

Study Notes for 1 Thessalonians chapter 1

Begin your group by reading through chapter 1 aloud to get a sense of what the Apostle is saying.

If you have time, you might also read through **Acts 17:1-9** as a backdrop for this study. It is a mini-history of Paul's visit to Thessalonica.

1:1 Grace and Peace - Among the early Greeks, **grace** was a common salutation and greeting. The word **peace (Shalom)** served the same purpose for the Jews. Paul thus combines Greek and Hebrew greetings and attaches theological significance to them.

- What was the theological significance that Pastor Paul brought out in the teaching?
- Why must grace always come before peace?
- Why do you think so many people struggle laying hold of God's grace?

1:2-3 Giving thanks for the Thessalonians

- What three things did Paul give thanks for related to the Thessalonian church? (List them)
- What does Paul mean by "**work of faith**"? (Note: Pastor Paul mentioned that this Greek word for "work" refers to good works, or good deeds.)
- Why should faith always produce good deeds in the life of a believer?
- (If time allows consider these cross-references: Romans 1:5; Galatians 5:6; 2 Thes. 1:11)

- We sometimes hear the term "**labor of love.**" This is the second thing Paul gave thanks for in the Thessalonians. What actions might Paul be referring to when he writes about their "labor prompted by love"?
- What makes love such an important motive for our hard work?

- Define "**steadfastness of hope**" in your own words?
- How does someone act when they're hopeful? How about when they're hopeless?
- In practical terms, what does it mean to hope in Jesus?
- What things do people put their hope in today that are a bad idea?
- Why is it so wise to put our hope in Jesus?

1: 4-5 Coming to Christ with Power and Conviction

- What do these verses reveal about the basis of Paul's assurance of the Thessalonians' salvation? How did Paul know that they were "**chosen**"?
- In light of Paul's previous life as a proud Pharisee, what significance do you see in his calling a largely Gentile group "**brothers**" in 1:4?
- What do you think Paul means by "**our gospel**" in **1 Thes. 1:5**?
- What do you think he means in this verse when he says that this gospel came "**with power**"?
- What is "**conviction**"?

- According to the rest of this chapter, what were the Thessalonians convicted of?

1: 6-7 Suffering as a Christian

The Jewish converts in the church were hated and persecuted by the unbelieving Jews of the synagogue who were extremely antagonistic to the gospel of Jesus. The Gentile converts suffered in the sense that they had to swim against the swift current of idolatry that flowed like a torrent through commercial Thessalonica.

- How is it possible to have joy even when following Christ leads to suffering, as Paul says in 1:6?
- Have you thought about what your life might be like if you were made to suffer for being a believer in Jesus? How would you react?

1: 8-10 Faith and Power

- Paul tells the Thessalonians that their faith has “**gone forth everywhere.**” What do you think he meant by that?
- Is our faith going forth today? Why or why not?
- In **verse 9** what is the main proof that the believers in Thessalonica were recipients of the power of God?
- If someone who knew you before Christ met you now, what would they say you had turned away from since coming to the Lord?
- In **verse 10** the Apostle also spoke of the power they had received to wait for the coming of Jesus. Why does waiting for Jesus require the power of the Spirit?
- The final comment of the chapter is that Jesus delivers us from the wrath of God. Why are believers no longer subject to God’s wrath?
- Why does the world deserve the coming wrath of God?
- What should our attitude be toward the world?