

1 Thessalonians

Who, When, Where

Written by Paulus (Paul). Paulus was originally a fanatical Pharisee, persecuting, imprisoning, and even killing Christians for teaching what he thought was heresy, that Yeshua was the Anointed, (The Jewish Messiah). After meeting Yeshua in a miraculous way on the road to Damascus, Paulus became not just a Christian but one of Christianity's most fervent preachers and teachers. He spent most of his life as an itinerant missionary, with all the life threatening perils that that brought with it, to the towns and cities which lay along the route between Jerusalem and Rome. Paulus died in Rome somewhere in the 60'sAD, and he wrote most of the letters which we have in the New Testament. Probably one of Paulus' earlier letters. And possibly written as early as AD50, but very likely sometime in the early 50s.

Written from Corinth, in southern Macedonia (now called Greece).

Summary

Paulus had been there before and helped start a Christian community there. He was writing to let them know that, even though it had been longer than he hoped between visits, he still prayed for them constantly and was desperate to visit.

But in case he was delayed, ... he wrote about a few things he thought were really important for that local body of young Christians.

Yeshua modelled life for Paulus and co.

Paulus and co modelled life for the Thessalonians.

They will model it for others. Not just sermons, but living it out day by day.

This is the Biblical way.

Is it your way?

Paulus is desperate to visit them face to face to see how they're going, to build them up...

He knows he's been blocked twice already by Satan. So he sends someone else,

(Timotheos), to at least check on them. But he is still pleading with God to be able to go in person. And still believes he will get there.

This is the love a mentor should have for his disciples.

Do your mentors love you this much?

Do you love your disciples this much?

Do you live it out so they can see it?

Before You Read

Be honest. How much are you willing to suffer to build the church?

Do you ever feel like Satan has blocked you from doing something? What can you do about it if that happens?

How much more good are you than the criminals, the drug dealers, the bad people in general you see in society around you? How would you rate yourself and them on a scale of 1 .. 100 of goodness?

Key Verses

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

And you, you became imitators of us, and of the lord, welcoming the message amid much duress, with the joy of the holy spirit. So that you became models to all those who trust, in Macedonia, and in Achaia.

This is the church model.

The Thessalonians became imitators of Paulus and co. Who had come to them as imitators of Yeshua.

And now, the Thessalonians in turn, are now models for those in Macedonia and Achaia.

Who modelled Yeshua for you?

And now, who are you modelling Yeshua for?

1 Thessalonians 2:8-12

In the same way, longing for you, we're delighted to give you not only the good news of God, but also our very lives, because you've become beloved to us, for you, brothers, recall our trouble and labour. For working night and day so that we wouldn't overburden any of you, we proclaimed the good news of God to you. You're witnesses, so is God, how piously, and righteously, and blamelessly, we behaved towards those of you who trusted. Even, as you know, how we entreated and exhorted each one of you, like a father to his own children. And testifying, so that you walk worthily of God, the one who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

It's not just a matter of standing on a street corner and shouting out the message of God. We have to live it out in front of them. Making it clear that we're not after their money, or our own glory, or power. But that we are here to serve them. To sacrifice ourselves for them. Even to suffer for them when we shouldn't really have to. So that nothing of us gets in the way of them hearing what we are saying.

This was the model that Yeshua gave us. He should have been welcomed as a king.

Worshipped, served, honoured. But he was willing to be treated like a nobody,

disrespected and abused by many, and ultimately charged with crimes he didn't even commit, and killed as a political favour to the people he came to save!

All so we would be able to hear the message, and to have the salvation we totally didn't deserve, (through nobody's fault but our own).

This is what we have to be modelling for the world now.

Are we?

Is this what the church is famous for?

1 Thessalonians 2:18

That's why we wanted to come to you. Indeed, I, Paulus, tried once, and then a second time, but Satan hindered us.

Satan himself stepped in to block Paulus returning.

You and I probably aren't so high on his radar. But sometimes when ministry things don't work out as we planned, it is possible that it is the forces of evil who are blocking it.

Pray about it. Try again.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-2

That's why, when we could stand it no longer, we were delighted to remain by ourselves in Athens, and we sent Timotheos, our brother, and servant of God, and our fellow-worker in the good news of the Anointed, in order to firmly establish you, and to encourage you concerning your faith.

Even when they were blocked a second time they didn't give up. But they found a way... they sent Timotheos instead, to at least check up on them.

Is there something you need to keep trying?

Is there some other way you might be able to achieve it?

1 Thessalonians 3:11-12

Night and day, pleading exceedingly to see your faces, and to fully provide for the needs of your= faith. Now may God himself, our father, and our lord Yeshua the Anointed, align our path so we can come to you.

And still not giving up. Still praying, pleading with Yahweh to let it come to pass that they can visit as planned. To see their disciples face to face. And to be able to minister to them again in person.

1 Thessalonians 4:4-5

that each of you know how to have ownership of their own vessel, in sanctification and in honour, not in the passion of desire like the nations who don't know God

The world around us is increasingly driven by its passions and desires. The message of the "media" is increasingly that it is totally OK to give in to those. And even that it is no longer acceptable for you to tell me otherwise.

That I have the right to pursue my desires without hindrance. (No matter how twisted and deviant they are).

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

For we say this to you in the message of the lord, that we who are living, those who are left behind until the arrival of the lord, won't precede those who've been laid to rest. Because the lord himself, with a rousing shout, with the loud voice of a chief messenger, and with a trumpet of God, will descend from the sky, and the dead in the Anointed will rise up first. After that, we who are living, those who are left behind, will be snatched away at the same time, together with them in the clouds, to meet the lord in the air, and in this way we will always be together with the lord.

Some in those days thought that any Christian who died had missed out on the resurrection. They were expecting Yeshua to return for his followers, and to be resurrected and saved from this depraved world.

Paulus is just making it clear here, that they won't miss out, they'll come back with Yeshua and we will all live together in the new world. (But more on that in chapter 5).

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

Now about the times and seasons brothers, you've no need to be written to, for you yourselves know exactly that the day of the lord is coming like a thief in the night. For when they're saying "Peace and security", then, unforeseen by them, complete ruin will be standing there, like labour to the one who's pregnant. And they definitely won't escape.

Just when they think it's all OK. It will suddenly come upon them and it will be over.

But we have nothing to worry about because we are of the light, not of the darkness, and we will be snatched away to meet Yeshua in the air.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

And we entreat you brothers, admonish the disorderly, exhort the faint hearted, uphold the weak, be patient towards all.

I feel like in our modern society we would rather just ignore these people, and let the government deal with it.

But that's not what we're called to. Is it?

1 Thessalonians 5:15

See that nobody repays anyone evil with evil, but always pursue good, both to one another and to all.

Not repaying anyone evil with evil seems pretty OK within the church, and probably within family.

But to everyone!?

There are some real jerks out there.

There are some really evil people out there.

But we should pursue good. We should reach out to them in kindness.

How evil are they? Compared with you?

How evil was pre-Christian you? Compared with Yeshua?

You know I'm right.

Let's be nice to everyone. Who knows, we might change their life the way Yeshua changed yours.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

How long do you think it will be before Yeshua comes back for us?

What should you be doing while you wait?

How much more good is Yeshua than pre-Christian you? How would you rate him and you on a scale of 1 .. 100 of goodness?

How does that compare to the scale of you and the "bad" people around you?

How can you copy his attitude towards you and live that out towards them?