

The 1st letter that Paul wrote to the Christians at Thessalonica (The book in the Holy Bible called 1 Thessalonians) About this letter

Paul wrote this letter about 2,000 years ago, about 20 years after Jesus went back to heaven, and it is now in the Holy Bible.

God sent Paul to lots of countries and lots of towns to tell people about Jesus. One of those towns was Thessalonica (see Acts 17:1-9). It was a big town in the country called Greece, where the Greek people come from, and it is still there today. Sometimes people now call that town Salonica.

When Paul went to Thessalonica some people believed in Jesus and became Christians, but others didn't like what he was saying, and they made trouble for him. So he could not stay there very long. Soon after that he sent his friend Timothy back to Thessalonica to find out how those new Christians were going, and to help them be strong for Jesus. After Timothy came back and told him how they were going, Paul wrote them this letter. Paul's 2 friends, Silas and Timothy, they helped him write this letter. This was the 1st letter that Paul wrote to them. He wrote them another letter about 6 months later.

In this letter Paul wrote about the time when Jesus will come back from heaven, and he said

other important things too. So today we have to take notice of what Paul wrote to the Christians at Thessalonica.

¹ I am Paul, and this letter is from me. Silas and Timothy are here with me, and they are helping me write this letter.

We are sending this letter to you Christians that are in God's church, in the town called Thessalonica. You belong to God our father and to Jesus Christ our leader.

We are asking God and Jesus to be good to you, and to make you feel happy and quiet inside yourselves.*

People at Thessalonica properly believed in Jesus

² We pray for you mob all the time, and we always thank God for you. ³ Whenever we talk about you to God, our father, we remember the good things that you do. You properly believe in Jesus Christ, and you love him very much, so you do those good things. And you love other people too, so you work hard to help them. You are really sure that our leader, Jesus Christ, will come back for you, so you keep on following him, no matter what other people do to you.

⁴ Christian friends, we know that God loves you, and he picked you to be his own people.

⁵ Remember the time when we told you the good news about Jesus. We told you the message with our words, but the Holy Spirit made us sure that we were telling the true story, and he gave us his

* **1:1** Acts 17:1

power to show you that God was with us. And remember the sort of people we were at the time when we were with you there. We showed you the good way to live. ⁶ So you changed the way you live, and you lived the same way that we lived, like the way that Jesus, our leader, lived. You believed the message about Jesus, and the Holy Spirit made you really happy. Other people gave you a lot of trouble, but you were happy anyway.* ⁷ You showed all the other Christians there in Macedonia country the right way to live. And you did that too for the Christians in the country to the south of you, called Akaya.

⁸⁻⁹ And now people in lots of places have heard about Jesus. You see, other people told them about you. They told them that you listened to us when we came to your town, and that you turned away from the gods that are not real, and that now you only work for the true God, the one that is properly alive. And it's not only the people in Macedonia and Akaya that have heard that story. Everywhere we go we find people that tell us about you, so we know that story has gone around to lots of places. We don't have to tell anyone about you. They have already heard the story. ¹⁰ And they say that you are waiting for God's son to come back from heaven. His son is Jesus. Jesus died, but God made him alive again. And you know, God will judge everybody one day. Everybody has done bad things, and that makes God angry. But Jesus will save his people,

* **1:6** Acts 17:5-9

so God will not be angry with you, and he will not be angry with us.

2

Paul asked the Christians at Thessalonica to remember the time he visited them

¹ Christian friends, you know that it was good that we went to your town and told you God's message. It wasn't a waste of our time, because you believed that message. ² And you know that before we came to you, we told God's message to the people in Philippi. Some of those Philippi people got really cheeky to us, and they beat us up. After that, we came to your town, and God made us brave, so we told God's message to you too. We didn't get frightened of the cheeky people that tried to stop us.* ³ You see, we only told you true things. We told you the good news so that you can believe God's message. We were not trying to trick you. We were not trying to get you to believe things that are not true. ⁴ No way. You see, it was God that sent us. He knew us, and he trusted us to tell people his message. So we only say what he wants us to say. We don't try to make people happy. We only try to make God happy. ⁵ And when we talked to you, we didn't say nice things about you, so that you will like us. We didn't make a secret plan to get you to give us things. God knows that. ⁶ And we didn't try to get anyone to say good things about us. We didn't want you or anyone else to do that.

