Refrain vs. 15, 18*

Lord, open now our lips to raise  
to You sweet songs of joyous praise!  
Thus let Your favor on us fall,  
and build and strengthen Zion's wall!

No sacrifice, no offering  
would You have us, Your people, bring;  
but broken spirits, cleansed of lies,  
and pure hearts You will not despise.

*Refrain*

Now build Your Church, raise high the wall  
of those who on Your mercy call.  
And take our lives and let them be  
sweet sacrifices, Lord, to Thee!

*Refrain*

### 3 Word and Power

Pray Psalm 46.1-3.

God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear,  
Even though the earth be removed,  
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;  
Though its waters roar and be troubled,  
Though the mountains shake with its swelling.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1.5.

Reflect.

1. In what sense (or senses) is the Gospel of Jesus Christ both *word* and *power*?
2. Why does Paul mention the *kind of men* they were *among* the Thessalonians?

Meditate.

The Gospel came not *in word only* to the Thessalonians; it also came with the *power* of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel only truly comes to anyone when it comes by the Spirit. Merely hearing the words of the Gospel, even to the point of affirming or agreeing with those words, is no true indication that the Gospel has come. Unless the power of the Spirit is evident *in much assurance* (complete and absolute certainty), and in the *power* of faith, love and hope (vv. 2-4) – unless such *power* is in evidence, beginning soon and increasing, then the Gospel has not come at all, no matter how fervently preached or passionately confessed.

Paul indicates that the power of the Gospel came not only *to the Thessalonians* but *through and in and by* Paul and his team. They were the *kind of men* who, when they preached repentance and faith and obedience unto love and good works, were believable, because this is how they lived together before the Thessalonians. We are called to *be* witnesses, not just to *do* evangelism (Acts 1.8).

The power of the Holy Spirit is an out-of-this-world power that works upon us, within us, and through us to accomplish the Kingdom-and-glory agenda of the Lord. He comes as the engine of God's grace, with the medium of the Gospel of grace, to effect transforming grace in all who submit to Him and His Word. And where this occurs, the power of the Spirit works unto righteousness, peace, and joy as the Kingdom of God comes on earth as it is in heaven, to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

Word and power: Seek the grace of God to increase in His saving grace and peace every day of your life (v. 1).

Prepare.

1. The power of the Holy Spirit is something we ought to know when we're experiencing it, right? How should we know it?
2. Can we do effective evangelism without also being witnesses for Jesus? Explain.
3. Could you write verse 5 to all the people in your Personal Mission Field, and feel as though it were true? Explain.

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*For you know, he says, how you came to be chosen (that is, how you arrived at faith), for you did not believe solely by means of our words. Indeed, we not only spoke but also showed wonders, great and glorious and worked by the Spirit, by which you were strengthened with regard to the things we had spoken to you. Hold on tightly to what you have learned, and don't be deflected from your course by the external things that happen to you.* Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428), *Commentary on 1 Thessalonians*

*Heavenly Father, let my witness to Jesus not be one of word only, but also of...*

*Pray Psalm 46.4-11.*

Sink into (the meaning of "Be still") the presence of the Lord. Rest in Him. Focus on Jesus, exalted in glory, and call upon the Lord to be with you throughout the day to come, as you pray about the people you'll see and the work you've been given to do, that you might *be His witness* in word and power.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 46** (*St. Chrysostom: We Have Not Known You As We Ought*)

God is our refuge and our strength; He is our help in times of need.

Thus though the earth beneath us should change, the sea consume the mountain range;

Waters may roar with raging speed; yet God will rescue us at length.

God's everlasting, joyous grace gladdens the city where He dwells.

Safely in Him, we will not be moved; when morning dawns, His love will be proved.

Fears and distresses Jesus dispels for His beloved, chosen race.

Kingdoms arise and rage and roar, threat'ning the earth with sore distress;

Nations may fall, earth melt away, His Word is yet our hope and stay.

God is among us, ever to bless; He is our stronghold evermore.

Come see the works of God's Right Hand! He breaks the nations of the earth,

Shatters their foolish weapons and pride, sets all their sinful strength aside;

Them He will show His infinite worth as they before His judgment stand.

