

The 2 letters that Paul wrote to the
Christians at Thessalonica
The 1st letter that Paul wrote to the
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This page tells a bit more about Paul's
1st letter to the Christians at
Thessalonica

Thessalonica was a big town in the country that we now call Greece. It is still a big town today. Sometimes people now call that town Salonica.

About 2,000 years ago Paul went to Thessalonica to tell the people there about Jesus Christ, and 2 other men went there with him. Their names were Silas and Timothy (see Acts 17:1-15). They couldn't stay there very long, maybe only a few weeks.

Paul was sorry that he didn't have enough time at Thessalonica, so he sent Timothy back to them later. Paul wanted to teach the new Christians there a lot more about Jesus Christ. After Timothy came back and told Paul about them, Paul wrote them this letter. Silas and Timothy helped him write it. This happened about 20 years after Jesus went back to heaven.

In this letter Paul told about Jesus coming back from heaven, and he said other good things too. So today we have to take notice of what he wrote a long time ago to the Christians at Thessalonica.

¹ I am Paul, and this letter is from me and Silas and Timothy. They are helping me write this letter. We are sending this letter to you people that belong to God, the

Father of our leader, Jesus Christ. We are sending it to you Christians that live in the city called Thessalonica.

We are asking God to be very 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 Dear friends, we know that God loves you and he picked you to be his own people. ⁵ Do you remember the time when we told you the good news about Jesus? We told you the message with our words, but the Holy Spirit also showed you his power at that time, and he made us sure that we were telling you the story properly. And do you remember the kind of people we were, with you there? We showed you the good way to live. ⁶ So you started to live the same way that we lived, just like we tried to live the same 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 the right way to live. Those Christians live in Macedonia country, where your town is, and also in the country to the south of you called Achaia.

⁸⁻⁹ And now people in many 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 you turned away from the gods that are not real, and now you only work for the true God, the one that is properly alive. And it's not only the people in Macedonia and Achaia that have heard this 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. He died, but God made him alive again. Later, God will judge everybody, and he will be angry with people that do bad things. But Jesus will save us, and he will save you too, so that God will not be angry with us.

2

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

¹ Friends, do you remember the good things that happened when we came to your town? We didn't go there for nothing. ² But 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 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 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. We were not trying to trick you or get you to believe things that are not true. ⁴ No way. You see, it was God that checked us out and sent us to tell people this 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 you remember how

we talked to you. We didn't say nice things about you to get you to like us. We never had any secret plan to get you to give us things. God knows this. ⁶ We didn't try to get anyone to say good things about us, not you and not anyone else.

⁷ Jesus made us his special workers and he sent us to you. But we didn't say, "We come from Jesus Christ, so we are your bosses and you've got 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 had to tell you the good news about Jesus. And more than that, we were happy to do anything to help you.

⁹ Friends, do you remember when we were there with you? We worked to get money and at that same time we told you the good news from God. We worked long hours, not only in the day time but also at night time. We worked hard to get enough money to look after ourselves. So you didn't have to give us anything. ¹⁰ While we were with you Christians we only did things that make God happy. We did things that are good and right. You know this, and God knows it too. ¹¹ And you know that we treated each one of you the way a father treats his own children. 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 picks 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 too for the way you listened to us. We told you God's message and you knew that it wasn't only a message from us humans. 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 if you believe in Jesus, God uses his word to help you.

¹⁴ And friends, do you know what happened to the people in the churches in Judea country? They believed in Jesus and their Jewish countrymen gave them a lot of trouble. And it is the same for you now. You believe in Jesus and your countrymen give you a lot of trouble. That Jewish mob didn't want to believe God, and they made trouble for Jesus too. ¹⁵ 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 also killed our leader, Jesus. And wherever we told people about Jesus, the Jewish mob chased us out of those places. They make God angry and they are everyone's enemies. ¹⁶ They try to stop us telling everyone that God can save other people that are not Jewish. That Jewish mob did a lot of bad things in the past and they are also doing these 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, friends, we never wanted to leave you mob, but we had to. But it was only for a little while, and we kept thinking about you, and we really wanted to go back to you. ¹⁸ I, Paul, tried to go back many times but the devil boss called Satan stopped me every time. ¹⁹⁻²⁰ Listen. One day our leader, Jesus, will come back and he will ask us, "What people did you help?" Then we will tell him about you mob, and we will be so proud of you. We know for sure that you are trusting him and you make us really happy. You know about athletes that run in races, don't you? After a race the winner gets a prize. Well, just like that, after Jesus comes back he will tell us we did a good job with you, and this will be like a prize for us.

3

Paul sent Timothy to the Christians at Thessalonica

¹⁻² But at first, soon after we left you, we worried about you. 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, "Let's send Timothy by himself, and we will 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 will give you trouble, but we didn't want any of you to stop following Jesus. You yourselves know that people will give us trouble if we follow Jesus. ⁴ This is what we told you when we were still with you, we said, "Soon some people will give you trouble." And they soon did that, just like we said. ⁵ And I really worried about you. I thought, "You Christians in Thessalonica are very new Christians. Maybe the devil gave you too much trouble and maybe he tricked you. Maybe 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 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 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. This is the story Timothy told

us. ⁷ And we were very happy to hear this news about you. 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 for you. We can't thank him enough. ¹⁰ We pray to God both in the day time and at night time, and we ask 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 more.

