



I THESSALONIANS

GREETING

1 ¹From Paul, Silas, and Timothy.
 To the church at Thessalonica united with God the Father and the Lord
 Jesus Christ.
 Good will^a and peace are yours!

NOVEMBER 22

1 Thessalonians 1:1–3:13

Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to be faithful to God in spite of their problems and persecution.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE THESSALONIANS

²We always thank God for all of you as we remember you in our prayers.
³In the presence of our God and Father, we never forget that your faith is active, your love is working hard, and your confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ is enduring. ⁴Brothers and sisters, we never forget this because we know that God loves you and has chosen you. ⁵We know this because the Good News we brought came to you not only with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with complete certainty. In the same way you know what kind of people we were while we were with you and the good things we did for you.

⁶You imitated us and the Lord. In spite of a lot of suffering, you welcomed God's word with the kind of joy that the Holy Spirit gives. ⁷This way, you became a model for all the believers in the province of Macedonia and Greece. ⁸From you the Lord's word has spread out not only through the province of Macedonia and Greece but also to people everywhere who have heard about your faith in God. We don't need to say a thing about it. ⁹They talk about how you welcomed us when we arrived. They even report how you turned away from false gods to serve the real, living God ¹⁰and to wait for his Son to come from heaven. His Son is Jesus, whom he brought back to life. Jesus is the one who rescues us from God's coming anger.

PAUL REMEMBERS WHEN HE WAS WITH THE THESSALONIANS

2 ¹You know, brothers and sisters, that our time with you was not wasted. ²As you know, we suffered rough and insulting treatment in Philippi. But our God gave us the courage to tell you his Good News in spite of strong opposition.

³When we encouraged you, we didn't use unethical schemes, corrupt practices, or deception. ⁴Rather, we are always spreading the Good News. God trusts us to do this because we passed his test. We don't try to please people but God, who tests our motives. ⁵As you know, we never used flattery or schemes to make money. God is our witness! ⁶We didn't seek praise from people, from you or from anyone else, ⁷although as apostles of Christ we had the right to do this.

Instead, we were gentle when we were with you, like a mother taking care of her children. ⁸We felt so strongly about you that we were determined to share with you not only the Good News of God but also our lives. That's how dear you were to us! ⁹You remember, brothers and sisters, our work and

^a1:1 Or "Grace."



what we did to earn a living. We worked night and day so that we could bring you the Good News of God without being a burden to any of you. ¹⁰You and God are witnesses of how pure, honest, and blameless we were in our dealings with you believers. ¹¹You know very well that we treated each of you the way a father treats his children. We comforted you and encouraged you. Yet, we insisted that ¹²you should live in a way that proves you belong to the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

PAUL REMEMBERS HOW THE THESSALONIANS RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD

¹³Here is another reason why we never stop thanking God: When you received God's word from us, you realized it wasn't the word of humans. Instead, you accepted it for what it really is—the word of God. This word is at work in you believers.

¹⁴You, brothers and sisters, were like the churches of God in Judea that are united with Christ Jesus. You suffered the same persecutions from the people of your own country as those churches did from the Jews ¹⁵who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and who have persecuted us severely. They are displeasing to God. They are enemies of the whole human race ¹⁶because they try to keep us from telling people who are not Jewish how they can be saved. The result is that those Jews always commit as many sins as possible. So at last they are receiving God's anger.

¹⁷Brothers and sisters, we have been separated from you for a little while. Although we may not be able to see you, you're always in our thoughts. We have made every possible effort to fulfill our desire to see you. ¹⁸We wanted to visit you. I, Paul, wanted to visit you twice already, but Satan made that impossible.

¹⁹Who is our hope, joy, or prize that we can brag about in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Isn't it you? ²⁰You are our glory and joy!

TIMOTHY'S REPORT TO PAUL

3 ¹We thought it best to remain in Athens by ourselves. But, because we couldn't wait any longer for news about you, ²we sent our brother Timothy to you. He serves God by spreading the Good News about Christ. His mission was to strengthen and encourage you in your faith ³so that these troubles don't disturb any of you. You know that we're destined to suffer persecution. ⁴In fact, when we were with you, we told you ahead of time that we were going to suffer persecution. And as you know, that's what happened. ⁵But when I couldn't wait any longer, I sent Timothy, to find out about your faith. I wanted to see whether the tempter had in some way tempted you, making our work meaningless.

⁶But Timothy has just now come back to us from you and has told us the good news about your faith and love. He also told us that you always have fond memories of us and want to see us, as we want to see you. ⁷So brothers and sisters, your faith has encouraged us in all our distress and trouble. ⁸Now we can go on living as long as you keep your relationship with the Lord firm.