Rest in the Lord and be at peace, all who are mired in sore travail:

Lift up our God, praise Jesus our Lord; proclaim to all the earth His Word!

God is our stronghold, never to fail: thus may our hope and joy increase!

## 4 Exemplary Followers

*Pray Psalm 79.8, 9.*

Oh, do not remember former iniquities against us!  
Let Your tender mercies come speedily to meet us,  
For we have been brought very low.  
Help us, O God of our salvation,  
For the glory of Your name;  
And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins,  
For Your name's sake!

*Read 1 Thessalonians 1.6, 7.*

*Reflect.*

1. In what sense did the Thessalonians *follow* Paul and the Lord?
2. Are affliction and joy mutually exclusive?

*Meditate.*

The pattern the Thessalonian believers were now called to adopt was clear. They saw it in the lives of Paul and those who were with him. It was a pattern of faith, love, and hope – even in the midst of trials and affliction – that exuded joy in every circumstance. This is what it means to be called to the Kingdom and glory of God (1 Thess. 2.12).

All believers need examples they can follow. Paul often set himself forward as an example of one who was following the Lord Jesus and, for that reason, one others should follow as well (v. 6; cf. 1 Cor. 11.1). All believers are followers of Jesus, and all believers are, to some extent, leaders as well. We need to make sure that we can say, like Paul, that those who want to follow Jesus will be helped on their way by following and imitating us.

It might seem strange to see the words *joy* and *affliction* paired in the same context. Aren't these either/or states? Not for Christians. We know that our lives of following Jesus can entail various afflictions, but no affliction can deprive us of the joy of knowing the Lord. We may be suffering and in pain, but we can rejoice nonetheless, just as Paul and the Thessalonians did. Joy is that state of complete happiness and wellbeing (Hebrew: *ashre* and *shalom*) that results as we participate freely and increasingly in the life of God. Only Christians can know such unshakeable joy, and we may know it in any situation.

Paul mentions that the Thessalonians became examples to churches throughout Macedonia (northern Greece) and Achaia (southern Greece). So strong was their faith, so evident was it that real transformation was occurring in these believers, that others noticed and were encouraged. Why can't our churches today be more like that?

*Prepare.*

1. To whom are you an example of following Jesus? Is your example as clear and consistent as it should be? How can you improve in your example to others?
2. How would you counsel a believer who was suffering some affliction to tap into the joy of the Lord? Does that mean such a person should not experience affliction? Or that it is somehow wrong to grieve or feel pain

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or hurt? Explain.

3. What would you say are the primary attributes of a true follower of Jesus Christ?

*The affliction pertains to the body, and the joy to things spiritual. But how? The things that happened to them were burdensome, but not so the things that sprang up out of them, for the Spirit does not allow it. So then, it is possible for one who suffers not to rejoice when he is suffering for his sins but nevertheless to experience pleasure when he is being beaten and suffers for Christ's sake. For such is the joy of the Spirit.* John Chrysostom (344-407 AD), *Homilies on 1 Thessalonians 1*

*Fill me with Your joy, Lord, and help me to live as an example of a true follower of Jesus to...*

*Pray Psalm 79.*

Many aspects of this psalm are pertinent to the state of the Church in our day. We are afflicted in many ways, and some of them are the result of our own bad choices. Seek the grace of God on behalf of believers everywhere, and give Him thanks for the many ways He cares for you, His sheep.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 79** (*Passion Chorale: O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*)

O God the nations all Your inheritance have spoiled!  
Your City have they ruined, Your temple they have soiled!  
Your servants' bodies all to the birds of heav'n are thrown;  
The flesh of all Your faithful the jaws of beasts now own.

The blood of faithful servants like water flows around;  
And none are there Your saints to commit into the ground.  
Our neighbors mock and scorn us: How long, O Lord, how long?  
How long will You be angry and scorn our mournful song?

Pour out, O Lord, Your wrath on all who deny Your Name;  
Who trust You not nor seek You, bring down to deepest shame!  
For they have with great rancor Your precious saints devoured;  
Lay waste their habitation at this late dreadful hour.

