

1 THESSALONIANS

Greetings (1:1-3)

1 From Paul, Silas and Timothy.
To the church in Thessalonica, those who live in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

May grace and peace be imparted to you.

²We continually thank God for all of you when we pray for you.
³We are always mindful before our God and Father of the work that is the result of your faith, your deeds that have been the outworking of your love, and your perseverance that is inspired by your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lead by example (1:4-10)

⁴⁻⁶Brothers, you are loved by God who has chosen you through the preaching of our gospel, not simply through words but also with demonstrations of His power. We ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit and with great assurance. It was for your sake that we lived among you and you are well aware that our lifestyle was an example to you; and so you were able to imitate us and the Lord, doing what pleases Him.

Even though there was much suffering, you received the message with the joy that the Holy Spirit gave you. ⁷You in turn became a model for all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸⁻⁹It was not only in these regions that the Lord's message was proclaimed through you; your faith in God is known everywhere. So we do not need to speak further about your reputation, for it is well known what a great reception you gave us. People speak about the way you turned from idol worship and now serve the true and living God. ¹⁰They know that you long for the return of God's Son from heaven, Jesus who was raised from the dead and who rescues us from the wrath that will come at the time of judgment.

Time in Thessalonica (2:1-20)

2 So, my brothers, you know that our time among you was not a failure. ²Before our arrival, you knew we had suffered greatly in Philippi, but despite this, with God's help we boldly proclaimed this gospel to you, regardless of strong opposition.

³We have not appealed to you out of any wrong motives; we have no desire to deceive you in any way. ⁴Quite the opposite! We speak to you as those commissioned by God Himself. He has entrusted us with the task of spreading the gospel as those He has approved. So we are certainly not attempting to please man, but God who tests our hearts.

⁵⁻⁶You know that we have never flattered you, nor have we used the gospel as a front to cover up any desire for personal gain. God Himself is our witness that this is the case. We are not expecting praise from you, nor from anyone else.

Because Christ has made us His apostles, we would have every right to expect you to support us, but we never allowed ourselves to be a burden to you. ⁷Instead we dealt with you as a mother deals gently with her small children. ⁸Our love for you was so great that it was sheer joy for us not only to share the gospel with you but also to make our own lives available to you. This is the very evidence of how precious you are to us.

⁹Dear brothers, surely you have not forgotten the way we worked so hard among you! We worked day and night to support ourselves while we preached the gospel of God to you.

¹⁰Not only is God our witness but you yourselves know well that we lived holy, righteous and blameless lives among you believers. ¹¹You can vouch for the fact that we treated you as a father would deal with his own children. ¹²We encouraged you, strengthened you and urged you to live in ways that are worthy of God, who calls us to reveal His Kingdom and His glory.

¹³Because you received what we preached to you as God's Word, rather than our own words, we thank God continually for you. So now His Word is at work in you because you believed. ¹⁴As a result, my brothers, you reflect the same life as God's churches in Judea, for you too are in Christ Jesus.

You have suffered persecution from your own countrymen as the Judean churches suffered from the Jews. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶As a people they not only killed Jesus but also the prophets who preceded Him; and they also disassociated themselves from us. This displeased God for they do everything in their power to prevent us from taking the truth to

the Gentile nations, so that they may be saved. It seems that there is no limit to the sins they compile, placing themselves under God's wrath and judgment.

¹⁷Never did we leave you in our hearts, even though, my brothers, we had to leave you physically for a time. We made every effort to return to you as soon as possible. ¹⁸Again and again this was my purpose personally, but the devil prevented this from happening. ¹⁹For is it not true that when the Lord Jesus comes it will be seen that you are our hope, our joy, the crown in which we will glory in His presence? ²⁰Yes, you are our glory and joy.

Timothy sent to encourage the believers (3:1-5)

3 When I could stand my separation from you no longer, ²I sent Timothy to you while I remained in Athens. He is a faithful brother and God's fellow worker in spreading Christ's gospel in order to strengthen and encourage your faith, ³so that you would not be disturbed by the trials you have to face. You know clearly that we were destined to face such things. ⁴In fact, when we were with you we kept warning you that we will all be persecuted. It was inevitable and so it turned out.

⁵When I could no longer stand being without news of how you were coping, I sent Timothy so I could hear about your faith. I was fearful that the enemy might have tempted you to deny your faith, for then all our work among you would have come to nothing.

Timothy's good report (3:6-13)

⁶However, Timothy has just arrived back here bringing good news about your faith and love. He has reported that you continue to think well of us and long to see us again, just as we are longing to be reunited with you. ⁷Therefore, my brothers, despite all the distress and persecution, your steadfast faith has greatly encouraged us. ⁸Because you continue to stand strong in the Lord, we have received a new lease of life! ⁹So how can we thank God enough for you because of all the joy we have in our Lord's presence because of you? ¹⁰We pray earnestly night and day that we may return to you and strengthen your faith still further.