* **2:2** Acts 16:19-24; 17:1-9

⁷ God made us Jesus's special workers, and he sent us to you. But we didn't say, "We are Jesus's special workers, so we are your bosses, and you have to do what we say." No, we didn't talk like that. We were like little kids with you. We talked easy to you. We were good to you, like a mother taking care of her kids. ⁸ We loved you so much that we told you the good news about Jesus. And more than that, we were ready to do anything to help you.

⁹ Christian friends, remember what we did when we were there with you. We worked to get money, and while we did that, we told you the good news from God. We worked a lot to get enough money to look after ourselves. We didn't only work in the day time, but we worked at night time too. So you didn't have to give us anything. ¹⁰ While we were with you mob, we only did things that made God happy. We did things that are good and right. You know that, and God knows it too. ¹¹ And you know that we treated each one of you the same way a father treats his own kids. ¹² We taught you, and we helped you to be brave and strong. And we told you very strongly to do things that make God happy. You see, God is the one that picked you to be in his own family, and you will be really great with him.

People at Thessalonica believed God's message

¹³ And we always thank God for the way you listened to us. We told you God's message, and you knew that it wasn't only a message from

people. You believed that we told you words from God, and that it was God's message. And you were right. It is God's word. And now that you believe that word, it helps you grow strong for him.

¹⁴ And, Christian friends, your countrymen gave you a lot of trouble after you believed in Jesus. You know, the same thing happened to the Christians in the churches in Judea country. They believed in Jesus, and their Jewish countrymen gave them a lot of trouble too.* ¹⁵ That Jewish mob didn't want to believe God, and they made trouble for Jesus. You see, a long time ago, it was the Jewish mob that killed the men that told God's messages, and it was the Jewish mob that killed our leader Jesus too. And it was the same for us. Wherever we told people about Jesus, the Jewish mob chased us out of those places. They make God angry. They work against everyone.* ¹⁶ They try to stop us telling everyone that God can save people that are not Jewish. That Jewish mob did a lot of bad things in the past, and they are also doing those bad things now, so they make God angry, and he is going to punish them.

Paul wanted to go back and visit the Thessalonica people

¹⁷ Look, Christian friends, we never wanted to leave you mob, but we had to. But it was only for a little while, and we kept on thinking about

* **2:14** Acts 17:5 * **2:15** Acts 9:23, 29; 13:45, 50; 14:2, 5, 19; 17:5, 13; 18:12

you, and we really wanted to go back to you. ¹⁸ I, Paul, tried to go back lots of times, but Satan, the boss over the bad spirits, he stopped me every time. ¹⁹⁻²⁰ Listen. One day our leader, Jesus, will come back, and he will ask us about the things we did. Then we will tell him about how we got you mob to trust him. And you will be there with us on that day, so we will be really happy. We are like athletes that run in a race and win the prize, because after Jesus comes back, he will tell us that we did a good job with you, and that will be like a prize for us.

3

Paul sent Timothy to the Christians at Thessalonica

¹⁻² But back at the time just after we left you, we worried about you for a while. We didn't know if you kept on trusting Jesus or not. We tried to go back to find out about you, but we couldn't do it. And we couldn't wait to get some news about you. So we reckoned, "We'll send Timothy by himself, and we'll stay here in this city called Athens and wait for him to come back." Timothy is like our brother. He works with us for God, telling people the good news about Jesus Christ.

We sent Timothy to you so that he could help you to be strong and to trust Jesus better. ³ We knew that people would give you trouble, and we didn't want any of you to stop following Jesus. You yourselves know that you get trouble for

following Jesus. ⁴ This is what we told you when we were still with you, we said, “Some people will give you trouble.” And soon that happened, just like we said.

⁵ And I really worried about you. I thought, “You Christians in Thessalonica are very new Christians. Maybe the boss over the bad spirits gave you too much trouble. Maybe he tricked you, so that you don’t trust Jesus any more. Maybe we worked for nothing there in Thessalonica.” That’s what I was thinking, but I didn’t really know the true story. And when I couldn’t wait any longer, I had to send Timothy to find out the true story about you.