Why should the nations mock and say, "Where now is their God?"  
Let there be known among them harsh vengeance for our blood!  
Hear, Lord, our groans and sighing; preserve us by Your pow'r.  
For we are fairly dying each day and hour by hour.

Reproach those who reproach us with judgment sevenfold!  
Let thanks and praise to You by Your precious flock be told.  
We are Your sheep, O Savior, we thank You all our days.  
Look on us with Your favor as we declare Your praise.

## 5 Sound Forth!

Pray Psalm 107.31, 32.

Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,  
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!  
Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people,  
And praise Him in the company of the elders.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1.8.

Reflect.

1. What do you suppose that “sounding forth” of the Word looked like?
2. What was the “faith” that went out from Thessalonica? Was it just the words of the Gospel? Or was it more?

Meditate.

As we read this verse, we remember that Paul has referred to the believers in Thessalonica as “examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe” (v. 7). We should thus take them as an example for ourselves and our churches. Part of that example entails how they received the Gospel – in Word and power, unto faith, love, hope, and perseverance. An important part of that example is that the Word and faith of Jesus “sounded forth” and had “gone out” from them “in every place.”

Do we have any doubt as to what this means? From the churches in Thessalonica, by some means, the Gospel was preached and the witness of their lived faith spread throughout Greece and beyond. People in many places knew that the Kingdom of God had established a beachhead in Thessalonica and was advancing from there into new places. We must consider how that happened – not by any organized program, but spontaneously, through natural relationships of family, business, perhaps even government, or as people visited synagogues of friends and family in other places.

This is what Roland Allen has referred to as “the spontaneous expansion of the church.” Where the Gospel has been truly received in Word and power, and the Spirit is at work unto faith, love, good works, and hope, people naturally talk about what has happened to them. They share eagerly of what they have discovered in Jesus, of the lifting of the burden of sin and guilt, of the abiding sense of assurance that all is well with their soul, of the hope of glory, and of new found love for God and neighbors. The Gospel landed in Thessalonica like a large drop of refreshing water, and the ripples of that impact spread by natural relationships and everyday dealings into “every place.”

Why are our churches today not following this example? Why have we chosen to organize our church life and conduct our services of worship to *attract* the lost, rather than preparing ourselves daily to *go among them*, testifying and demonstrating the power of Jesus? The New Testament provides many examples of how the Kingdom comes and the glory of God is raised. Have we simply chosen to ignore these? Are we avoiding our calling as witnesses because we fear the opposition or affliction that might ensue? Or is it that we have little confidence in the power of the Gospel to change the hearts of the lost, or in our own example to convince them that believing in Jesus makes any difference?

Let us begin to pray daily that we might align ourselves with the examples of believers and churches that we find in the New Testament, even if it means that our present way of doing church or being Christians must change radically.

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*Prepare.*

1. By what means is the Word of God *sounding forth* and the faith of Jesus *going out* from your church?
2. In your own Personal Mission Field, do you consistently seek opportunities to show Jesus and talk of Him with others? How might you become more consistent in this?
3. What are the primary barriers or obstacles that keep you and your church from becoming more like the believers and churches in Thessalonica?

*Here we have an elegant metaphor, by which he intimates that their faith was so lively, that it did, as it were, by its sound, arouse other nations. For he says that the word of God sounded forth from them, inasmuch as their faith was sonorous for procuring credit for the gospel. He says that this had not only occurred in neighboring places, but this sound had also extended far and wide, and had been distinctly heard, so that the matter did not require to be published by him. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on 1 Thessalonians 1.8*

*Lord, make me a more spontaneous witness for Jesus. Take away fear and doubt, and instead grant that I might...*

*Pray Psalm 107.1-9.*

These verses show that the grace of God can reach even those who are wandering far from Him. Thank Him for reaching you, and pray for the people you will see today who are wandering “in the wilderness” and need the Lord.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 107.1-9** (*Faithfulness: Great is Thy Faithfulness*)

Lord, You are good, we give thanks and we praise You!

Your steadfast love will forever endure.

Let the redeemed, who from trouble You rescue,

Gather and say that Your mercy is sure!

*Refrain vv. 1-3*

Lord, for Your wondrous works, and for Your steadfast love,

We give You thanks, we exalt Your great Name!

