

- ii. What was their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ? (1:3, 10).
  - a) Their allegiance (faith) was to a new King who was the true author of peace and whose kingdom was peace, and they were awaiting His return to establish His kingdom in full.
  - b) What does “faith” or “allegiance” to the King look like?
    - Matthew 24:45-51 – Giving food to the King's servants until He returns.
    - Acts 6 makes clear the the apostles took this to mean both the food of the Word and the food for the widows.
    - The Thessalonians had an abundance of work because they were doing the work of the King.
  - c) They had labor. What produced this in them?
  - d) They had endurance.

### LIVE THE STORY

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- How might Paul's brief opening of 1:1 tell us something about the nature of this letter to the Thessalonian church?
- The Thessalonians, even by gathering, were putting themselves at risk. What are the things Americans are usually willing to suffer for? What were the Thessalonian believers willing to suffer for?
- How might the term “church” (1:1) have been a loaded term for the Thessalonian believers?
- How can we follow Paul's example (imitate him) from what we see in vv2-3?
- How might Matthew 24:45-51 inform what faith (faithfulness) to the King looks like and why it produced work in this young church?
- Why do you think a proper understanding of Christian hope (1:3, 10) is essential in order to have work, labor, and endurance?
- If the actions of the church are to display the nature of the Kingdom of Christ to the world, what are we communicating?

## Dissident Disciples (Part 2)

### *The King's Emissary to the Kingdom Dissidents*

Jerry Cisar — June 24, 2017

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3

### Introduction

#### I. Paul, Silas, and Timothy (1:1a)

A. Paul, Silas, and Timothy ...

- i. When you receive a letter, whose name is first?
- ii. Cosenders or coauthors?

Jeff Weima: *“Cosenders must not be equated with ... coauthors. In other words, just because Paul frequently included the names of others in the sender formula does not necessarily mean that these named cosenders and equal or even minor role in the actual composition of the letter.”*

a) Galatians 1:1-2

b) It does two things:

- Paul is with Timothy and is therefore well informed by him since his recent return.
- It brings increased comfort.

iii. Did you notice anything missing in this first line?

iv. Who were Silas and Timothy?

## II. To the Church of the Thessalonians (1:1b-c)

- A. What is the Church
  - i. The gathered citizens (polites) of the city (polis) was called the ekklesia (the church).
  - ii. This is the word used in the Greek OT to describe the people of God (Israel).
    - a) Ephesians 2:11-13, 19
    - b) When Paul calls the Thessalonian believers “the church,” he is including them into citizenship in Israel.
  - iii. ... in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
    - a) This phrase either means that they are *in the presence of God the Father and the Lord Jesus*, or, it means the church was made *by God the Father and the Lord Jesus!*
    - b) “God the Father” and “the Lord Jesus Christ” are objects of one preposition. (See also 3:11, and 2 Thess. 3:5, 16.)
    - c) This *high Christology* was present in primitive Christianity!
- B. “Grace and peace to you.”
  - i. Paul's use of this phrase is not haphazard.
  - ii. Paul rather methodically introduces his letters with *grace* and *peace* and ends them with *peace* and *grace*.
  - iii. Reversing the order communicates the sense that this atmosphere of grace and peace are found in the very words of the letter!

## III. Thanksgiving (1:2-3)

- A. Paul, Silas, and Timothy give thanks to God
  - i. They give thanks to God because they know that God is the One at work ultimately bringing about what is happening.
  - ii. When do they give thanks?
    - a) If we want to have lives that are more filled with gratitude (and we should) it begins by praying.
    - b) We should learn to pray by imitation!

Gary Shogren writes, “In general the North American church fails to teach its people to pray. For some the training begins and ends with, 'Forget about formal prayers you may have learned. Prayer is just talking to God, so just speak to him as you would to another person.' Given the importance of good praying and its difficulty, this sort of negligence is appalling. Solid biblical praying is best created through a living model for people to imitate. Paul taught the new converts the relevant truths; he also said, in effect, 'Listen to me and pray as I do.' Rather than teaching a class on prayer, why not select a smaller number of people and say to them, 'Let's pray together for three months, and we'll also talk about what the Bible says about prayer'?”

- B. What They Give Thanks For
  - i. They give thanks for their work, labor, and endurance.
    - a) “work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus.”
    - b) The work produced by faith, the labor that grows out of love, the endurance can only result from hope in the Lord Jesus.