

Lighthouse Bible Church

March 1st, 2015

1st Thessalonians 1: 9 – 10 *Scripture Reading: Romans 6: 15 - 23*

‘An Example Church to Follow’ #4

Stand – Read – Pray

As we finish up chapter one of this book we are going to see two final character qualities that set the church at Thessalonica apart as a God honoring, Christ centered, Spirit lead **example** church to follow.

We have been looking at the church at Thessalonica because Paul calls them the example church to follow and imitate and we want to find out what that example looks like and then look at our own church and see if we are that kind of church and people as well.

Just by way of reminder, Paul has shared 7 character qualities so far that set this church apart as an example church to follow. They are:

A praying church

Works of Faith, Labor of Love, and Patiently Endure until Christ, who is their hope, returns

Secure in the salvation, faith church

Church that preached and lived the gospel of Jesus Christ

Church that had leaders worth following and imitating because they were following and imitating Christ.

They were an Example to others to follow church

They were an Evangelistic, Outreach, Witnessing church *get CD's*

The next character quality, 8 if your keeping track, that sets the Thessalonian church apart as an example church to follow is in Verse 9 and that is that they are:

#8 A Transformed Church

Verse Nine: For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

This church had **turned** away from all of its pagan practices and their worship of false gods and idolatry and **turned to** and began to **serve** the **living and true God**.

They heard the gospel of salvation and received it and as a result, repented of their sins of idolatry and turned from that to serve the living God. You see that's what a true salvation conversion does, it renounces the former sins and turns from them and it believes and receives and trusts in the finished work of Christ that begins to evidence itself in fruits of righteousness and in service and obedience to the living God.

Like Paul said in **Romans 6: 17 - 18**, before you were saved you were a **slave to sin**. After you were saved you became a **slave of righteousness**. This Thessalonian church was a transformed church.

They didn't just say 'I'm a Christian' and then live like they always did. They didn't just add Jesus to their list of God's or use Him as some kind of crutch or formula for happiness in their marriage or family or finances. They **turned FROM** the dead false idols and all that that lifestyle promoted and turned **TO** serve the living and true God as slaves of Christ.

They experienced the life changing power of the gospel and then lived it out in transformed lives of obedient service to God. That is always the indicator of someone who is truly transformed, the fruits of a transformed heart and life.

Have you experienced the life changing, transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Have you been born again? Jesus said 'if you haven't you will not see the kingdom of heaven'. **John 3: 3.**

Your religious works can't save you (*not everyone who says to*)
Your doing good works can't save you (*for by grace you have*)
Your belief in God can't save you (*the demons believe and they*)
You being a good person or better than most people can't save you

Because you're really not a good person at all, you're are just like the rest of us. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God and deserve hell and death. You have sinned by breaking God's moral law in the 10 commandments. Because if I were to ask you have you ever:

Lied, Stolen, Lusted, Blasphemed, Angry, Parents
Put something else above God

Is it apparent or will it be apparent **what manner of entry** the word of God had in your life. Or what manner of entry some faithful person had in your life by sharing the gospel with you. Do others see a transformed life of obedience or do they see someone who calls themselves a Christian yet **looks like, acts like** and **talks like** an unbeliever.

We have seen all too often churches and individuals who claim to be Christians yet there is never any evidence of a changed life. When someone is truly transformed, their allegiance is also transformed. They **turn from** the idols of the world: religion, money, self, good works, business, sports, jobs, abilities, looks, immorality, approval, and they **turn to** serving God as the new priority in their lives.

We want it to be apparent to others, when they see your transformed life, what manner of entry this church and the gospel message had in your life. So that they say ‘there is something different about that church and the people who attend there’. It is something that they will desire and want to emulate and follow and have for themselves, and it will be Christ Jesus.

And that is exactly what the church at Thessalonica was, a transformed church that became obvious to everyone. What about you and what about our church? Well, there is one final character quality that set this church apart as a God honoring, Christ centered Example church to follow and it is found in Verse 10. They were:

#9 A Waiting for the Return of Jesus Christ Church look at Verse 10

Verse Ten: and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

This church had a proper theology and understanding of the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ. It was a hope that filled them and it was a hope that helped them to endure, even in the most difficult of times, knowing that their salvation and faith in Jesus Christ would **deliver them from the wrath to come**. Remember in Verse 6; it was a patience of hope in His return that got them through.

