

## A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians

What a joy it is once again to be able to come to you and share with you the Word of God. Today, we're going to be looking into the book of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians, and I would remind you that we're going through a series of studies called, "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You," the books of the New Testament. Our goal is not to go in depth on these books but to give a bird's-eye view as to what's going on here, the author and the background, the purpose of the books, and so forth and so on.

But today, we want to look in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians. And some of the background on this book is that Paul the apostle was the author of the book, and we see Silas and Timothy mentioned here in verse 1. It talks about these people working with Paul. But Paul was the author, and I would remind you that Paul the apostle was possibly the author of over half of the New Testament, and we're going through his epistles right now, leading up to the other epistles that are written by other individuals under the inspiration of God.

But today in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians, we see the date of both letters to the Thessalonians was soon after A.D. 50, and the setting is Thessalonica, the chief city in this Roman province. Now, Paul had preached the Gospel in this city earlier, and you'll read about that in Acts chapter 17, verses 1-10. And because of the Jews, Paul had to leave this city in a hurry. But the Christians loved Paul so deeply and he loved them. Now, Paul's first visit to Thessalonica was not a long visit. He had to leave quickly, remember, because the Jews were going to kill him.

The key verses that I see here...and you may see other verses that you would see as key verses. I recommend that you read the book, and if something stands out to you as a key verse, then that's fine. But what I see here is chapter 3, verses

6-7. The Bible says: *<sup>6</sup>But now when Timotheus came from you unto us... Paul is speaking here, talking about Timothy is coming to him... and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: <sup>7</sup>Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith. He says, "We've gone through a lot, but we've been uplifted, knowing that your faith is holding strong, that you're serving God."*

Well, the purpose of the book is several things here, but we want to look at one particular thing. Paul wishes to express his deep love and concern for the brethren here at Thessalonica. He reveals that he is able to live because they remain standing in the Lord. First Thessalonians 1, 2, and 3 talk about that.

Well, there is a message to the church of Thessalonica here that Paul is telling these people. He talks about an elect people. In 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians chapter 1, verse 4, it says, *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.* That means that they have trusted Jesus as their Savior.

The Bible tells us that God knew before the foundation of the world who was going to be saved, but nowhere in the Scripture does it say that God is choosing who would be saved. Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord, the Bible says that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. That means anyone. So God does not say, *"You're going to be saved, and you're going to be lost, and you're going to be saved, and you're going to be lost."* "Elect" simply means that He knew who was going to be saved. It doesn't say anywhere in the Scriptures that He has chosen certain individuals to die and go to Hell.

Remember, the Bible tells us that Hell was created for the devil and his angels, and when man goes

there, man goes because he's chosen to go there. He has chosen himself to go to a devil's Hell. God does not want anybody to go to Hell. He wants people to come to a saving knowledge.

And then, not only is Paul writing to an elect people, those people who are saved, but he's writing to an exemplary people. In 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians chapter 1, verses 6-7, it says, *And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: <sup>7</sup>So that ye were ensamples....or examples.... to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.* And that's the way we need to be today as Christians. We need to live a life that's pleasing to the Lord, that brings honor and glory to Him, and in turn other people will see that life and prayerfully and hopefully they will turn to the Lord by seeing something in our lives, something that they need, and that something is Jesus Christ.

He's also writing to an enthusiastic people, in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians chapter 1, verses 7-9. He's writing to an expectant people. First Thessalonians chapter 1 and verse 10 says, *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

Paul goes on to write an evangelistic approach. He says an evangelistic approach is a worthy example. First Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 1-13, talks about that, and first of all in these verses, he says, "Go with pure motives." First Thessalonians 2, verses 1-3, says, *For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: <sup>2</sup>But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. <sup>3</sup>For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.*

He says that, "Everything that we presented to you was done with a pure motive. We didn't want anything in return. We simply wanted people to be saved. We wanted people to be on their way to

Heaven." And that's what Paul is talking about here. His aim was to please God and not men, according to 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 4-6.

And then he says, "Do not be a burden to the listeners." In other words, 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2:6-9 talks about this. It says, *<sup>6</sup>Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. <sup>7</sup>But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.* In other words, they didn't become burdens to these people. They became blessings to these people, leading them to the Lord and helping them to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he talks about caring for the people as a mother. First Thessalonians 2:7 says, *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.*

He was very calm and collected here, and he's telling these people what they did when Paul came and the others came with him to lead these people to the Lord. He's talking about helping them to know Jesus Christ and to nurture them as a mother would nurture that child and building that person up in the Lord Jesus Christ. So many people I find in our churches today go out and they lead someone to the Lord and they leave them. They don't help them to understand what's happened in their lives. But we as saved people, our job is not only to lead that person to the Lord but our job as a saved person, not to get saved but because we are saved, our job is to lead the person to Christ and also to nurture that person, to help that person understand what has taken place in their life, help them to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, something else that Paul talks about here is the life that pleases God. He says in chapter 4, verses 3-8, he talks about walking in all holiness. He says, *<sup>3</sup>For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: <sup>4</sup>That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; <sup>5</sup>Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the*

*Gentiles which know not God: <sup>6</sup>That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. <sup>7</sup>For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. <sup>8</sup>He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.* He's saying, "You need to walk in all holiness. You need to live the life, not to be saved but because you are saved. Live it because you love the Lord. Why? Because He first loved you. He gave us the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. He's given us the ability spiritually to walk in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

He talks about walking in brotherly love. He talks about walking honestly. He talks about comforting each other because of His coming in the clouds. He says, chapter 4, verse 13, *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. <sup>15</sup>For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remaining unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: <sup>17</sup>Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup>Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

We need to comfort each other, knowing that Jesus could come back for us who are saved at any moment. He could come back in the clouds and say, "Come up hither," and the Bible says in those verses that we're going to be changed. We will be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, and we will be fashioned like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, Paul goes on to admonish these people and there's some lessons that we need to learn here. One lesson is this. No matter what is going on around us, keep living the Christian life. No matter what happens to us, keep on keeping on, and also that Christians need to grow in faith by remembering to be faithful to other Christians and by looking to other Christians because of their faithfulness.

Do you know Him today as your Savior? If not, may I invite you to receive Him right now. The Bible says that we are to repent. Now don't get confused there. It's not by works of righteousness which we have done that He saves us, but it's by His mercy and His grace. When we repent, that means that we're willing to turn away from sin and turn to Him. Receive Jesus as our Savior. Acknowledge the fact that you're a sinner, you can't save yourself, and that you want to go to Heaven, you want to live for the Lord. The Bible tells us that, if we call upon His name, that He'll save us so that we are able to go to Heaven. *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Why not bow your head right now and receive Him as your Lord and your Savior.

Go to our website today, [www.LRWM.org](http://www.LRWM.org), and you'll see other helps on there that will help you to know how to receive and how to live for the Lord today, how to please the Lord.

Well, it's been good being with you, and may I invite you once again to tune in when you'll hear me say, "It is a good life." May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.