

“Becoming a MAD Church”

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Scripture

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

“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.

We give thanks to God always for all of you, **making mention of you in our prayers**; constantly **bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, **knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you**;

for **our gospel did not come to you in word only**, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

You also **became imitators of us and of the Lord**, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

so that you **became an example to all the believers** in Macedonia and in Achaia.

For the word of the Lord has **sounded forth from you**, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and **how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God**, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.”

Last Week

We discussed Jesus’s pattern of evangelism

He came to serve and served first -> then He was given the opportunity to speak -> **Serve then Speak**

He healed and cast out demons -> He drew a crowd -> then He spoke about the Kingdom to them

This Week

We are talking about becoming a MAD Church

What is a MAD Church, you are asking yourself? -> MAD is “Making a Difference”

The Thessalonian church is my example church in the Bible

THE IDEAL CHURCH

- The Location -> Macedonia (now Northern Greece)
- The Culture -> A Roman “Free City” and a Commercial Mecca on the northern Aegean Sea
- The History -> **Acts 17 (and Acts 20)**

The Jews ran Paul and Silas out of town:

Acts 17:1-9

“Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 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." 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.

But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the marketplace, 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. 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; and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.**" They stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.”

Sermon notes have a fill-in-the blank today, so let's get started looking at MAD church

Of first importance, the MAD church is:

#1 -> A CHURCH FOCUSED ON PRAYER led by a PASTOR FOCUSED ON PRAYER

1 Thessalonians 1:1-2

“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. We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers.”

Paul always prayed for the churches under his care

He was thankful for their example in his life

There is nothing more joyful to a pastor than to watch his congregation flourish under the Holy Spirit's work

Paul thanked God that the Thessalonian church was a MAD church -> making a difference in its community

We need to pray for opportunities in the community to minister and serve them

Hopefully, you have seen and heard that from me from the pulpit, in Sunday school, on Wednesday nights

Join me in prayer for these opportunities to be presented to us!

Second, the MAD church is:

#2 -> A CHURCH WHERE FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE IS PARAMOUNT

1 Thessalonians 1:3

“...constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.”

Paul lauds the church for its work in its community

It is a Church that works for Jesus

The Church works ON BEHALF OF Jesus Christ

They are His hands and feet

They Serve First

The members prove that they are faithful BY their works:

James 2:14-17, 26

“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? **Can that faith save him?** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, **what use is that?** Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”

v. 26 -> “For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

Paul wrote about these works:

Ephesians 2:8-10

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that none may boast. **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them**”.

Workmanship is the Greek “Poiema” -> A Poem -> Believers are God’s creative poetry

Created “for the purpose of good works” -> Intrinsically Good Work

“Which God prepared beforehand” -> Divine Appointments -> Predestined

“That we should walk in them” -> As we live in Christ, working for Him

It is a Church that loves others

The Church Loves as Jesus Did -> It is a labor of love FOR Jesus Christ

Paul wrote about love to the Corinthian church:

1 Corinthians 13:4-13 (The Excellence of Love)

“Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. **But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.**”

The Corinthians were too focused on building themselves up higher than each other

Paul needed to teach them about what true love is all about

Love Inside the Church -> Other Believers

Jesus spoke about this kind of love

John 13:34-35

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **By this all men will know that you are My disciples**, if you have love for one another.”

Jesus wanted the church to be known by its love for each other

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples” -> It is an identifying love

But the MAD church also shows **Love Outside the Church** -> The Lost

Jesus exemplified this kind of love:

Luke 13:34 (Jesus to the Unbelieving People in Jerusalem)

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her young under her wings, and you were unwilling.”

Jesus purposely went to see the lost woman at the well in **John 4**

In **John 8**, we read of a lost woman caught in adultery

Mark 7:25-29

“A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And He was saying to her, “**Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.**” But she answered and said to Him, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs.” And He said to her, “Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.”

