
Getting Ready To Meet Jesus

Scripture reading: I Thessalonians 1:1-10 (NKJV)

Illustration

When I was growing up, my mom would get four of us kids up for school bright and early every morning, because soon my cousin Wardi (Rose) would knock at the door with two baskets full of ingredients from my uncles wife fouzi (Victor), these ingredients for my Mom to cook two meals for two uncles family. Then my grandfather would send some fresh fish he had caught from the Mediterranean Sea, I was never know exactly when they are coming But I made sure I WAS READY WHEN THEY ARRIVED

We always make sure that:

- † We “get ready” for a lot of things don’t we?
- † -We get ready to go out to eat
- † -We get ready to have company come over for dinner
- † -We get ready for an approaching hurricane
- † -We get ready for Church

But for those of us who are Christians there is one event we must GET READY for that is of vital importance, and is THE COMING OF JESUS.

In the last 10-20 years of my ministry I have grown increasingly more concerned that many people who “profess” to be Christians are not ready for the return of Christ.

- † Many are still in love with the world.
- † Many are still living a life of sin.
- † Not only are they NOT ready for the return of Christ
- † They aren't **WATCHING** for His return
- † They aren't **WAITING** for His return
- † They aren't **WORKING** toward His return
- † They aren't **PRAYING** for His return
- † They aren't even **THINKING ABOUT HIS RETURN**

The imminent return of JESUS CHRIST is always one split second away!

Getting ready for Church means:

taking your shower or bath.....shaving....brushing your teeth.....getting on your good Sunday clothes.....getting your offering check written and finding your Bible and Sunday School book. Now we are ready for Church! Wrong! Is your heart Humble? Is your mind open? Only you can answer this question!

At this time of year we're also getting ready for Christmas...

Getting ready for Christmas means:

- † Getting your house decorated
- † Getting your shopping done
- † Getting the groceries to make your favorite holiday recipes
- † Getting your gifts wrapped
- † Getting your house all cleaned up for company to come in

- † We “**get ready**” to go to town
- † We “**get ready**” to go out to eat
- † We “**get ready**” to go on vacation
- † We “**get ready**” to go hunting or fishing
- † We “**get ready**” for work
- † We “**get ready**” for school

WE'RE ALWAYS “GETTING READY” FOR SOMETHING

My Question Are you getting ready for JESUS

What are you doing to get ready? We know how to get ready for worldly events BUT when it comes to getting ready for Jesus, We put our fences up, busy sign up and do not disturb sign up.

ARE YOU READY

We say

- † Other people may have more money than you. So what
- † Other people may wear nicer clothes than you. So what
- † Other people may live in nicer homes than you. So what
- † Other people may drive nicer vehicles than you. So what

And what is this has to do with it?

It is absolutely impossible for someone who is outside of JESUS CHRIST to have a life as FULL and ABUNDANT as the life you and I have in Christ.

- † **We** have **GOD'S WORD** to guide us.
- † **We** have **GOD'S SON** to strengthen us.
- † **We** have **GOD'S SPIRIT** to empower us.
- † **We** have **GOD'S LOVE** to sustain us.
- † **We** have **GOD'S GRACE** to save us.
- † **We** have **GOD'S RICHES** to bless us.
- † **We** have **GOD'S PROMISES** to anchor us.

And we have **GOD'S HEAVENLY HOME** awaiting us

Open your Bibles to I Thessalonians chapter one.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 (New King James Version)

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. 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.

5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. 9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

LET US PRAYER

Introduction

In this opening chapter of his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul commends this Church for being “A Model” for all Churches to follow.

Paul is teaching us that not only is important for each of us as individuals to GET READY for the coming of Christ, it is also important that WE AS A CHURCH GET READY FOR HIS COMING!

As we go back through these verses we are going to see FOUR CHARACTERISTICS of “A Model Church.” And I’ll let you in on a “little secret.” It has nothing to do with the size of the Church, the beauty of her buildings, or the strength of her programs.

First of all.....

I. They Were an ENERGETIC Church (vs. 1-4)

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. 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.

1. The Church at Thessalonica was established by Paul on his second missionary journey. We read about this in Acts 17:1.

Paul's preached in the synagogue at Thessalonica on three successive Sabbaths, until he was finally run out of the synagogue by the Jews living in the city.

For a time, Paul found refuge in the homes of some of the new converts in Thessalonica and continued to preach wherever he was allowed. But once the Jews found out about it they threatened Paul's life and he fled town. (Acts 17:10-14) We do learn in I Corinthians 16:5 that Paul did return to Thessalonica for one brief visit.

2. Although Paul was with them for just a short time, the Church in Thessalonica grew to become one of the strongest Churches in the New Testament.

3. As I noted just a moment ago, the first thing Paul commended this Church for was that **THEY WERE AN ENERGETIC CHURCH.**

4. When we think of an "energetic church" we think of a Church that is busy, busy, busy. A Church that offers lots of programs and is always doing something.

5. But when you look at the Church at Thessalonica, it wasn't their "physical energy" Paul was commending them for, but rather their "spiritual energy."

