

1 Thessalonians 1:2-4

Paul's Greeting

1

Introduction

The introductory verses give us a clear picture of a strong church. The picture painted in these verses is a model for all churches. It is the picture of a church strong in carrying on a work for the Lord.

1. It has faithful ministers (v. 1).
2. It is a church of the people (v. 1).
3. It is founded in God and Christ (v. 1).
4. It needs God's supreme gifts: grace and peace (v. 1).
5. It stirs prayer (v. 2).
6. It arouses people to work (v. 3).
7. It is chosen by God (v. 4).

2

1 Thessalonians 1:1-4

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

3

A Strong Church Has Faithful Ministers

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A strong church has ministers who are faithful to the church. Note that Paul was not writing this letter alone. Silas and Timothy joined him in exhorting the church. call to be associates.

4

A Strong Church of the People

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A strong church is a church of the people. Paul did not address the letter to “the church at Thessalonica,” but to “**the church of the Thessalonians.**”

5

A Strong Church is founded in God and Christ

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A strong church is founded “in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

6

A Strong Church Needs Grace and Peace

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A strong church possesses God's gifts—grace and peace.

1. **Grace** (charis) means the undeserved favor and blessings of God. No church can be strong without the favor and blessing of God.

2. **Peace** (eirene) means to be bound, joined, and woven together. It speaks of being whole and complete.

Through God's grace we have been saved and brought into completeness in Christ!

7

A Strong Church Prays

1 Thessalonians 1:2

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

A strong church prays. This is a crucial trait, for God has ordained prayer to be the medium through which He blesses and moves on behalf of people. Paul, Silas, and Timothy have been praying for the Thessalonian believers and expressed their thanks for God for His work in and through them.

8

A Strong Church Prays

1 Thessalonians 1:2

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

Why has God chosen prayer to be the medium through which He acts for man? Because sharing and talking together are the way people communicate, fellowship, and commune together. This is true both with men and God. Prayer requires our presence, sharing, and talking; and God wants to fellowship and commune with us. A strong church encourages people to pray, and it stirs people to pray for it and its ministry.

9

A Strong Church has People who Work

1 Thessalonians 1:3

remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

A strong church is a church that is stirred up and aroused to work. Three things stir and arouse the church to work.

1. **Faith stirs the church to work.** When a person truly believes in Jesus Christ, he is stirred to work and serve Him. The same is true with a body of believers, the church. The stronger the belief of the people in Christ, the stronger they will work for the Lord. A strong faith stirs, arouses, activates, and energizes believers to work and carry out the mission of Christ.

10

A Strong Church has People who Work

1 Thessalonians 1:3

remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

2. **Love stirs the church to labor.** The word **labor** means to toil, or to labor to the point of exhaustion. When a person truly loves Christ, he is prompted and driven to arduously labor for Christ. Note: the believer who is driven by love is the believer who has really seen the love of Christ. He is always conscious that Christ has taken his sins upon Himself and borne the punishment for them.

11

A Strong Church has People who Work

1 Thessalonians 1:3

remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

3. **Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ stirs the church to endure in its work and labor.** The word **patience** means endurance, steadfastness, perseverance. Our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ: we know He will guide, provide, deliver, strengthen, sustain, and bless, In addition, we know that the Lord is going to transfer us into heaven at the end of this life and reward us according to our labor here on earth. Therefore, strong believers and churches are driven to endure in hope. Jesus is returning!

12

A Strong Church is Elected by God

1 Thessalonians 1:4

knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

A strong church knows it has been elected by God.

The word election means that the church has been selected and chosen by God. This means two things.

1. Believers are elected and chosen by God to be His beloved people. God has called believers out of the world and away from the old life which the world offered, the old life of sin and death. He has called believers to be separated and set apart to Himself and the new life He offers, the new life of righteousness and eternity.

13

A Strong Church is Elected by God

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2. Believers are elected and chosen to be beloved brethren. The Thessalonica believers were facing intense persecution. It would be logical to think that God had abandoned them just as many do today. Our salvation is not based in ourselves. All believers are secure in Christ. All of Satan's forces cannot undo the "election" of God!

14

So What ...

Someday in the near future, we will all stand before God and give an account of our lives. As believers, our sins are forgiven, but our rewards hang in the balance. It is foolish to live our lives for our short time on earth at the expense of eternity.

We are in this together! We are here to support one another. Everyone has been given gifts and talents which are to be used to make a difference in this world. Let's work together!