

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Thessalonians 1:1-10.**
- B. In our series of lessons we learn to prepare for the coming of Christ by:
 - 1. Being the type of people that God wants us to be.
 - 2. Growing in the word of God.
 - 3. Being encouraged and being an encourager.
 - 4. Walking in holiness, harmony, and honesty.
 - 5. Taking comfort in Christ's coming.
 - 6. Making adequate preparations for Jesus' return.
 - 7. Knowing the encouragement of praise and prayer.
 - 8. Not being lazy in our commitment to the Lord.
- C. In our series I will be talking about some of the things that will happen when Christ returns and discussing some of the things that will not happen. But no matter how God decides to end the world with the second coming of Christ, we know that if we are ready for that coming it won't make any difference how these events come to pass.
- D. One of the best ways to prepare for the second coming of Christ is to be a member of the Lord's church who is doing all that they can for God.

I. AN ELECT PEOPLE.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 1:1-4.
Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. **2** We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers; **3** constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, **4** knowing, brethren beloved by God, *His* choice of you;...
- B. The church (1:1) is God's chosen people (1:4). The doctrine of election confuses some people and frightens others and yet both responses are not justified.
- C. Election involves the following:
 - 1. It begins with God. The entire plan of salvation was born in the heart of God long before man was created or the universe formed (2Th. 2:13; Eph. 1:4).
(Eph 1:4) ...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love
(2Th 2:13) But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.
 - 2. That predetermined plan involves our becoming like X (Rom. 8:29-30).
For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; **30** and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.
 - 3. Salvation involves our having faith (Eph. 2:8; Heb. 11:6).
(Eph 2:8) For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;
(Heb 11:6) And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.
- D. Being an elect person should change our life. Being chosen means being special. It changed the lives of the brethren in Thessalonica. Notice in 1:3 the things of which Paul gives thanks. Their "work of faith" and "labor of love" and "steadfastness of hope."

II. AN EXEMPLARY PEOPLE.

A. Scripture text: 1Th. 1:5-7.

...for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. **6** You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

B. These brethren received the word.

They had been blessed to witness the miraculous power of the HS. They saw the apostles for who they really were, ambassadors for X.

C. They followed to words and lifestyle of the apostles:

They did it so well that Paul could call them imitators. This meant sharing in the “joy of the HS” but also in the sufferings that come to those who have faith (1Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1-2).

(1Cor 11:1) Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

(Eph 5:1-2) Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; **2** and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

D. They became examples to other brethren (congregations).

Brethren should never compete with one another to see who can be the best or do the most, but it is scriptural to “provoke unto love and good works” (Heb. 10:24). It would seem this fits the conduct here.

III. AN ENTHUSIASTIC PEOPLE.

A. Scripture text: 1Th. 1:8.

For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

B. As receivers of the word they then became transmitters! The words “sounded forth (out)” means to sound as a trumpet. They were not “tooting their own horns” as did the Pharisees, but their true, sincere faith was as obvious as a trumpet blast to all who knew them.

C. One elder told me several years ago, “Preachers who are not fired with enthusiasm, will be fired with enthusiasm!” May we be enthusiastic for X, and His church. This means not sitting back and allowing the leadership or just a select few do all the work. 10% doing 90% of the work may be reality but it is not how God wants His church to function.

D. According the W.E. Vine, to be “enthusiastic” means to be of good cheer, of good courage, or to make cheerful. One use of the word is found in 2Cor. 9:7, where it can be translated as hilarious!

E. A person will become interested in someone who shows good cheer. This will be especially true when even the face of troubles and persecution that a person can face life with good courage.

IV. AN EXPECTANT PEOPLE.

A. Scripture text: 1Th. 1:9-10.

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, **10** and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

B. To understand this point let's look back at 1:3:

1. Their “work of faith” made them an elect people for they turned to God.

2. Their “labor of love” made them an enthusiastic people as they lived and shared the gospel.

3. Now, their “patience of hope” made them an expectant people looking for the Savior’s return.

C. Paul makes the point that Xians will be delivered from the wrath to come (1:10). He makes this point again in 5:9-10; 2Th. 1:5-10.

D. Worshipping idols brings no hope in the lives of those who do. Psalm 115:2-11 is a great description of the worthlessness of serving idols instead of the true God.

Why should the nations say, “Where, now, is their God?” **3** But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. **4** Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands. **5** They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; **6** They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they

cannot smell; **7** They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. **8** Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them. **9** O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. **10** O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. **11** You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.

- E. It could be that the most difficult thing to do in this passage is to wait (1:10). This word here means to "await someone with patience and confidence, expectantly." But what are we waiting for? We wait for:
1. Not signs from heaven--but a Savior from heaven (4:16; Rev. 1:7).
(1Th 4:16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.
(Rev 1:7) ...BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen.
 2. We are waiting for the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23-25).
 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. **24** For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.
 3. We are waiting for the new body (Phil 3:20-21; 1Cor. 15:52-54).
(1Cor 15:52-54) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. **53** For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory."
(Phil 3:20-21) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.
 4. We are waiting for complete and total righteousness (Gal. 5:5).
 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.
 5. We are waiting to become like X (1Jn. 3:1-2).
 See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.**2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

CONCLUSION & INVITATION.

- A. Jesus is coming again! May we be ready, as the Thessalonians were ready by being:
 1. An elect people.
 2. An exemplary people.
 3. An enthusiastic people.
 4. An expectant people.
- B. May we prepare for the coming of Jesus by:
 1. Works of faith.
 2. Labors of love.
 3. Patience of hope.
 4. Learning to wait for our coming Lord.
- C. Are you one of the elect? You can become so by becoming a Xian!
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.