6. In verses 2, 3 Paul notes three things that revealed the ministry of the Thessalonian Church was driven by the power and energy of the Holy Spirit, and not by mere human effort.

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,

7. Note the three things Paul commended them for.....

(a) They had a FAITH that worked.

The work done by the Thessalonian Church was an outgrowth of their FAITH in God. Genuine, authentic FAITH always leads to WORKS.

James 2:1 "Thus also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

FAITH without works is like a CAR with no ENGINE, It's like A FLASHLIGHT with no BATTERIES.

OUR WORKS don't save us, but our WORKS are the evidence we have A SAVING FAITH.

When a person has genuine faith in Christ, he is stirred to good works and service for the Lord. The same is true of a Church. The stronger the faith of the Church, the harder they will work for the LORD!

A strong faith empowers and energizes the Church to work hard for the cause of Christ. The Church at Thessalonica had A FAITH THAT WORKED!

(b) They had a LOVE that labored.

That term “labor of love” has an interesting meaning in the Greek. It literally means, “to beat one’s breast” or “to strike oneself down.” The Church at Thessalonica had labored for one anothersweated for one another.....cried for one anothersacrificed for one another....and surrendered to one another. They put aside their own convenience.....they gave their all for one another.

Isn’t it sad that many Churches today “labor in strife and jealousy, and envy, and hostility” rather than in LOVE?

What a wonderful MODEL we see in the Church at Thessalonica.

† THEY HAD A FAITH THAT WORKED!

† THEY HAD A LOVE THAT LABORED!

(c) And they had a HOPE that endured.

Hope has to do with the things that are UNSEEN. It is the kind of hope that keeps us moving towards whatever it is we have yet to realize or taken hold of.

The Thessalonians had an enduring hope that kept them working towards the return of Jesus Christ. That too should be our ENDURING HOPE.

When you put these three things together you see the Church at Thessalonica was “energized” by FAITH.....HOPE and LOVE.

Remember what the apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 13:13?

“And now abide FAITH....HOPE....LOVE, these three; and the greatest of these is LOVE.”

May Christian Hope Church of Christ be a Church that is energized by A FAITH THAT WORKS.....A LOVE THAT LABORS and a HOPE THAT ENDURES!

Secondly Paul tells us.....

II. They Were An EXEMPLARY Church (vs.5-7)

5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of

men we were among you for your sake. 6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

1. First let me explain what I mean by “an exemplary

Church.” “Exemplary” simply means, “to set an example” or to do something so well others would be wise to follow a similar pattern.”

2. The Church at Thessalonica was an “exemplary” Church.

In fact, Paul tells us in VERSE 7 that the Church at Thessalonica set such a good example, the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia wanted to model themselves after her.

3. Do we have any “exemplary” Churches here in eastern North Carolina? What Churches are providing a model to all other Churches? Is Christian Hope Church of Christ an “exemplary” Church?

† What are we doing “right” that other Churches should follow our example?

† What great things are we accomplishing for the Kingdom here at Christian Hope that other Churches would be stronger and better if they were to model themselves after us?

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA WAS AN ENERGETIC CHURCH! AND
THEY WERE AN EXEMPLARY CHURCH!

Thirdly Paul tells us.....

III. They Were An EVANGELISTIC Church (v.8)

8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

1. Notice Paul says “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth!” What Paul is saying is “You have peeled forth the trumpet call to salvation, not only in your own town of Thessalonica, but also in Macedonia and Achaia, and places beyond!

2. Having received the gospel of salvation, the Thessalonian Church had not thought of keeping it all to themselves. By proclaiming the gospel with their mouths and demonstrating it in their daily lives, the Thessalonian Christians made the gospel known to others. From her very beginning, the Church at Thessalonica was a “missionary Church.”

3. How far has “the trumpet call to salvation” peeled forth from Christian Hope Church? How far has the influence of this Church reached? Could we be properly called “a missionary Church?”

They were AN ENERGETIC CHURCH.

They were AN EXEMPLARY CHURCH.

They were AN EVANGELISTIC CHURCH.

And fourthly, Paul tells us.....

IV. They Were an EXPECTANT Church (vs.9, 10)

9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1. The Church at Thessalonica was “waiting” on the Lord’s return! They were looking for His return! They were excited about His return! They were ready for His return!

2. To “wait for the Lord’s return” is a characteristic of every true believer. That phrase “wait for His Son” is written in the present tense. That means “we are to keep on waiting for the Lord! We are never to stop waiting on the Lord!

3. The Thessalonian Christians didn’t regard the return of Christ as some “distant possibility” but rather as an “imminent probability” each and every day. And that was reflected in their lifestyle and habits.

They GOT READY FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST every day!

4. My prayer is that through this series, all of us will be challenged “To get ready for the coming of Christ” each and every day; that we will stop looking at the return of Christ as a “distant possibility” and start living our lives every day as though Christ’s return is an imminent probability.

CONCLUSION

The Church at Thessalonica provides us with a wonderful model of what a Church ought to be. May Sumner Christian Fellowship strive to be “a model Church””a Church that sets an example for others to follow.”