

Introduction

My father founded Murchison Drilling Schools, a company that was dedicated to teaching rig personnel how to properly supervise a drilling operation. The company developed a worldwide reputation as one of the industry's best schools. It was known for the heavy homework load and the case histories that were used in the lectures. Both of these things indicate that my father truly understood the importance of examples in learning. In the lectures, he gave examples of the principles that he was teaching. He would share case histories on various wells where they encountered a problem, and how they were able to resolve it. Students learned from these examples and it made the principles that they were learning relevant and practical. After the class was dismissed each day, there was a great deal of homework to be done. There were eighteen different homework assignments that were graded and incorporated into the final grade. The homework included numerous examples of what was covered and students had to make practical application of what they had learned. The homework examples were very similar to the classroom examples. Students could use their class notes and then apply the same principles to the problem they were working through. My father knew the importance of using examples to help people learn. He was a great example to me, and I have tried to add examples from my own life and ministry in my messages. I want to make the scriptures relevant, practical, and easy for people to apply in their lives.

We are starting a study of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. One of the things that Paul said about the Thessalonians is that they were an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. What a great compliment. The Thessalonians were role models and examples for the church in Corinth, the church in Cenchrea, the church in Berea, and the church in Philippi. These are the known churches, but there were probably other churches in Macedonia and Achaia that we are not familiar with.

(1 Th 1:7) "so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia."

In 2 Corinthians 8, when Paul was exhorting the church in Corinth to finish taking the offering for the saints in Jerusalem, he used the churches in Macedonia as an example. The church in Thessalonica was an example to the other churches in Macedonia, and was certainly one of the churches Paul had in mind, if not the primary one. Paul mentioned seven different characteristics of their giving, so the Corinthians could learn from their example. They gave by the grace of God. They gave with an abundance of joy. They gave out of their poverty. They gave according to their ability. They gave by faith. They gave on their own accord. They saw giving as an opportunity and took advantage of it.

(2 Co 8:1-5) "Now, brethren, we *wish* to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, {2} that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. {3} For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord, {4} begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, {5} and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God."

In this letter, Paul encourages the Thessalonians in their walk. He also exhorts them to do God's will in their lives, living holy, sanctified lives, rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, and giving thanks in everything. He comforts them with instruction about believers that have died, and the resurrection of believers. He instructs them about the day of the Lord. He encourages

them to appreciate their pastors who have charge over them. He gives several miscellaneous exhortations, including the handling of prophetic utterances. It is a very practical letter, and is very profitable for all of us to study. Just as the church in Thessalonica was an example to all the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, I believe that the church in Thessalonica is also an example for us to follow and to learn from. I look forward to studying and sharing this book with you.

In our passage today, we will be looking at the Introduction to 1 Thessalonians, and we will cover the first verse. We will look at the authors, the recipients, and the greeting.

Introduction to 1 Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:1)

1. Authors
2. Recipients
3. Greeting

(1 Th 1:1) “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.”

1. Authors

The authors of this book are Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy. They wrote the letter a few months after they had founded the church. In most of Paul’s letters, he mentions himself and others as the authors, and he signs the letter with his own handwriting. He is dictating to the other person, who is writing the letter on behalf of Paul. Most people believe that Paul had poor eyesight, which is why he signed it with big letters. In this letter to the Thessalonians, Paul does not state that he is signing it himself, but I believe that is how it was done. Throughout this letter, “we” is used, and it refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. In fact, “we” is used fifty-one times in the letter; “our” is used twenty-three times, and “us” is used twenty times. At the very end of the letter, in 1 Thessalonians 5:27, “I” is used, and I believe that this was probably in Paul’s own handwriting. The letter is clearly a letter from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, with a final exhortation from Paul.

(1 Th 1:1) “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.”

(1 Th 5:27) “I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.”