⁹We can never thank God enough for all the joy you give us as we rejoice in God's presence. ¹⁰We pray very hard night and day that we may see you again so that we can supply whatever you still need for your faith. ¹¹We pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus will guide us to you. ¹²We also pray that the Lord will greatly increase your love for each other and for everyone else, just as we love you. ¹³Then he will strengthen you to be holy. Then you will be blameless in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all God's holy people.

Today
Ask God for strength to remain faithful when you face opposition to your beliefs.





INSTRUCTIONS ON THE WAY CHRISTIANS SHOULD LIVE

4 ¹Now then, brothers and sisters, because of the Lord Jesus we ask and encourage you to excel in living a God-pleasing life even more than you already do. Do this the way we taught you. ²You know what orders we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³It is God's will that you keep away from sexual sin as a mark of your devotion to him. ⁴Each of you should know that finding a husband or wife for yourself is to be done in a holy and honorable way, ⁵not in the passionate, lustful way of people who don't know God. ⁶No one should take advantage of or exploit other believers that way. The Lord is the one who punishes people for all these things. We've already told you and warned you about this. ⁷God didn't call us to be sexually immoral but to be holy. ⁸Therefore, whoever rejects this order is not rejecting human authority but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

⁹You don't need anyone to write to you about the way Christians should love each other. God has taught you to love each other. ¹⁰In fact, you are showing love to all the Christians throughout the province of Macedonia. We encourage you as believers to excel in love even more. ¹¹Also, make it your goal to live quietly, do your work, and earn your own living, as we ordered you. ¹²Then your way of life will win respect from those outside the church, and you won't have to depend on anyone else for what you need.

COMFORT ABOUT CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE DIED

¹³Brothers and sisters, we don't want you to be ignorant about those who have died. We don't want you to grieve like other people who have no hope. ¹⁴We believe that Jesus died and came back to life. We also believe that, through Jesus, God will bring back those who have died. They will come back with Jesus. ¹⁵We are telling you what the Lord taught. We who are still alive when the Lord comes will not go into his kingdom, ahead of those who have already died. ¹⁶The Lord will come from heaven with a command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call, of God. First, the dead who believed in Christ will come back to life. ¹⁷Then, together with them, we who are still alive will be taken in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. In this way we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸So then, comfort each other with these words!

BE READY FOR THE DAY OF THE LORD

5 ¹Brothers and sisters, you don't need anyone to write to you about times and dates. ²You know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When people say, "Everything is safe and sound!" destruction will suddenly strike them. It will be as sudden as labor pains come to a pregnant woman. They won't be able to escape. ⁴But, brothers and sisters, you don't live in the dark. That day won't take you by surprise as a thief would. ⁵You belong to the day and the light not to the night and the dark. ⁶Therefore, we must not fall asleep like other people, but we must stay awake and be sober. ⁷People who sleep, sleep at night; people who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸Since we belong to the day, we must be sober. We must put on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹It was not God's intention that we experience his anger but that we obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰He died for us so that, whether we are awake in this life or asleep in death, we will live together with him. ¹¹Therefore, encourage each other and strengthen one another as you are doing.

PAUL ENCOURAGES THE THESSALONIANS

¹²Brothers and sisters, we ask you to show your appreciation for those leaders who work among you and instruct you. ¹³We ask you to love them and

NOVEMBER 23

1 Thessalonians 4:1–5:28

Looking forward to Jesus' return brings encouragement to Christians who are going through difficult times. Paul reminded the Thessalonians to watch for Christ's return, to never stop praying, and to be joyful and thankful.





think very highly of them because of the work they are doing. Live in peace with each other.

¹⁴We encourage you, brothers and sisters, to instruct those who are not living right, cheer up those who are discouraged, help the weak, and be patient with everyone. ¹⁵Make sure that no one ever pays back one wrong with another wrong. Instead, always try to do what is good for each other and everyone else.

¹⁶Always be joyful. ¹⁷Never stop praying. ¹⁸Whatever happens, give thanks, because it is God's will in Christ Jesus that you do this.

¹⁹Don't put out the Spirit's fire. ²⁰Don't despise what God has revealed. ²¹Instead, test everything. Hold on to what is good. ²²Keep away from every kind of evil.

Today

Tell God about the frustration or pain you feel from difficult circumstances in your life. Thank God that when Christ returns, you will never experience pain again.

**FAREWELL**

²³May the God who gives peace make you holy in every way. May he keep your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—blameless when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

²⁵Brothers and sisters, pray for us.

²⁶Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss.

²⁷In the Lord's name, I order you to read this letter to all the brothers and sisters.

²⁸The good will^a of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

^a5:28 Or "grace."