

I. GREETING

- This follows the ordinary form and style of ancient letters (writer/destination/greeting).

A. The Ongoing Concern – 1a

- Two overarching burdens: they are *relatively young believers*; they are pressed by *outside persecution*. Letter of encouragement to uphold them and strengthen them.
- **Paul, Silvanus [also Silas], and Timothy** - The three men that helped establish the church continuing in concern for them. Not content in just getting them "saved", but to grow and be established in the Lord.

Application: If we have a genuine love for Christians, there will be this ongoing concern for them.

B. The Encouraging Description – v.1b

- **To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ** - Though a young group of believers and had many things to grow in, they were considered a true church. The word church is the compound work meaning "called out." They had been called out of the world to be a part of God's people. As such they were in a new relationship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

C. A Divine Benediction – v.1c

- **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.** – A benediction is a prayed blessing or calling on God. This is both what is true, and what God desires for them to more and more realize. As true believers, they already had and Paul wished them grace and peace. The grace of God is His unmerited favor in approaching them in Christ for the purpose of reconciliation. The result was the peace of God through Christ.

Application: This description and benediction are also for you as a church and individual believers.

II. THANKSGIVING**A. The Constancy of Their Thanksgiving – vv.2-3a**

- **We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers... remembering without ceasing** - As an apostle, missionary, and pastor, Paul (and his companions) were men of prayer. They were especially burdened to pray for those who had, by God's design, been influenced by their preaching and teaching to become Christians. While there were many concerns, the overarching tone of their prayers were thanksgiving. It is often the difficulties of new believers that we focus on, but their constant remembrance of them was with an appreciative heart.

Application: Our prayers should be filled with thanksgiving to God and remembering fellow believers.

B. The Reason for Their Thanksgiving**1. The Work of the Thessalonians – v.3b**

- As they prayed with thanksgiving, there were three things in particular that they had seen and continued to hear about the lives of the believers in Thessalonica. We see an example of what is known as the *triad of Christian graces* (also seen in 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 Thess 5:8). But we see them attached to three specific kinds of work. They are seen as the work of these believers ("*your...*").
 (1.) **Work (of faith)** – Work (general term) motivated by faith.
 (2.) **Labor (of love)** – Labor (exhausting work) motivated by love.
 (3.) **Patience (of hope)** – Endurance (continuance through difficulty) motivated by the hope of Christ.
- **In our Lord Jesus Christ** - Connected particularly to the hope of Christ's 2nd coming (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- **In the sight of our God and Father** – An awareness of the God seeing them.

Application: We should ask ourselves if this fruit of the Gospel is seen in our lives.

2. The Work of God – v.4

- **Knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God** – This was the work of God in them. The basic meaning of this word is "chosen", and is what we derive "elected." Used in reference to Paul Acts 9:15.
- Paul connects this very closely to the reality of their being both *brethren* (in God's family as siblings of one Father) and *beloved* (out of which they have been elected).
- Notice the connection between their works and the knowledge of their election. 2 Peter 1:10.
- Even though they are a young church, he does not hesitate to bring in this reality.
- This is why He thanks God for what He sees in them – it is ultimately His work in them (though their work).

Application: When we see the work of faith, love and hope, our ultimate praise and thanksgiving goes to the Lord.