In chapter 2, Paul wrote that “our coming to you was not in vain,” and he is referring to the three of them, who went there around 50-51 AD. He went on, “we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak.” Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy all preached the gospel to the Thessalonians, and it is very fitting for the three that preached the gospel to all write a joint letter to the people that they had brought to the Lord.

(1 Th 2:1–4) “For you yourselves know, brethren, that **our** coming to you was not in vain, {2} but after **we** had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, **we** had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. {3} For **our** exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or by way of deceit; {4} but just as **we** have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so **we** speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines **our** hearts.”

In 1 Thessalonians 2:6, they wrote, “nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.” Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were all three apostles. Paul was the team leader, but all three were apostles. Many theologians teach that there were only twelve apostles and Paul was the twelfth apostle. That contradicts Acts 1, where Matthias was added to the other eleven apostles of the Lamb. There are about twenty-six people mentioned in the New Testament that are called apostles. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were all apostles, and they were writing to a church that the three of them had founded. They had all preached the gospel, and founded the church.

(1 Th 2:6) “nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.”

In Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch after their first apostolic trip. After being there for a while, Paul wanted to go see how all these new believers and churches were doing. He said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” They got into a disagreement over John Mark, who had deserted them on their first apostolic trip. Barnabas insisted that they take his cousin (Col 4:10), but Paul refused to bring him along. So, Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left. Silas is a nickname for Sylvanus. Paul and Silas traveled through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches, and they came to Derbe and to Lystra, which is where they added Timothy to the team. The three of them were now passing through the cities, and were strengthening the churches in their faith.

(Ac 15:40–16:5) “But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. {41} And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. {1} Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, {2} and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. {3} Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. {4} Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. {5} So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.”

Paul, Silas, and Timothy passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they got to Troas, Paul had a vision of a man in Macedonia standing and appealing to him to come to Macedonia and to help them. The three of them concluded that God was calling them there to preach the gospel to them. They put out to sea and went past the island of Samothrace to Neapolis, a city on the coast of Thrace. Then, they went to Philippi, the leading city in the district of Macedonia.

(Ac 16:6–12) “They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; {7} and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; {8} and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. {9} A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” {10} When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. {11} So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis;

{12} and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a *Roman* colony; and we were staying in this city for some days.”

In Philippi, they were arrested, beaten and thrown into prison. While in prison, the jailer and his household were saved. When they were released, Paul let the chief magistrate know that they had beaten and imprisoned a Roman citizen without a trial. This was a very serious mistake that they had made and were now at Paul’s mercy. The chief magistrate appealed and begged them to leave the city, which they did. They went through Amphipolis and Apollonia, two smaller cities in Macedonia, and they finally arrived at Thessalonica.

According to Paul’s custom, he went to the synagogue of the Jews and reasoned with them from the Scriptures for three Sabbaths. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. Luke only mentions Paul and Silas, but Timothy was also with them. At this point, Timothy is an apprentice and helper. Later on, through the laying on of hands by the presbytery, he was confirmed into apostolic ministry. It is fitting for this letter to come from Paul, Silas, and Timothy, the three men who brought the gospel to the Thessalonians.

(1 Ti 4:14) “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.”

Let’s take a brief look at each of these three men who authored this letter to the Thessalonians. The leader of this apostolic team is Paul. His Hebrew name was Saul, which means asked. After he became a Christian, and was ministering to Gentiles, he was called Paul, which is a Latin name, meaning little or small. He was a descendant of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin. He was a descendant of Abraham, and had been circumcised on the eighth day. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews, meaning he spoke Hebrew, and he was also a Pharisee. Paul was also the son of a Pharisee, and had been brought up and trained to be a Pharisee. He studied under Gamaliel, who was very well respected among the Pharisees.

(Php 3:4–5) “although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: {5} circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;”

(Ac 22:3) “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.”

As a zealous Pharisee, Paul was actively engaged in persecuting those that belonged to the Way, a name by which the Christians were called. While on his way to Damascus to arrest and bring back any Christians that he found, God revealed Himself to him. God appeared as a bright light and blinded Paul so that he had to be led by those that accompanied him. Jesus spoke to him and asked him, “Why are you persecuting Me?” The men heard the voice, but saw no one.