Timothy came back with good news

⁶ And now Timothy has just come back to us, and he brought us good news about you. He told us that you still believe in Jesus Christ, and you still love God, and you still love other people. He said that every time you remember us, it makes you happy, and you want to see us again, just as much as we want to see you again. That is the story Timothy told us.* ⁷ We heard that news about you, our Christian friends, and we were very happy. After we heard it, we got braver and stronger for God. It doesn’t matter to us if people give us trouble and hit us. You still trust Jesus, so we are happy. ⁸ We heard that you strongly believe in our leader, Jesus, and now we feel properly alive again. ⁹ You make us so happy that we pray to God and thank him

* **3:6** Acts 18:5

for you. We can't thank him enough. ¹⁰ We are always praying to God, both in the day time and at night time, and we are strongly asking him to let us visit you again. There are still some things we need to tell you about Jesus so that you can trust him even more.

Paul wanted God to help the Christians at Thessalonica

¹¹ Yes, we want God, our father, and Jesus, our leader, to help us come to you. ¹² And we want Jesus to get you to love each other and to love other people, even more than you do now. We want you to love people just as much as we love you. ¹³ We want Jesus to make you properly good and clean inside. You see, one day Jesus, our leader, will come back, and all his people will be with him. And then we will all meet God our father, and God will see that we are properly good and clean inside, so he will be happy with us, and he will not have to blame us for doing anything wrong.

4

God wants Christians to live the right way

¹ There is one more thing we want to tell you, our Christian friends. You know, we taught you about the right way to live, to make God happy. And you have been living that way. That's good. But we want you to live like that even more. ² You know the things that we told you to do. Our leader, Jesus, got us to tell you those things.

³ This is what God wants. He wants you to be properly good and to keep away from everything that is wrong. If somebody is not your own wife or husband, don't sleep with them as if you are married to them. ⁴ Every one of you has to learn how to control your own body in a way that is clean and good. ⁵ Don't be like people that don't know God. They just want to sleep with anybody and do the wrong thing with them. That is what they want to do, and they are always thinking about it. They don't try to stop themselves. Don't be like that. ⁶ None of you men can ever sleep with a woman that is not your own wife. If you do that, you are doing a bad thing to her husband. He is the only person that can sleep with her, so don't cheat him out of that. Don't do that bad thing to another Christian, or to anyone else. God is the one that will punish you if you do that. We told you about that when we were with you, and we mean it. ⁷ God picked us to be his people, but he didn't pick us to be people that do bad and dirty things, like sleeping with somebody else's wife or husband. He picked us to be people that keep away from everything that is bad. ⁸ That rule doesn't come from people, it comes from God. So anyone that doesn't listen to that rule, is not listening to God. And remember, God is the one that gives you his Holy Spirit, and his spirit is really good.

⁹ I don't need to write to you about how you have to love other Christians. God himself taught you to love each other. ¹⁰ Yes, you love all the Christians in every place in your country, called

Macedonia. But we ask you strongly, friends, to love each other more and more.

¹¹ Try to live the way we told you to when we were with you. Try to live in a quiet way, and don't make any trouble for anyone. Don't mess up the things that other people are doing, or try to boss them around. And don't be lazy, but work to get enough money to buy whatever you need.

¹² Then you will not have to ask other people for things. If you live like that, the people that don't know God will see that you are good, and they will respect you.

Christians will go up to meet Jesus while he is coming back

¹³ Christian friends, we are going to tell you now about people that have already died. We don't want you to be sad when you think about them. Other people, that don't believe in Jesus, they don't know what will happen to them after they die. So when their friends die, they get really sad. But if our Christian friends die, we don't have to be really sad like those other people. Listen, we want you to understand this properly. ¹⁴ You see, we believe that Jesus died, and after that, God made him alive again. So we also believe that when Jesus comes back to this earth, all the Christians that already died will come back with him. Jesus will bring them all back with him. ¹⁵ You see, this is the message that Jesus, our leader, told us, and we tell this same message to you. Those of us that are still alive when Jesus comes back, we will not go

and meet him before the Christians that already died. ¹⁶ It will happen like this. Our leader, Jesus himself, will come down from heaven, and while he is coming, everyone will hear him call out, and they will hear the voice of the boss angel, and they will hear the sound of God's trumpet. Then, first of all, those people that belonged to Jesus Christ and already died, they will come back to life. ¹⁷ After that, God will get those of us Christians that are still alive at that time, and he will take us up into the clouds with the Christians that already died, and we will all meet Jesus, our leader, way up in the air. And so, after that, we will be with Jesus all the time, for ever.* ¹⁸ So think about this message, and talk to each other about it, and help each other to stay strong, so that you are not sad when your Christian friends die.

