

“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. - 1 Thessalonians 1:1 ESV

Probably the first letter that Paul wrote to the church.

Here is a little background you might want to share – there is quite a bit here but gives you some good background on Silas and Timothy and how Silas and Paul, on the 2nd missionary journey, established the church in Thessalonica. The church was made up of some Jewish converts and many Gentiles.

A. Greeting and thanksgiving.

1. (1) Paul greets the Thessalonian Christians.

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.

a. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy: Paul was an amazing man and apostle of God, but he usually did not work all by himself. Whenever he could, Paul worked with a team. Here Paul mentioned the men he worked with.

i. Silvanus (also known as *Silas*) was a long and experienced companion of Paul. He traveled with Paul on his second missionary journey and was imprisoned and set free with Paul in the Philippian jail ([Acts 16:19-30](#)). When Paul first came to Thessalonica, Silas came with him ([Acts 17:1-9](#)). Therefore, the Thessalonians knew Silvanus well.

ii. Timothy was a resident of Lystra, a city in the province of Galatia ([Acts 16:1-3](#)). He was the son of a Greek father ([Acts 16:1](#)) and a Jewish mother named Eunice ([2 Timothy 1:5](#)). From his youth learned the Scriptures from his mother and grandmother ([2 Timothy 1:5](#); [3:15](#)). Timothy was a trusted companion and associate of Paul, and he accompanied Paul on many of his missionary journeys. Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians on a previous occasion ([1 Thessalonians 3:2](#)).

b. To the church of the Thessalonians: Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey ([Acts 17:1-9](#)). He was only in the city a short time because he was forced out by enemies of the Gospel. Yet the church of the Thessalonians continued alive and active. Though Paul had to suddenly leave this young church, his deep concern for them prompted this letter.

i. On Paul's second missionary journey, he was imprisoned in Philippi and then miraculously freed from jail – only to be kicked out of the city. Then he came to Thessalonica, the prosperous capital of the province of Macedonia (northern Greece), located on the famous Egnatian Way.

ii. After only three weekends of prosperous ministry ([Acts 17:2](#)), he had to flee from an angry mob. He moved on to Berea – again enjoying several weeks of ministry, but soon driven out by the same Thessalonian mob.

Historical Background of Thessalonica

Thessalonica was located at the intersection of two major Roman roads, one leading from Italy eastward (Ignatia Way) and the other from the Danube to the Aegean. Thessalonica's location and use as a port made it a prominent city. In 168 BC it became the capital of the second district of Macedonia and later it was made the capital and major port of the whole Roman province of Macedonia (146 BC). In 42 BC, after the battle at Philippi, Thessalonica was made a free city. Today the modern city of Thessaloniki is the second most important city of Greece and home to a million inhabitants.

The apostle Paul finds himself going a different direction than what he previously thought. He thought he would primarily be ministering to the Jews but he experienced what many scholars refer to as The Macedonian Call – Paul, who was a great Jew, is now commissioned through a dream to head to the Gentiles.

It is good to know that v. 1 is really a standard opening common to the culture and the time.

Authors –

Paul, Silvanus and Timothy

Paul is the primary author but Paul takes Silas with him and Timothy is included even though he did not go on the trip because Timothy is believed to be the deliverer of the letter.

The authors are writing to the church of the Thessalonians-

What is a church? Body of believers in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

The term is Ekklesia – which is an assembly that is set apart. The church exists to worship God and proclaim the gospel.

As a church, group boundaries are set. A boundary between the saved and unsaved.

What do you think of this statement? The Bible has no value to the outside world because it makes no sense. Only when the Spirit flips the switch can anyone begin to understand.

Take time to allow participants to discuss this question - Are we offering here at church what people can get anywhere else? Is the church different?

Here is an interesting thought in today's church culture – Here at this church, you will find no judgment.

A judgment free zone church allows you to make up your own truth. Scripture does speak to the truth of the gospel. There is a standard for truth and it is found in God's Word and in the person of Jesus Christ.

Imitating the best plans of the world will always lead to disillusionment. It becomes a vicious cycle that can distract individuals and a church from faithfulness.

Paul reminds them that they are In God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. – the unity of the two is important. Paul reminds the believers of their belief in God. They were Jews who understood the Law and believed God as Father. Paul reminds them that Jesus made claims that He and God the Father are One. This is a very important point for Paul to make.

They are writing to a local church. Christ as the head and led by chosen leaders
And Paul is specific that it is The Thessalonian church, but the truths pertains to us today as well.

All Scripture matters and pertains to us if we are listening. Have you ever wondered this sermon is ever going to relate to me and where I am at?

The authors send Grace to you and peace – unmerited favor; being treated better than you deserve; reminds them of the heart of the gospel – grace from God Himself

Christ came as a human; lived a sinless life; was put to death; and was resurrected.

Peace – shalom which was a powerful greeting/proclamation

Who needs more grace? Getting more than you deserve.

What kind of spotter/safety net do you employ?

What about peace? It is not passing peace but peace that is centered and complete in the very person of God.

1. Be encouraged that God gives us people to lead us to Him. God doesn't wait for us to become winners in order to save us. He loves losers.
2. Be encouraged that God gives us a place to heal and belong. Our brokenness affirms that the gospel is true. If we are not broken then the gospel is not needed.
3. Be encouraged that the Father has adopted us if we have made Jesus our Lord.
4. Be encouraged that God gives us grace and peace for our hearts.

Some possible decision points for you to consider –

- Are you a part of the assembly?
- What do you need to surrender to Christ today?
- Do you accept and give grace?
- Are you becoming more dramatic or more like the Prince of Peace?

Read this quote - You cannot go with God and stay the way you are. – Henry Blackaby

Are you willing to surrender that which is holding you back from allowing Christ to rule your life?

Take time to share prayer requests and pray.