(Ac 9:1–9) “Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, {2} and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. {3} As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; {4} and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” {5} And he said, “Who are

You, Lord?” And He *said*, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, {6} but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.” {7} The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. {8} Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. {9} And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.”

When Paul arrived at Damascus, Ananias came to Paul and laid hands on him, and when he did, something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. He got up and was baptized, took food, and was strengthened. The Lord told Ananias that Paul “is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.

(Ac 9:11–19) “And the Lord *said* to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, {12} and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.” {13} But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; {14} and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” {15} But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; {16} for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” {17} So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” {18} And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; {19} and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus,”

Even though Paul was called to be an apostle, he did not serve in that capacity for many years. While Paul was living in Tarsus, Barnabas came to him and asked him to help him establish the church in Antioch. During the next eighteen months they preached the gospel, made disciples, and raised up a leadership team.

(Ac 11:25–26) “And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; {26} and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

While that pastoral team was ministering to the Lord, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them.” From that point on, they are referred to as apostles. On that first apostolic trip, Barnabas was the team leader. They were apostles, but they were not apostles of the Lamb. Many teach that Paul became the twelfth apostle, taking Judas’ place, but Paul does not meet requirements in Acts 1 to be an apostle of the Lamb. Paul was not there for the baptism of Jesus, with Him during His ministry, and a witness of His death and resurrection, which were the requirements for those twelve men. That does not however diminish his value or work as an apostle. He wrote thirteen of the books of the New Testament, more than anyone else.

(Ac 13:1–4) “Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. {2} While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to

which I have called them.” {3} Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. {4} So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.”

(Ac 1:21–22) “Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— {22} beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

Silas was a prophet before joining Paul’s apostolic team. He is called Silvanus in this letter, but he is also referred to as Silas, which is a nickname for Silvanus. Silas is the root word and means “of the woods.” In Roman mythology, Silvanus was the Roman god of forests. If I had his name, I would probably want to be referred to as Silas, not Silvanus, since it was a mythological god. He is first mentioned in Acts 15, where Paul and Barnabas had gone to Jerusalem to meet with the elders and apostles about the requirements for being saved. There were those who were teaching that circumcision was necessary to be saved, but Barnabas and Paul said it is by faith and not by works. The apostles and elders in Jerusalem agreed with Barnabas and Paul, and they wrote a letter to the churches with their decision about this matter. The apostles sent Judas and Silas to verify the letter and the decision. When they arrived in Antioch, Silas encouraged the saints with a lengthy message.

(Ac 15:27-34) “Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word *of mouth*... {30} So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. {31} When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. {32} Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message. {33} After they had spent time *there*, they were sent away from the brethren in peace to those who had sent them out. {34} But it seemed good to Silas to remain there.”

Timothy joined Paul’s team when he and Silas were in Derbe and Lystra. He was well spoken of by the brethren. His father was a Greek, and his mother was a Jewish believer. Since his father was Greek, Timothy had not been circumcised. Paul wanted Timothy to be able to go into the synagogues with him, and circumcision was required. Paul circumcised Timothy for ministry purposes, not as a requirement for salvation.

(Ac 16:1–4) “Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, {2} and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. {3} Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. {4} Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.”

Timothy’s name means one who honors God. Paul refers to Timothy as a brother, a fellow worker, and a beloved son. Paul mentored Timothy and helped him fulfill the calling on his life as an apostle. Many people mistakenly teach that Timothy was the pastor in Ephesus, but he was an apostle who was helping the church in Ephesus. He was there at Paul’s request to help resolve some problems with false teachers. Paul’s two letters to Timothy give us valuable instructions about prayer, treatment of widows, the qualifications of deacons and elders, and many other things.

2. Recipients

The recipients of this letter are the saints in Thessalonica. God inspired the letter to be part of the canon of Scripture, and in that sense, it is a letter to all of us.