Jesus’s compassion in serving the lost is evident -> even to the Gentiles

Our compassion in serving our community should be the same -> **We need to serve first!**

It is a Church focused on Christ’s return

- A Free City but a Powerful Jewish Presence
- Engaging the Community with the Gospel

The Church was in Tribulation -> Yet they had a steadfast hope IN Jesus Christ

2 Timothy 3:12

“Indeed, all who want to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Matthew 5:11-12

"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The MAD Church loves even if it is persecuted by the unbelieving world

1 Peter 4:12-13

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.”

1 Peter 3:15

“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

Speak Second!

Even in circumstances where people do not like you

Serve in spite of that

Third, it is a Saved Church

#3 -> A CHURCH WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE CHOSEN (That is: SAVED)

1 Thessalonians 1:4

“knowing, brethren beloved by God, **His choice of you**”

The church understands that God has chosen them for a reason

The Church is on a Mission for Jesus

It does not merely attend on Sundays or Wednesday nights

It's in operation in the homes and offices of its members

It's active in the community

It was evident to Paul that the Thessalonians were chosen

He goes on to explain further with the next few verses

Fourth, it is a Church of Action and Words:

#4 -> A CHURCH OF ACTION ALONG WITH WORDS

The Church Has a Testimony

1 Thessalonians 1:5-7

“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.”

The Gospel came with Words:

1 Corinthians 9:16

“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.”

The Gospel came “in the power of the Holy Spirit” -> There was a visible transformation in the Thessalonian church

The Gospel was lived out by a Pastor personally “All-in” -> Paul Proved It

The Church followed Paul’s example -> “As I follow Christ”

1 Corinthians 11:1

“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”

The Thessalonian church became the example for others

They modeled what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:14-16

“**You are the light of the world.** A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand and it gives light to all who are in the house. “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.””

This is the MAD church at work!

Whatever those good works are, they focus on the God Who chose them for His glory

Example service leads to a reverberation of its words and actions

Fifth, it’s a church with an echo:

#5 -> A CHURCH WITH AN ECHO

The Church Sounds out from inside its doors

1 Thessalonians 1:8

“For **the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you**, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.”

The Church Isn’t Focusing on Solely Consuming Knowledge

The Church reverberates truth through its actions -> **A Literal Echo (sounded forth)**

The Church became a megaphone for the Gospel

- Within Greece
- Around the Christian World
- Without Needing the Pastor to Tout His Congregation

“Hey, did you hear what Calvary Baptist Church did last week for the community?”

James 1:21-25

“In humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. **But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.**”

“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

If you're only hearing the Word, you're missing the point of "Church"

Sixth and lastly, it is a church of the redeemed:

#6 -> A CHURCH REPENTED AND REDEEMED

The Church is Transformed for a Purpose

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

"For they themselves report about us, what kind of a reception we had with you, and **how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God**, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come."

Paul was hearing about the Church from others -> Timothy and Silas, primarily

To repent means "to change your mind" -> to realize that God is in control of life and commit to Him as Lord

The Church was made up of individual testimonies

The Church understood the truth and was committed to live by faith

The Church was longing for Jesus's Return to be finally free from sin -> to be redeemed!

The Church served God with a purpose knowing they were secure in Christ forever

Like Paul in **Romans 7** -> Paul didn't do what he wanted to do, and he did what he didn't want to do

So, this is the **IDEAL CHURCH**:

1. A CHURCH FOCUSED ON PRAYER led by a PASTOR FOCUSED ON PRAYER
2. A CHURCH WHERE FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE IS PARAMOUNT
 - a. **The Church "Works"**
 - b. **The Church Loves Others**
 - c. **The Church is Focused on Christ's Return**
3. A CHURCH WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE CHOSEN (That is: A SAVED CHURCH)
4. A CHURCH OF ACTION ALONG WITH WORDS
 - a. **The Church Has a Testimony**
5. A CHURCH WITH AN ECHO
 - a. **The Church Sounds out from inside its doors**
6. A CHURCH REPENTED AND REDEEMED
 - a. **The Church is Transformed for a Purpose**

So, what do you think?

Do you want to be a MAD Church?

Does this sound like our church today? or Do we need to work on becoming this type of a church?

Your pastor is praying for us to be this kind of church

Join me in that prayer for our church to make a difference in our community!

Prayer

Benediction