¹¹I pray that our God, the Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus will provide an opportunity for us to visit you. ¹²May the Lord cause your love to increase and overflow for one another and for others, in just the same way that our love overflows to you. ¹³May He keep your hearts strong so that you will be blameless and holy in the

presence of God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes together with all His holy ones.

Devote yourselves to please God (4:1-8)

4 Finally, my brothers, we taught you how to live in ways that please God; and this you are indeed doing. Now we plead with you in the name of the Lord Jesus to devote yourselves more fully to pleasing Him. ²For you are aware of the instructions we gave you by the authority the Lord Jesus Christ gave us.

³⁻⁴It is God's will that you should lead a holy life; that you should avoid sexual immorality and that each of you should learn to control his or her body in the way that is holy and honourable in God's eyes. ⁵Avoid the passionate lust typical of the heathen, the unbelievers that do not know God. ⁶No one should wrong his brother or sister or take advantage of another believer in this matter of sexual relationships. The Lord will surely punish those who are guilty of such sins, as we have already warned you. ⁷For God did not call us to live impure lives, but to walk in holiness. ⁸So anyone who ignores these instructions rejects not man but God, who gives you His Holy Spirit to enable you to live a holy life.

Love one another (4:9-12)

⁹Now we do not need to write to you about brotherly love, for God has Himself taught you to love one another. ¹⁰In fact, you have shown your love for all the believers throughout Macedonia. Yet we encourage you, dear brothers, to continue to do this even more fully.

¹¹⁻¹²Aim to live a quiet life; this should be your ambition. And mind your own business! Obey our instructions to work diligently so that you will win the respect of outsiders by the way you live day by day. At the same time you will not need to be dependent upon anyone.

The Lord's return (4:13-18)

¹³My brothers, we want you to be informed about those believers who have died, for you should not grieve like those who have no hope. ¹⁴Because we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we also are confident that God will ensure that those who have died in Christ Jesus will accompany Him when He returns.

¹⁵Based on what the Lord has said Himself, we can assure you that we who are still alive on earth when the Lord comes again will

certainly not rise to meet Him ahead of those who have already died.

¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven shouting His command. The voice of the archangel will be heard, together with God's call, sounding like a trumpet. Those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise. ¹⁷Then those believers who are still alive on earth will rise together with them in the cloud of glory to meet with the Lord. Thus we shall be with the Lord for all eternity.

¹⁸So encourage one another with these truths.

Remain spiritually alert (5:1-10)

5 Now, my brothers, I have no need to write to you about when these events will take place, ²for you can be sure that the Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly, as a thief who comes in the night. ³While some are saying: "Everything is peaceful and we are safe," sudden destruction will come upon them, in the same way that a pregnant woman suddenly has labour pains. They shall not escape!

⁴However, my brothers, you do not live in ignorance, so that this Day will surprise you like a thief. ⁵For you are all sons of the light and of the day. No, we do not belong to the spiritual night where all is darkness. ⁶So let us be alert and ready, and not like those who are asleep spiritually. ⁷People sleep at night and get drunk at night. ⁸But because we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled in the way we live. Wear your faith and love like a breastplate and your hope of salvation like a helmet. ⁹For God has not condemned us to suffer His wrath, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰He died for us so that whether we are alive or have died at that time, we will live together with Him.

Closing instructions (5:11-28)

¹¹So continue to encourage one another and build each other up, as you are already doing.

¹²Now, my brothers, I ask you to have true honour for those who work hard on your behalf, whom the Lord has placed over you and who warn and correct you as necessary. ¹³Maintain the highest regard for them and love them wholeheartedly because of their work. And live in peace and harmony with one another.

¹⁴My brothers, I also urge you to warn any who are lazy, to encourage the fearful, to help the weak and to be patient with everyone. ¹⁵Be certain that none of you retaliates with wrong for wrong. Instead always aim to be kind to one another and to anyone else.

¹⁶Always be full of joy. ¹⁷Keep praying all the time. ¹⁸Give thanks to God, regardless of your circumstances. All this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹Do nothing to dampen the fire of God's Spirit within you. ²⁰Do not treat genuine prophetic words from the Lord with contempt by ignoring them. ²¹Test whatever is said and hold onto what is good because it is clearly from God. ²²Shun evil in all its forms.

²³And may God Himself, the God of peace, cause you to be holy in every aspect of your lives, so that everything about you in spirit, soul and body will be kept blameless in God's eyes at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who has called you is the Faithful One and He will work this in you.

²⁵Pray for us, brothers. ²⁶Greet all the brethren with genuine love. ²⁷In the Lord's Name I insist you ensure this letter is read to the whole church.

²⁸May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.