(1 Th 1:1) “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.”

(1 Th 5:27) “I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.”

Thessalonica was the capital city of the Roman province of Macedonia. It was founded around 315 B.C. The main road that linked all the important cities of Macedonia was the Via Egnatia, and it passed through Thessalonica. It was a coastal city, and it was the home of a great Macedonian naval fleet. It was considered the chief port of Macedonia.

The church in Thessalonica was made up of both Jews and Gentiles. When Paul first came to Thessalonica, he went to the Jewish synagogue for three weeks and reasoned with them. Paul preached the gospel to the Jew first, and then he would turn his attention to the Gentiles, as he was an apostle to the Gentiles. It is clear that there were prominent women and other influential people that accepted Christ and became part of the church. At the same time, we know that there were some poor people in the church, and Paul encouraged them to work hard. Luke recorded that a large number of God-fearing Greeks became believers.

(Ac 17:1–4) “Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. {2} And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, {3} explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.” {4} And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.”

There are differing thoughts on how long Paul, Silas, and Timothy were in Thessalonica. We know that they were there for the three Sabbaths. We do not know how long he spent preaching to the Gentiles in Thessalonica before the Jews formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. During the uproar, they attacked the house of Jason, who had welcomed Paul into his home. In Romans 16:21, Paul refers to Jason as a kinsman, so he was a Jewish believer that received the gospel message that Paul had shared in the synagogue. Jason was a peace-maker and got things settled down in Thessalonica by making a pledge to the city officials.

(Ac 17:5-9) “But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. {6} When they did not find them, they *began* dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have upset the world have come here also; {7} and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” {8} They stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. {9} And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.”

Paul and Silas left Thessalonica and went to Berea, which is about forty-five miles away. The Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was in Berea and they went there to agitate and stir up the

crowds there. Paul went on to Athens, but Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. In 1 Thessalonians 3, we find out that while Paul was in Athens, he and Silas sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to strengthen and encourage them. This was a very young church, and Timothy's help was needed and appreciated.

(1 Th 3:1–2) “Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, {2} and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,”

3. Greeting

Paul gives a greeting of grace and peace. He says, “grace to you and peace.” In the Hebrew culture, people did not say, “Hi, how are you.” They greeted one another with a blessing of peace. Typically, they would say, “Shalom,” which means peace. Having grown up in the Middle East, our normal greeting to people was “Salaam,” which means peace. The full greeting is salaam malaikum, which means peace be upon you. It is customary to greet and bless people with peace. The peace that Paul blesses them with is a peace that surpasses all comprehension. It is a supernatural peace. It is not the absence of trouble, conflict, hardship, or difficulty, which are all external matters. God’s peace is an internal manifestation. He gives us peace in the midst of troubles.

(1 Th 1:1) “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.”

Paul not only greets them with peace, but also grace. There are two definitions of grace that I want to quickly mention. Grace can mean the unmerited favor of God. It is by this unmerited favor or grace that we are saved. Our salvation is not as a result of works that no man should boast. This is an unmerited, undeserved favor that we are given by God. We cannot earn this grace. This grace should create in us a gratefulness and should be reflected in our worship and praise to Him. We find this grace in Ephesians 2.

(Eph 2:8-9) "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

There is another type of grace that we have. The Lord told Paul in the midst of his afflictions that His grace was sufficient for him. This grace is not just the unmerited favor, but it is the desire and ability to carry out God’s will. Grace can also mean the measure of God’s provision in strength, ability, power, gifts, and resources to carry out His will.

(2 Cor 12:9) "And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

In Romans 12, Paul speaks about this grace a couple of times. He speaks into their lives by the grace that was given to him. Paul was doing an apostolic work and was given the grace to do this work. Paul did not have any more favor with God than you or I. Paul had a desire and ability to do a certain work that God had called him to. He alludes to this grace again at the close of his letter. He wrote them very boldly on some points and he could do that because of the grace that was given to him by God.