Paul will share a lot with this church about Christ’s return. He will tell them later in **1st Thessalonians 4: 15 – 18** *Overview and Read*

He will tell them when he writes his second letter to them in **2nd Thessalonians 2: 1 - 12:** about what to look for just before His return and what would happen after His return.

All of that caused in them, what it should cause in us, is an expectancy of His return at any time and then live in light of His imminent return. I'm convinced that some Christians don't ever hope in the return of the Lord because they are too **busy** or too easily **distracted** by the things of this world.

We are called as **Colossians 3: 2** says **to set our minds on things above and not on things of the earth.** Because as **Philippians 3: 20** says **our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also EAGERLY wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

We need to be doing what **Titus 2: 13** says **looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.**

We, in scripture, are called Pilgrims, Aliens, Strangers, Sojourners because this life is temporary and this world is temporary in comparison to heaven and eternity. But all too often some Christians lay up, or try to lay up for themselves, treasures on earth and not in heaven as **Matthew 6: 19 – 20** says

We have a hope in the return of Jesus Christ. Every passage that dealt with His first coming has come to pass just as the Bible said. So do we believe the hundreds that are still yet to be fulfilled at His return? We just finished a study on those end time events that should excite us about His soon return.

By the way, our hope at His return is because He conquered death by His resurrection from the grave. He said 'because I live, you shall live also'. As **John 14: 1 – 3** says **let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place, I WILL come again to take you to be with Me.** Our hope is heaven.

But I want you to notice what our deliverance is from, which should bring great joy and comfort, **who delivers us from the wrath to come.**

There is coming a day when God's grace is going to give way to His perfect wrath. What is the **wrath to come** that we are **delivered** from as a born again believer?

Well, the first one is His wrath against this earth and against the people living at the time who refuse to acknowledge God as God. **Revelation 6: 16** calls it the **wrath of the Lamb** and **Revelation 14: 10** calls it the **wrath of God**. We know it as the great tribulation. *Explain* We will escape that because Jesus said in **Revelation 3: 10** that **I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole earth...**

The second aspect of delivering us from the wrath to come is His ultimate and final and eternal wrath poured out on all those who are not born again, who are not written in the Lamb's book of life. It is God's eternal punishment for their unforgiven sin in a place we know as hell.

It is described as outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth, everlasting fire, the second death and the lake of fire. **Revelation 14: 10 – 11** describes it this way. ... **the wrath of God which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever and they have no rest day or night.**

Revelation 20: 10 says **they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

Paul told the Thessalonian church because you have been saved from your sins by placing your faith and trust in Christ alone for salvation, you are delivered from God's wrath and His punishment against sin and you are delivered from a Christless eternity in hell. Because you received the righteousness of Christ as **2nd Corinthians 5: 21** says.

John the Baptist told his disciples in **John 3: 36**: **he who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**

Paul will tell them later in **1st Thessalonians 5: 9 – 10**: **for God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another just as you also are doing.**

So as we look at this example church, we see the example they set by being a:

A praying church

A work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope church

A secure in their salvation and faith church

A gospel preaching and living church

A church that wants to imitate its leaders and Christ

An example people and church for others to follow

An evangelistic, outreach, witnessing church

A transformed church

A waiting for the return of Jesus Christ church

So how are you doing in your own individual life as you honestly put yourself up against the lens of this example church and people? Are these character qualities evident in your life? Are there some you are doing well in and others that you may need to work on? We don't want to be merely hearers of the Word but doers of it.

If there is some area where you need help in, please let us know and we or someone else will come along side of you to help. Do you know of someone else who may need help in one or more of these areas that you yourself are living faithfully in, then reach out to them to mentor them to help them along.

Closing Prayer

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Introduction and Review:

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Romans 6: 17 – 18
John 3: 3

Verse 10:

1st Thessalonians 4: 15 – 18
2nd Thessalonians 2: 1 – 12
Colossians 3: 2
Philippians 3: 20
Titus 2: 13
Matthew 6: 19 – 20
John 14: 1 – 3
Revelation 6: 16
Revelation 3: 10
Revelation 14: 10 – 11
Revelation 20: 10
2nd Corinthians 5: 21
John 3: 36
1st Thessalonians 5: 9 – 10

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