We who from east and west, north and south gather,

Boldly redemption in Christ we proclaim!

Wand'ring in deserts, no city, no dwelling,

Hungry and thirsty and faint in our soul –

Lord, when we cried, all our misery telling,

You brought us home and in grace made us whole!

*Refrain*

## 6 Turn, Serve, Wait

*Pray Psalm 115.1.*

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,  
But to Your name give glory,  
Because of Your mercy,  
Because of Your truth.

*Read 1 Thessalonians 1.9, 10.*

*Reflect.*

1. What does Paul mean by “manner of entry” (v. 9)? To what does this refer?
2. What does it mean to “wait” for Jesus?

*Meditate.*

The example of the Thessalonians reflected on Paul and his team and on the ministry they had among them. The ready manner (Greek: εἰσοδος – *welcome*) in which the Thessalonians received them and their witness commended not only their faith but Paul’s mission, and preceded Paul as a preparation for his preaching.

Three verbs in particular stand out here as defining the effects of God’s grace on the Thessalonian believers. They *turned* to God from idols. When people come to Jesus, they cannot bring their old loyalties and devotions with them. These must all be left behind. Whether our idols are Greek deities cast in silver and mounted on a mantel, or the idols of wealth, pleasure, or other forms of self-indulgence, all these must be set aside to be returned to no more.

Thus we may fully and faithfully *serve* the living and true God. The sense of this verb is that of being at the behest of God for His purposes and will, to hear His every command and carry them out faithfully. The idols people serve have no life in them; God alone is living and true, so we will never regret turning away from what is worthless and perishing to Him Who endures forever.

And in this posture of service we *wait for* His Son from heaven – continuing in our service, whatever may be our particular station or calling in life, and looking expectantly for the return of Jesus from heaven.

Here in a brief space (v. 10) Paul summarizes the work of Jesus: He is God’s eternal Son, Who delivered us from the wrath to come (by His death on the cross); God raised Him from the dead, and He has ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, where He is advancing His Kingdom on earth. He will one day return to gather His faithful people to Himself. By Him we have turned away from all futile things; in Him we have the power to serve God; and for His return we prepare and wait, as we serve the living and true God day by day.

*Prepare.*

1. Using just verses 9 and 10, how would answer someone who asked you what it means to be a Christian?
2. The verbs *serve* and *wait* apply to every believer, regardless of their calling in life. *Serving* the living and true God and *waiting* for Jesus to return should define all our waking moments as believers. Is this the case in your life? Explain.

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3. The *welcome* the Thessalonians gave to Paul and the Gospel commended his ministry to others. Of what did that *welcome* consist (vv. 2-10)? How much of this *welcome* do you see in your own life?

...the Apostle, in ascribing to God the epithets true and living, indirectly censures idols as being dead and worthless inventions, and as being falsely called gods. He makes the end of conversion to be what I have noticed—that they might serve God. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on 1 Thessalonians 1.9*

*Lord, I welcome You and Your Word and Spirit into my life and calling today. Help me thus to...*

*Pray Psalm 115.1-18.*

As you pray, let the Lord search your soul, to discover any idols that yet have some place in your life. Haul them into the light of His grace, and cast them away from you. Then commit yourself afresh to Jesus and seek the Lord's help to live for His glory.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 115** (*Plainfield: Nothing But the Blood of Jesus*)

Not to us, O God, not us, but unto Your Name give glory!  
For Your love and faithfulness, ever to Your Name be glory!  
Why should the nations cry, "Where is their God on high?"  
You rule us, Lord, on high: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Idols made by men's own hand – ever to Your Name be glory –  
see nor hear nor understand – ever to Your Name be glory!  
They neither feel nor walk, nor can they speak or talk;  
All those who serve them fall, but unto Your Name be glory!

All who trust in Jesus yield – ever to His Name be glory –  
find in Him their help and shield: Ever to Your Name be glory!  
O Israel, trust the Lord! He helps us evermore!  
Fear Him obey His Word: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Blessings from our gracious Lord – ever to Your Name be glory –  
will attend us evermore: Ever to Your Name be glory!  
Bless all who fear You, Lord, all who obey Your Word,  
All who Your Name adore: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Grant us, Savior, great increase: Ever to Your Name be glory!  
Bless us with eternal peace: Ever to Your Name be glory!  
Heaven and earth are Yours; let every soul adore  
And bless You evermore: Ever to Your Name be glory!

