**A Study Outline of First Thessalonians**

Founding of the church:

* Acts 17:1-9 records the beginning of the church in Thessalonica.
* Occurred during Paul’s second missionary journey after Paul and Silas left Philippi.
* For three weeks in a row Paul reasoned (dialogue) in the synagogue (Acts 17:2).
* He *opened* (to cause to understand) and *alleged* (to lay out before) from the Scriptures.
* The church began with an uproar in the city (1 Thes. 1:6)!

**Chapter 1**

* Silvanus was a companion of Paul and Peter (1 Pet. 5:12).
* Work of faith (v. 3). Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:26).
* Labor of love (v. 3). Paul wrote that the “love of Christ constrained him” (2 Cor. 5:14). He had been seized by the love of Christ and felt a pressing to keep working for Him.
* Patience of hope (v. 3). The word should be *endurance* or *perseverance*.
* Election of God (v. 4). The Calvinist believes that God has selected certain individuals to be saved and lost. God has elected the manner by which people must be saved, not the number of people who will be saved (2 Thes. 2:14).
* The word of God came in:
  + Power – ability, achieving power.
  + Holy Spirit – the miraculous.
  + With much affliction – Acts 17:5-9.
* The example set by the Thessalonians:
  + Their reputation (v.7-8).
  + Their conversion (v.9).
  + Their expectation (v. 10).

**Chapter 2**

* Verses 1-12 address how Paul handled himself among the people.
* He kept speaking, even after the arrest and beating in Philippi (Acts 16:20-24).
* Paul’s motivation in preaching was not impure (v. 3, 5-6).
* Verse 4 is very important! God has entrusted us with His word. What are we doing with it?
* Verses 7-12 show that Paul behaved as a loving parent to the Thessalonians.
* Verses 13-16 address how the word of God was received:
  + As it truly is – God’s word.
  + Followed the example of other congregations.
* Verses 17-20 show that Paul would like to have been reunited with them. Acts 17:10 shows that the church sent them away quickly when the persecution started.

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**Chapter 3**

* 3:1-5 - Paul expresses his concern about their faith following persecution. Living the Christian life will cause suffering, isolation at times, and temptation.
* 3:6-10 – Paul is relieved by Timothy’s report on the brethren.
* 3:11-13 – Paul wants them to abound (*exceed in number*) in love and be blameless (*unblemished, one who can be caught or accused*) in holiness.

**Chapter 4**

* 4:1-8 – They, and we, are to walk so as to please God and avoid fornication. Paul mentions the Gentiles who did not *know* God. The Greek word for “know” here carries the idea of taking interest in something or someone. The Gentiles lived in lust because they took no interest in God.
* Verse 8 shows who we are rejecting when we decide to do whatever we want to do.
* 4:9-12 – Christians are to continue to love one another, not be busy-bodies, and stay busy.
* We are to live in such a way that we might have a good influence on “those who are outside” (v. 12).
* 4:13-18 – It appears from these verses that there were some in the first century church who believed and taught that Christ was coming back during their lifetime.
* They also believed that those who had already died would miss their reward. Paul writes this section to tell them that those things were false and that there would be an order when Christ returns.
* This section addresses those who had already died.
  + They will not miss Christ’s return (v. 14).
  + The living would not precede (NKJV) those who were dead in Christ (v. 15).
  + The dead will be raised first (v. 16).
  + The living will meet the Lord in the air (v.17a).
  + Both groups will be with the Lord forever (v. 17b).

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**Chapter 5**

5:1-11 – The Day of the Lord

* The return of Christ is no mystery. These Christians knew “perfectly” (*exactly, accurately*) that the Lord’s return would be a surprise.
* Peter also stated that “the day of the Lord” would come as a thief in the night (2 Pet. 3:10).
* Jesus stated that no one knows when His return will be (Mk. 13:32-37).
* The Lord’s return is not going to be quiet or secret!
* There is no escaping the return of Christ (v. 3).
* Christians are enlightened (v. 4-8). We know what the word of God teaches on these matters and should not be surprised as to the nature or timing of Christ’s return.
* God did not intend for man to live without regard to Him and then suffer for all eternity. The mission of Christ shows that the opposite is true. God wants man to be saved from his sin (v. 9-11).

5:12-15 – Be at peace among yourselves.

* Verses 12-13 address the eldership. We are to “recognize” (to see with perception, to take an interest in) those who labor and are over us in the Lord. Responsibility in the church is not all on the shoulders of the elders.
* Elders are to “admonish” us. The word means, “to put in mind, to warn, to exhort.”
* We are to “esteem” (to hold in a particular light) them “very highly” (over and beyond).
* The reason – “for their work’s sake.”
* Unruly (v. 14) – “insubordinate, out of rank.”
* We should desire what is best for everyone. This can only be accomplished if we are humble.

5:16-21 – Various charges.

* “Do not quench the Spirit” – do not extinguish the word of God.
* Despise – “to bring to naught, to reject.”
* Prove – “to try, to test, or approve.”

5:23-28 – Paul’s conclusion.

* What is the difference between spirit and soul?
  + Spirit – (*pneuma*) “breath, the principle of life residing in man.”
  + Soul – (*psuke*) “the eternal part of man.” Matthew 10:28
* Verse 27 show that this letter was to be circulated.

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