

# First Thessalonians – 5 Chapters

## Title:

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians – because it is the first of Paul’s two letters written to the church in Thessalonica.

## Author:

Written by Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul was a strict Pharisee in Jerusalem until he had a revelation of Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul spent the rest of his life as a missionary proclaiming Jesus to Gentiles around the Mediterranean. Paul wrote 13 of the Books of the New Testament.

## Occasion and Purpose:

Paul planted the church in Thessalonica and was run out of town by an angry mob of opponents to Christianity within weeks or months of his arrival. So, he left behind a baby church under persecution. The persecution was probably intensified because Paul left and Paul’s ministry and motives were questioned. Paul tried to go back, but was hindered. Finally, Paul sent Timothy back to see what was happening. Timothy reported to Paul that the church was doing well, but had a few problem issues. Paul wrote this letter to respond to the good news – He explained his absence, reminded them of his conduct, reminded them of their conversion, explained his continued absence, expressed his concern, and encouraged their faithfulness. And Paul also used this letter to respond to their issues – He addressed sexual immorality, lazy busybodies, their confusion over the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, and gave additional instructions for Christian living and community worship.

## Themes:

1. **Thanksgiving and Prayer** – Paul spends a large portion of this epistle giving thanks for God’s work in the lives of the Thessalonians. This includes Paul’s ministry among them, and their response. Paul details how he is praying for them and giving thanks for their continued faithfulness.
2. **Gospel Change** – In giving thanks, Paul highlights the dramatic life change that the Thessalonians experienced as the result of the power of the Gospel. He holds this up as the normal effect of the good news. And Paul addresses their problem situations by encouraging them to continue to live out the power of the Gospel by living changed lives.
3. **Sanctification** – Paul highlights the need for continued life change conforming more and more toward Gospel holiness. A life that is not continually conforming to God’s character is in need of more connection with the truth of God’s work in Christ and the powerful influence of God’s Spirit.
4. **Christ’s Second Coming** – Because the Thessalonians had questions and misunderstanding about the timing and nature of Christ’s second coming. They were afraid that some from their community who had died would therefore miss out on the benefits of Christ’s return. Paul corrects their understanding and soothes their worries by teaching the truth about how Christ will return.

## Summary:

God's powerful working through Paul's preaching of the Gospel resulted in dramatic conversions and a church in Thessalonica. This was God's work in the Thessalonians' faithful response. In spite of Paul's anxiousness for them in the midst of trials, God's work was evident in their persevering faithfulness, for which Paul rejoiced when he heard about it from Timothy. So, Paul celebrates, expresses his gratitude to God, expresses his longing and affection for the Thessalonians, and encourages them in their faithfulness. He also encourages them to continued growth in holiness of life and love for one another. He instruct them on the manner and the timing of Christ's second coming and gives them various instructions how to faithfully live in the meantime.

## Organization:

<b>1:1 Epistolary Introduction</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Author(s)</li><li>· Recipients</li><li>· Greeting</li></ul>
<b>1:2-3:13 Thanksgiving</b>
1:2-10 Thanksgiving for The Thessalonians' Faith 2:1-12 Description of Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica 2:13-16 Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Response 2:17-20 Description of Paul's Longing for the Thessalonians 3:1-5 Explanation of Timothy's Visit 3:6-10 Description of Paul's Joy in Timothy's Report 3:11-13 Prayer Report for the Thessalonians
<b>4:1-5:24 Instructions for Some Problem Issues</b>
4:1-12 Holy Living 4:13-5:11 Question about the Second Coming 5:12-24 Miscellaneous Instructions about Christian Living Together in This Age
<b>5:25-28 Conclusion</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Pray for Us</li><li>· Greet all the Brothers with a Holy Kiss</li><li>· Read the Epistle to All</li><li>· Grace Be With You</li></ul>

## Key Verses:

1:2-5, 2:13, 3:13, 4:1-3, 4:13, 5:23-24