Paul wanted something good for the Christians at Thessalonica

¹¹ Yes, we want God, our Father, and Jesus our leader, to show us the way to come to you. ¹² And we want God to get you to love each other and to love everybody even more than you do. We want you to love people just as much as we love you, ¹³ so that you will be spiritually strong. You see, one day Jesus, our leader, will come back with all his special people, and then we will all meet God, our Father. I want you to be there with us in that mob. I want you to be properly good, so that God will be happy with you and he will not blame you for doing anything wrong.

4

God wants Christians to live the right way

¹ There is one more thing we want to tell you. Do you remember what we taught you about the right way to live, to make God happy? Yes, and you have been living that way. 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 his own body in a way that is clean and good. ⁵ Don't be like people that don't know God. They always want very much to play around with somebody and sleep with them, and do what is wrong. They don't try to stop themselves. Don't you 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 taking something that belongs to another man. He is like your brother, but you are doing a bad thing to him. And God will punish you if you do things like that. We told you this when we were with you, and we mean it. ⁷ God didn't pick us to be people that do bad and dirty things. He picked us to be people that keep away from everything that is bad. ⁸ So anyone who doesn't listen to this rule is not turning his back to a human person, he is turning his back to God. He is not doing what God says. And remember, God is the one that gives you his Holy Spirit, and his spirit is properly 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 do love all the Christians in every place in Macedonia country. But we ask you strongly, friends, to love each other more and more. ¹¹ Try hard to live in a quiet way and don't make any trouble for anyone. Look after your own things, don't mess around with other people's things. And don't be lazy but work to get enough money to buy whatever you need. We told you to do these things when we were with you. ¹² If you live like this then you will have whatever you need, and you will not have to ask other people for anything. And 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 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 we Christians don't have to be sad like them when our Christian friends die. 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 believe too 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 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 can't go first to meet him, but those people that already died will get up and go ahead of us. 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 of God's angels, and they will hear the sound of God's trumpet. Then, first of all, those people that belonged to Jesus Christ when they died, they will get up alive again, and they will go up to meet Jesus. ¹⁷ After that, those of us who are still alive at that time will go up with them to meet Jesus. God will take us all up into the clouds to meet Jesus, our leader, way up in the air. And so, after that, we will be with him all the time for ever. ¹⁸ So think about this message, and talk to each other about it, so you will not be sad when your Christian friend dies.

Christians have to be ready for Jesus to come back

¹ Friends, we don't need to write to you about times and dates. ² You know already about that day when our leader, Jesus, will come back. You know that day will come suddenly, and everybody 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 It will be like this. People will be saying, "We are safe. There's no trouble here." But then that big trouble will come really quickly, and they will not be ready for it. God will give them that big trouble, and it will wreck them. You know what happens when a woman has a baby, she suddenly gets pain and then her baby starts to come, and nobody can stop it. It will be just like that. Big trouble will come to people suddenly, and nobody will get away from it.

⁴ But friends, you aren't like other people that do bad things all the time. It is like they are living in the dark all the time. When that trouble day comes you will not get a shock, like when a robber comes to steal things at night. ⁵ You belong to our leader, Jesus, and you do good things, so 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, like they are asleep. Instead, you can think clearly 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. ⁸ But we belong to the day time, so we have to think clearly. We have to keep on loving God and trusting him to save us. When we do these things, we will be like soldiers that put on special clothes made out of steel, to stop the enemy from hitting them.

⁹⁻¹⁰ You see, God didn't plan to get angry with us. No. He planned to save us. Our leader, Jesus Christ, died for us, so now God can save us. After Jesus comes back we will live with him for ever. It will not matter if we are alive or dead when he comes, we will all live with him for ever.

¹¹ So then, tell these things to each other and help each other to become stronger, not sad and weak. And yes, we know you are doing this already.

Some things to do and some things not to do

¹² Now friends, here are a few more things we really want you to do. Respect those 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 very much.

And another thing, don't argue with each other.

¹⁴ And the next thing, 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 wait for other people, and try to stay friends with 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 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 these things.

¹⁹ Now this is about people that give you messages from God. Don't stop God's spirit working in you. ²⁰ Listen carefully when anyone tells you a message that they say

comes from God. Don't rubbish God's messages, ²¹ but 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 kind 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 calm and settled inside themselves. I want this for you, and I'm asking God himself to clean you properly, so that you will be his special people. I want him to clean every part of each of you. That is your spirit, and your inside part called your soul, and your body, too. And I'm asking him to keep you clean, so that you will be properly good when our leader, Jesus Christ, comes back. ²⁴ Yes, God will do this for you. He picked you to be his people, and he always does what he promised to do.

²⁵ Friends, pray for us.

²⁶ And whenever you meet other Christians say hello to them and show them that you love 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 this.

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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