(Rom 12:3) "For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith."

(Rom 15:15) "But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,"

In Romans 12:6, Paul says that each of them had gifts that differed according to the grace given to them. Like Paul, each of us have been given certain gifts, abilities, and resources to carry out God's call for our lives. Therefore, each of them was to exercise them accordingly.

(Rom 12:6) "And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;"

We need to give our grace and peace to one another. When we greet one another, we should learn to extend grace and peace. Our words should encourage and motivate one another to have more desire and ability to accomplish God's will. Our words should not bring trouble and unrest but peace. Our words should bring about a calmness and rest. Our words should bring about a trust in God and His word. Our speech needs to be seasoned with grace. This grace opens people up; it opens doors of communication. This grace endears us to people. It makes people want to be around us. It is this grace and peace that will make a difference in Rome, Georgia, or wherever God may have you.

Conclusion and Applications

This letter to the Thessalonians was written just a few months after the church had been planted. It was written because Paul, Silas, and Timothy cared about the people in Thessalonica. They cared about their welfare. They cared about their growth. They cared enough to send Timothy to encourage them. They cared enough to write this letter to them. One application for us today is we need to care for others. It may be a phone call. It may be a letter or email. It may be a visit. It may be something else, or a combination of things. We need to demonstrate our care to others. Another application could be our obedience to the Lord. Paul received a vision from the Lord. He shared it with the team members and they concluded that God was sending them to Macedonia. The churches in Macedonia, which included Philippi, Berea, and Thessalonica, were all planted because Paul, Silas, and Timothy were obedient to the vision. The church in Thessalonica became a model for all the churches in Macedonia and Achaia because these three men were obedient to the change in direction that the Lord made in their ministry plans. Are we willing to lay aside our plans and do whatever the Lord shows us to do? Are you listening to the Lord? In Antioch, the leadership team was fasting and ministering to the Lord when the Holy Spirit said to set apart Barnabas and Paul. When John received the revelations on the island of Patmos, he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day? Are you ministering to the Lord? Are you worshiping and being filled with the Spirit? Are you asking Him for visions, dreams, or words? Are you sharing these things with those around you to examine them and see if it is a word of the Lord for you and our church? We must be listening, and we must be obedient.

(Ac 13:2) "While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

(Re 1:9-10) "I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God

and the testimony of Jesus. {10} I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound* of a trumpet,"

Another application could be the greeting that they gave to the church. Are we giving grace to those around us? Are we blessing others with grace and peace? In our greetings to others, let's bless them with grace and peace.

Concluding Prayer

Father God, thank You for this letter to the Thessalonians. Thank You for Paul, Silas, and Timothy, and the example they are to us. Thank You for the example of the Thessalonians. Lord, these three men made a huge difference in the lives of thousands of others because they were obedient to what You showed them to do. Lord, help us to abide in You. Help us to be quick to listen to what You are telling us. Holy Spirit, we ask You to give us dreams, visions, and prophetic words. Help us to be obedient to the things that You show us to do. As we study the book of Thessalonians, enrich our time. May Your word richly dwell within us, and may it perform its work in us. Bless our study of this book. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

Introduction (1 Th 1:7, 2 Cor 8:1-5, 1 Th 1:1)

1. Authors (1 Th 1:1, 5:27, 1 Th 2:1-4, 2:6, Ac 15:40-16:5, Ac 16:6-12, 1 Tim 4:14, Php 3:4-5, Ac 22:3, 9:1-9, 9:11-19, Ac 11:25-26, 13:1-4, 1:21-22, 15:27-34, 16:1-4)

2. Recipients (1 Th 1:1, 5:27, Rom 16:21, Ac 17:1-9, 1 Th 3:1-2)

3. Greeting (1 Th 1:1, Eph 2:8-9, 2 Cor 12:9, Rom 12:3, 15:15, 12:6)

Conclusion and Applications (Acts 13:2, Rev 1:9-10)