



You Can Make A Difference Because You Are Different

Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 159



1 Thessalonians 1:1–4 (NKJV)

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.

What Every Church Should Be

No doubt you have heard some preacher say, “If you ever find the perfect church, please don’t join it. If you do, it won’t be perfect anymore!”

What Every Church Should Be

Since local churches are made up of human beings, saved by God's grace, no church is perfect. But some churches are closer to the New Testament ideal than others. The church at Thessalonica was in that category. At least three times in this letter, Paul gave thanks for the church and the way it responded to his ministry (*1 Thes. 1:2; 2:13; 3:9*). Not every pastor can be that thankful.

What characteristics of this church made it so ideal and such a joy to Paul's heart?

The Church Must Know Salvation Begins With God

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

The Church Must Know Salvation Begins With God

John 15:16 (NKJV)

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

The Church Must Know Salvation Begins With God

Ephesians 1:4 (NKJV)

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

The entire plan of salvation was born in the heart of God long before man was created or the universe formed.

Salvation Involves God's Love

Paul called these saints “brethren beloved”—not only beloved by Paul but also beloved by God.

God's love made Calvary possible (*Rom. 5:8*), and there Jesus Christ died for our sins.

But it is not God's love that saves the sinner; it is God's grace.

Salvation Involves God's Love

God in His grace gives us what we do not deserve, and God in His mercy does not give us what we do deserve.

This is why Paul often opened his letters with, “Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” *(1 Thess. 1:1)*.

Salvation Involves Faith

“For by grace are ye saved through faith” (*Eph. 2:8*).

Paul, Silas (*Silvanus is the Roman spelling*), and Timothy brought the Gospel to Thessalonica and preached in the power of God (*1 Thes. 1:5*).

Salvation Involves Faith

Some people who heard the message believed and turned from their vain idols to the true and living God (*1 Thes. 1:9*).

The Spirit of God used the Word of God to generate faith.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Paul Called This *“Sanctification Of The Spirit And Belief Of The Truth”*

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

We are separated because of the Spirit of God, and the truth we believe.

Salvation Involves The Trinity

As you read this letter, you discover the doctrine of the Trinity. Christians believe in one God existing in three Persons: God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Keep in mind that all three Persons are involved in our salvation. This will help you escape dangerous extremes that either deny human responsibility or dilute divine sovereignty—for both are taught in the Bible.

Salvation Involves The Trinity

As far as God the Father is concerned, I was saved when He chose me in Christ before the world began.

As far as God the Son is concerned, I was saved when He died for me on the cross.

Salvation Involves The Trinity

As far as God the Holy Spirit is concerned, I was saved one day, when I heard the Word and trusted Jesus Christ.

At that moment, the entire plan fell together and I became a child of God.

1

Evidence of Salvation is a changed life

How did Paul know that these Thessalonians were elected of God? He saw a change in their lives. If you put 1 Thessalonians 1:3 next to 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10, You will get the picture:

- your **work of faith** you **turned** to God from idols
- your **labor of love** to **serve** the living and true God
- and **patience of hope** to **wait** for His Son from Heaven

Saved People Do Change!

The person who claims to be one of God's elect, but whose life has not changed, is only fooling himself.

Those whom God chooses, He changes. This does not mean they are perfect, but they are possessors of a new life that cannot be hidden.

Saved People Do Change!

Matthew 5:14–16 (NKJV)

14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Saved People Do Change!

Faith, hope, and love are the three cardinal virtues of the Christian life, and the three greatest evidences of salvation.

Faith must always lead to works (*James 2:14–26*).

It has been said, “We are not saved by faith plus works, but by a faith that works.”

Saved People Do Change!

If the Thessalonians had continued to worship their dead idols while professing faith in the living God, it would have proved that they were not among God's elect.

2.

Love Is Also An Evidence Of Salvation

Love is also an evidence of salvation:

Romans 5:5 (NKJV)

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

2.

Love Is Also An Evidence Of Salvation

We are “taught by God to love one another”.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 (NKJV)

But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

2.

Love Is Also An Evidence Of Salvation

We serve Christ because we love Him; this is the “labor of love” that Paul mentioned in 1 Thess.1:3.

“If you love Me, keep My commandments” (*John 14:15*).

3.

Evidence Of Salvation Is Hope.

The third evidence of salvation is hope, waiting for Jesus Christ to return.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV)

and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

The return of Jesus Christ is the dominant theme of both of these Thessalonian letters.

3.

Evidence Of Salvation Is Hope.

Unsaved people are not eagerly awaiting the Lord's return.

In fact, when our Lord catches His church up into the air, unsaved people will be totally surprised (*1 Thes. 5:1–11*).

Faith, Hope, And Love Are Evidences Of Election

These spiritual qualities are bound together and can come only from God.

For further evidence, see these passages:

- 1 Corinthians 13:13
- Galatians 5:5–6
- Hebrews 6:10–12
- 1 Peter 1:21–22
- Romans 5:1–5
- Colossians 1:4–5
- Hebrews 10:22–24

A Local Church Must Be Composed Of Elect People

A local church must be composed of elect people, those who have been saved by the grace of God.

One problem today is the presence, in the church family, of unbelievers whose names may be on the church roll, but not written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

A Local Church Must Be Composed Of Elect People

Revelation 21:27 (NKJV)

But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

A Local Church Must Be Composed Of Elect People

Every church member should examine his heart to determine whether he has truly been born again and belongs to God's elect.

A Local Church Must Be Composed Of Elect People

Philippians 2:12–13 (NKJV)

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.