

**Reading Together**  
**New Testament Bible Reading**  
**September 5 – September 11**

**Monday, September 5 – 1 Thessalonians 1: 1 – 10**

The Book of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians was written by the Apostle Paul to the church that had been established in Thessalonica. Thessalonica was a city in present day Greece and the story of how this church became established is found in Acts 17. Timothy was a Greek and Paul had given him the responsibility of overseeing this church. Paul wrote this letter to the church in response to a report he had received from Timothy (1 Thess 3: 6-7). The good news is that this church was standing firm in its faith. But they also had questions about Jesus and when he would return again. Paul addresses these questions in this letter.

Paul opens his letter to them with a normal greeting for that day, where he identifies himself, Silas, and Timothy as the writers of the letter, and the church in Thessalonica as the recipient. In the following verses, Paul gives thanks to God for what is happening in Thessalonica. Look at verse 3--they are working hard for the gospel, but their work is not out of duty, rather it is out of love for Christ, and they are enduring trials because of their hope in Christ. Next in verses 4 – 10, Paul recounts how they clearly came to faith because of the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. They were not simply persuaded by fine sounding arguments, but were moved in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and the change in their lives was evident for all to see.

**Tuesday, September 6 – 1 Thessalonians 2: 1 – 16**

In today's reading Paul recounts his ministry among them. He reminds them that there was nothing phony about his ministry. He didn't try to win them by flattery or manipulate them through improper means. He reminds them that he works for God, not for them, so his motives for ministry should always be pure. He wasn't even trying to make a living off of his ministry, but instead he took a job and worked right beside them each day, so he would not be a burden to them. While he did that, day after day he lived a "holy, righteous, and blameless life among them." He dealt with them like a father would deal with his own children

exhorting, encouraging them and comforting them as they took their first baby steps in Christ (verses 11-12).

Finally in verses 13 - 16 Paul thanks God for the way the Thessalonians received the Gospel and put it into practice in their own lives. Notice verse 14 where Paul refers to them as imitators of other Christians, which ties back to what Paul said in chapter 1 verse 6, where Paul says they became imitators of him. It is interesting that Paul made a point of telling people to imitate him. **1 Corinthians 11:1** Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ. Paul could do that because he was faithful to imitate Christ; so when people imitated him they were really imitating Christ. Is that true of our lives?

### **Wednesday, September 7 – 1 Thessalonians 2: 17 – 3: 13**

Look at verses 17 and 18 of chapter 2. Do you see the sense of very real spiritual warfare that is taking place? Look at the words that Paul uses, he was torn away from them, he has a great desire to see them again, but his plans are hindered by Satan. No matter how great our desire is, we are no match for Satan's power. That is why in verse 19 Paul says that our hope is in Jesus. Only Jesus has the power to defeat Satan. What Paul was living out here very much matches up with what he wrote in:

**Ephesians 6: 11 – 13** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Paul's visit to Thessalonica was very brief, and as a result, Paul was not sure if their ministry had really taken hold in the lives of the people. So Paul sent Timothy to check on their welfare. The report is very good (verses 6 – 10) and Paul is overjoyed and overflowing with thanks because of the way their faith is growing. Paul's desire is to see them again (verse 11), but in the meantime Paul's prayer is that their love for God and for each other would increase and overflow into the lives of others.

## **Thursday, September 8 – 1 Thessalonians 4: 1 – 12**

In these verses Paul gives very straightforward advice as to how they are to go about living their lives until Jesus returns. Look especially at 4: 3. Paul says, “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified.” To be sanctified means to holy—to be set apart for God, so Paul is calling them to live a holy life. Notice in verse 8 Paul says that if someone rejects this call to live a holy life they are not rejecting man, but rejecting God, because it is the Holy Spirit who prompts, encourages, and helps us to live the kind of life that God desires.

The second part of the advice Paul gives to them regarding how they are to live their lives deals with brotherly love—loving each other and other believers. Paul tells them that he doesn’t really need to tell them that because they are doing it already, but he does encourage them to do it more and more.

Finally, Paul exhorts them to live a quiet, but busy and productive life, that others will respect.

## **Friday, September 9 – 1 Thessalonians 4: 13 – 5: 11**

Finally in these verses, Paul gets to the question that seemed to be bothering the church at Thessalonica. This church had questions about what would happen to those who died before Jesus came again. Would they be lost forever? Paul assures them, in these verses, that the dead in Christ are also assured of eternity with Christ. Paul says in 4: 14 that because Christ died and was raised from the dead, we should expect the same thing to happen to those who have died trusting Christ as their savior. Just as Christ was raised from the dead, so too will they be raised along with those who are still alive at his return.

Paul says what is important isn’t the dates or the times (5:1), but to always be ready because the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night (See also Matthew 24: 36, 44).

## **Saturday, September 10 – 1 Thessalonians 5: 12 – 28**

The last part of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians deals with a variety of different subjects. Paul starts by telling them in 5:12 to love and regard highly those who work in the church as pastors and leaders. Next Paul gives them a laundry list of things that should mark their life in Christ: live in peace; warn the lazy; encourage the timid; be patient with all people; show mercy and kindness; have joy in their salvation; pray continually; give thanks for whatever is happening in your life. These things are their responsibility as Christians. But notice what Paul says that God's responsibility is to work in their lives to sanctify them (make them holy) through and through. We don't make ourselves holy through our actions, God makes us holy and our actions prove God's work in our lives!

## **Sunday, September 11 – 2 Thessalonians 1: 1 – 12**

Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians also deals with the subject of the Lord's return. Apparently there were some who feared that the Lord had already returned and they had missed it (2 Thessalonians 2:1-11). It may have been their inordinate concern over Christ's return that led some to being idle and lazy, which Paul addresses in this letter just as he did in the first.

Paul begins this second letter by reminding the Thessalonians to remain faithful even in the midst of persecution for their faith. Paul ties their faithfulness into the idea of the Lord's return, and how on the day Christ returns those who are evil will be punished and those who are righteous in Christ will be rewarded for their faithfulness.

Notice especially in verses 11 and 12 Paul's concern that they remain faithful to Christ so that on the day Christ returns they may be counted as being worthy of the Gospel. We live in an age where many people profess to believe in Christ, but then live however they want to. Paul makes it clear here, that while we all need Christ to be saved, we must also live out our faith so that Christ is glorified through our lives.