

Changed Lives

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: I Thessalonians 1.

B. The Thessalonians are facing a very dangerous world.

1. If we do not make the right decisions going forward, the collapse of Western Civilization is a very real possibility.

2. If we cannot find out how to change people, there is no hope in saving the world from ultimate collapse.

C. Paul was chased out of Thessalonica and Jews followed him from the city hindering him.

II. Introduction to the letter.

A. There is a double address: they are found in the Lord Jesus and in God the Father.

B. He is in prayer for these believers for faith, love and hope. (I Corinthians 13)

1. The work of faith. (I Thessalonians 1:4-5)

a. This is a faith that does something to you.

b. It makes you turn from what is wrong to what is right.

c. It is turning away from idols to God.

d. Americans worship all sorts of idols.

1) Fulfillment comes when you minister and not simply when you are ministered.

2) The result of self-fulfillment is emptiness.

e. The election and calling of God address the world's great problem—everything in the Bible starts out with God's love.

1) God's view of human life is that we have been deceived.

2) In the cross, we see the love of God.

3) We know that we are different because we are hungry and want God.

4) The gospel came in word.

5) The gospel came in conviction.

6) Until you have been moved to action, you have not received faith.

2. The labor of love. (I Thessalonians 1:5-8)

a. Despite persecution they had joy in the Holy Spirit—God first loved us, and He gives us affliction to see what kind of solution can be worked out as we trust Him.

b. The good news was spread by word of mouth.

c. They believed and trusted in God’s good care.

3. The persistence of hope. (I Thessalonians 1:10)

a. Everything looks to the hope of the Second Coming of the Lord.

b. Every believer is caught up in Christ at the believer’s death. (John 14)

c. The believers knew that they would not come into judgment and that Jesus would deliver them from another former judgment—the Great Tribulation. (John 5:24)

d. He who comes already rules in the hearts of men. His kingdom will come, but He is already living within us.

Application questions:

1. What is the object of Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians and how does this stand out from the common prayer for the church today?

2. Explain one of the elements that Paul prays for—what stands out to you about it?

3. Why were these elements so important for the Thessalonians especially given the hardship that they were facing? Explain.
