

LESSON 17 – I THESSALONIANS

DECEMBER 7, 2016

OVERVIEW

- . The Thessalonians response to the Gospel – I Thessalonians 1
- . Paul's relationship to his converts – I Thessalonians 2
- . Timothy's report – I Thessalonians 3
- . Exhortations – I Thessalonians 4-5

THE THESSALONIANS RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL – I THESSALONIANS 1

- . Paul's greeting – I Thessalonians 1:1
 - . In Paul's day a letter began with the writers name, then the name of the recipient, followed by a formal greeting
 - . He calls the recipient the church *in* God
 - . Christians are not simply people who profess to believe in Christ
 - . Christians live In Christ – we are an active member of the Body of Christ
 - . The word *in* implies a more intimate relationship
 - . "Lord Jesus Christ" is the most reverent greeting
 - . Lord is the same Greek word used for Jehovah in the Old Testament
 - . A Jew can use no stronger word for absolute deity
 - . Jesus always calls attention to the humanity of our Lord
 - . Christ is the Greek equivalent of Messiah, which means anointed one
 - . Paul then uses the Greek greeting of "grace" with the Hebrew greeting "Peace be to you"
- . Paul's prayer of Thanksgiving – I Thessalonians 1:2-4
 - . Paul's warmth of feelings towards the Thessalonians is expressed in the first sentence
 - . He's constantly praying for them and thanking God for them
 - . Paul thanks God for their work that springs from their faith
 - . Paul gives thanks that it is because of their deep love for God that they work for God
 - . Finally Paul gives thanks for their endurance inspired by hope
 - . Hope is not a passive state, rather steadfastness in the face of difficulties

- . The Thessalonians response to his message – I Thessalonians 1:5-10
 - . The Thessalonians response to Paul's message is proof of their election and salvation
 - . They adopted Paul's way of life and became examples for all of Macedonia
 - . They were great witnesses and spread the gospel throughout the area
 - . This provides great joy and peace to Paul at a needed time

PAUL'S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS CONVERTS – I THESSALONIANS 2

- . Paul had to leave Thessalonica suddenly because the non-believing Jews stirred up a mob against him
 - . Paul knew these Jews would stop at nothing to defame him
 - . They tried to link Paul to the band of vagrants who were preaching false religions for personal gain
 - . The report from Timothy confirmed that the Thessalonians needed no outside witness to defend Paul
 - . They knew Paul's love and sincerity and the power of his ministry
- . The response of the Thessalonians touched Paul deeply and filled him with a sense of hope and joy
 - . He expresses that his visit to Thessalonica was not a failure
 - . He knows the results of his work are the reaping of eternal fruit by these new believers
- . Paul gives seven aspects of his work of rooting souls in Christ and nurturing them
 - . Present the Gospel boldly
 - . Give yourself over completely to your work
 - . Live blamelessly
 - . Teach and provide comfort
 - . Have a great expectation that God's Word will work powerfully
 - . Be prepared for persecution
 - . Have great hope in God's eternal plan

TIMOTHY'S REPORT – I THESSALONIANS 3

- . Timothy's arrival and report
 - . The good news reported by Timothy fills Paul like a tonic
 - . He no longer feels weary or discouraged
 - . The good news is that spiritual ground has been won and kept from the enemy
 - . Timothy reports their faith hasn't been shaken
 - . In addition, their loyalty to Paul was untouched by all the propaganda

- . Paul had been suffering emotionally when Timothy arrived
 - . He had been carrying on the work alone under strenuous difficulties and continued opposition
 - . Timothy's news filled Paul with reinvigorating strength
 - . In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians he speaks of his intense satisfaction and delight in them
 - . Paul expresses all of this satisfaction, pouring forth his delight in God's gift of these friends
 - . There is joy in his letter and an outpouring of Thanksgiving to God, recognizing He is the true source of this love
- . Paul's prayer to be reunited with them – I Thessalonians 3:11
 - . Paul's hope is that he will someday see them again, yet recognizes it's in God's hands
 - . Through prayer, Paul is confident that he will come to know whether this is something God wants or not

EXHORTATIONS – I THESSALONIANS 4-5

- . Paul now applies the doctrine of faith in Christ to practical details of daily life
 - . A Christians way of life needs to be reoriented in contrast to the former orientation to the current fashions or public opinions of the world
 - . In all of Paul's letters there is a theme of learning to live "in Him"
 - . In our new, resurrected life we need to trust in Christ and trust in the strength He will give us to live a life of faith
 - . The aim and motive of Christian life is to please the one, living, personal God who tenderly loves us
 - . Paul encourages them to do this more and more
 - . In other words, to be standing still in our faith is to be backsliding
- . Exhortations concerning sexual purity – I Thessalonians 4:3-8
 - . In pagan Greek society sexual sins were not condemned
 - . Purity is God's will
 - . Sexual impurity not only harms us but it harms others
- . Exhortations concerning brotherly love – I Thessalonians 4:9-10
 - . The Thessalonians already exercised the warm, ardent, joyous, self sacrificing, protecting love for one another
- . Exhortations concerning honest work – I Thessalonians 4:11-12
 - . Our work is a witness to the outside world
- . Doctrines and exhortations concerning the Lord's return – I Thessalonians 4:13 –
 - . We need to resist focusing on the timing of this event
 - . We need to ignore others who prophesize of the timing

- . We need to embrace the attitude that time is of the essence, not knowing the day or the hour of His return
- . Because this concerns future prophesy we are not to be critical of two Christians with different views on the details of this
- . Description of the rapture – I Thessalonians 4:13-18
- . Description of the great tribulation – I Thessalonians 5:1-11
 - . These verses talk about God's judgment falling upon the whole world
 - . Paul emphasizes five points concerning this judgment
 - . It will be sudden and unexpected
 - . Believers need not fear it
 - . Live now in the light of Christ's coming
 - . Live together with Christ
 - . Continue to encourage and build up one another
- . Final exhortations – I Thessalonians 5:12-13
 - . We need to honor, obey and love those appointed to leadership in the church
 - . We are to admonish those who rebel against the church leaders or who attack the church
 - . Christians are called to give thanks to Him
 - . We are to test everything by the word of God
- . Paul's closing prayer of commitment – I Thessalonians 5:23-28
 - . Paul talks of God's enfolding power and faithfulness
 - . God calls for us to give all of us to Him – the total personality is to be sanctified
 - . To be blameless before God is not just to live good life but to be blameless in God's sight

NEXT LESSON: DECEMBER 21, 2016 – 2 THESSALONIANS