## 7 The Gospel of Word and Power

*Pray Psalm 146.1, 2.*

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

While I live I will praise the LORD;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

*Read 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10.*

*Reflect.*

1. How was the power of the Gospel evident to and among the Thessalonians?
2. How does the example of the Thessalonians encourage you?

*Meditate.*

1 Thessalonians begins with Paul reminding the people of that Macedonian city how the Gospel had come to them, and what had occurred since. In spite of opposition, many believed the Gospel, and a church was established in Thessalonica. The grace of God came through the preaching of Jesus – His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and imminent return – and those who believed and turned to God from idols began at once to worship and serve Him and to look forward to His return.

Their faith was real; the power of the Gospel had taken hold in them. And it seems the believers in Thessalonica could not keep quiet about Jesus, even in the face of persecution. Their lives backed up their words as their work of faith, labor of love, and hope in the coming of Jesus bore powerful witness to the new life that had come to them. The Gospel sounded forth and went out from them into many other places, bearing witness to their faith far and wide, making the church in Thessalonica a model congregation.

Paul will spend the rest of 1 Thessalonians shoring-up this good start and instructing the Thessalonians in how to remain faithful going forward. Paul longs for the grace and peace of the Lord to increase among these new believers, so by reminding them of their beginnings in the faith, he lays a foundation to build on for the rest of his epistle.

*Prepare.*

1. Imagine you were present the day this epistle was first read to the church in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 5.27). How would you have felt after hearing this first chapter? Would you have been encouraged? Why? Should we be more encouraging like this toward one another?
2. From 1 Thessalonians, what are the most important truths to make clear whenever you share the Gospel with someone?
3. Meditate on verse 8. How should the example of the Thessalonians guide you in working your Personal Mission Field?

*Thus, the obedient and responsive soul gives itself over to the virtuous life. This life is freedom itself, on the one hand, from the chains of this life, separating itself from the slavery of base and empty pursuits. On the other hand, this soul devotes itself to faith and the life of God alone, because it sees clearly that where there is faith, reverence and a blameless life, there is present the power of Christ, there is flight from all evil and from death which robs us of life. Gregory of Nyssa (335-394), On the Christian Mode of Life*

*1 Thessalonians 1  
1 and 2 Thessalonians*

*Let the Good News of Jesus come by word and power through me today, O Lord, as I...*

*Pray Psalm 146.*

Let the Spirit guide you to praise the Lord for the specific ways the power of His Gospel has brought grace and peace to you.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 146** (*Hallelujah! What a Savior!: Man of Sorrows*)

Praise the Lord, my soul, give praise! While I live, His Name I'll raise!  
And exalt Him all my days – God forever reigns in Zion!

Trust we not in prince or man – no salvation's in their hand;  
Death shall take them, breath and plans – God forever reigns in Zion!

Blessed are they whose hope resides in the Lord, Christ at His side.  
By Him heav'n and earth abide – God forever reigns in Zion!

He is faithful evermore; He gives justice to the poor,  
feeds the hungry from His store – God forever reigns in Zion!

Jesus sets the pris'ner free, heals blind eyes that they may see,  
Lifts those burdened painfully – God forever reigns in Zion!

He the righteous loves the best; wand'ers in His grace are blessed;  
Needy ones in Him find rest – God forever reigns in Zion!

But the wicked who defame His eternal blessed Name,  
Them He brings to ruin and shame – God forever reigns in Zion!

*1 Thessalonians 1  
1 and 2 Thessalonians*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Why do we say that the Gospel comes to people in word and power? What are the implications of this for your witness for the Lord?
2. When the Gospel comes, grace is the means and peace is the result. Explain.
3. What was the church in Thessalonica such an excellent example of the power of the Gospel? What might your church learn from them?
4. From 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10, what would you say are the keys to encouraging other believers? How can you become more consistent in encouraging the believers in your Personal Mission Field (Heb. 10.24)?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this study? How are you working to implement that lesson in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.