5

Christians have to be ready for Jesus to come back

¹ And now, Christian friends, think about the time when Jesus will come back. We don't need to write to you about times and dates. ² You already know about that day when our leader, Jesus, will come back. You know it will come suddenly, and people will get a big shock. They will not be ready for it, like nobody is ready for a robber to come in the night to steal things.* ³ You know, people will be saying, "We are safe.

* **4:17** 1 Corinthians 15:51-52
12:39; 2 Peter 3:10

* **5:2** Matthew 24:43; Luke

There's no trouble here." But then that big trouble will come really quickly, and they will not be ready for it. God will use that big trouble to punish them. It will be like what happens when a woman has a baby, she suddenly gets pain, and then her baby starts to come, and nobody can stop it. That big trouble will be just like that. It will come to people suddenly, and they will not get away from it.

⁴ But, Christian friends, you aren't like other people that don't listen to what God says. It is like they are living in the dark all the time. When that trouble day comes, you will not get a shock, like people do when a robber comes to steal their things at night. ⁵ You listen to what God says. It's like you belong to the light, and you belong to the day time. You aren't people that belong to the night time or the dark. ⁶ So don't be like other people that aren't ready for Jesus to come back, like they are asleep. Instead, you have to think properly about what is happening, like people that are awake. ⁷ You know, night time is the time when people go to sleep, or maybe they get drunk, so they can't think properly. ⁸ But we belong to the day time, so we have to think properly. We have to keep on loving God and trusting him to save us. When we do that, it will make us strong for God, like when soldiers put on special clothes made out of iron, to stop the enemy from hurting them.*

⁹⁻¹⁰ You see, God picked us to save us, not to

* **5:8** Isaiah 59:17; Ephesians 6:13-17

get angry with us. Our leader, Jesus Christ, died for us, so now God can save us and give us new life. After Jesus comes back, we will live with him for ever. Maybe we will die before he comes, or maybe we will still be alive. It will not matter, because God will give us all new life, and we will all live with Jesus for ever. ¹¹ So then, tell those things to each other, and help each other to become stronger for God, not sad and weak. And yes, I know that you are doing that already.

Some things to do and some things not to do

¹² Now, Christian friends, here are a few more things we really want you to do.

- Respect the people among you that work hard for God. They lead you, his people, and teach you how to live the right way.
- ¹³ They work for God, so respect them, and love them a lot.
- And don't argue with each other.
- ¹⁴ And the next thing, friends, tell lazy people that they have to work.
- And if somebody is frightened, talk to them in a way that helps them to be brave.
- And help anybody that is weak.
- And don't get angry with anyone, keep on trying to help them.
- ¹⁵ If somebody does something bad to you, don't try to do payback to them, but always try to be good to each other and to everyone else too.

¹⁶ And we want you to do these things too.

- Always be happy.

- ¹⁷ Be ready to pray to God at any time.
- ¹⁸ Always thank God, no matter what happens to you.

You see, you belong to Jesus Christ, so God wants you to do those things. ¹⁹ And we want you to do some more things too.

- Don't stop God's spirit working in you.
- ²⁰ Don't rubbish God's messages, ²¹ but listen carefully when anyone tells you a message from God. Think carefully about everything they say, and find out if it really comes from God. Then, if it is right, be careful to remember it and to do those good things. ²² But if it is wrong, or if it tells you to do a bad thing, don't do it. Keep away from every sort of bad thing, and don't listen to messages that don't come from God.

The end of this letter

²³ God is the one that helps people to be happy and quiet inside themselves. I want that for you, and I'm asking God himself to clean you properly inside, so that you will be his special people. I want God to help you be properly good in every way, with your body, and your spirit, and also that part inside you that thinks and that gives you your feelings. Yes, God can clean you and help you be properly good, so that at the time when our leader, Jesus Christ, comes back, God will not blame you for doing anything wrong. ²⁴ Yes, God will make you properly clean inside. He picked you to be his people, and he always does what he promised to do.

²⁵ And now, my Christian friends, I'm asking you to pray for us. ²⁶ And whenever you meet other Christians, show them that you know they are special, and that you are happy to see them.

²⁷ Now listen. I want you to promise me that you will read this letter to all the Christians there. And our leader, Jesus, will be listening to you promise that.

²⁸ And now I ask our leader, Jesus Christ, to be with you and to be very good to you.

From Paul

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who speak English as a second language

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