

3. Thessalonians: A True Letter

I. Introduction

- A) Why "the first"
- B) Really "the first"
- C) Reading the letters in the order in which they were written

- 1) Dating a bit uncertain, but all were written in the 50s
- 2) Read along, but be aware that I will be using the NRSV.

D) First Thessalonians, a real letter, a personal letter

II. The Beginning of the Letter (1:1)

- A) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy
- B) The church of the Thessalonians

- 1) The church
- 2) The Thessalonians

C) The opening salutation: Grace to you and peace

III. The End of the Letter (5:23-28)

- A) A final wish prayer, with an acknowledgement of God's fidelity (5:23-24)
- B) A request (5:25)
- C) Greetings (5:26)
- D) And a command (5:27)
- E) The final salutation (5:28)

IV. The Thanksgiving

- A) Two thanksgivings, a peculiarity of First Thessalonians
- B) The First Thanksgiving (1:2:12) 1) Addressed to God (1:2)
 - 2) What Paul remembered about the Thessalonians (1:3-10)

- (a) Their work of faith, labor of love, and steadfast hope (1:3)
- (b) Their election of which Paul was convinced (1:4-5)

- (c) Their conversion (1:6-10)
- 3) What the Thessalonians knew about Paul (2:1-12)
 - (a) The integrity of his way of life (2:1-9)
 - (b) His manual labor (1 Thess 2:10)
 - (c) His being a mother and father to them (1 Thess 2:7-8, 11-12) C)
- C. The Second Thanksgiving (1 Thess 2:13-3:13)
 - 1) The Thessalonians' reception of the message (2:13-16)
 - (a) Message from and about God
 - (b) From us
 - (c) Opposition encountered by believers
 - 2) Paul's burning desire to visit the Thessalonians again (2:17-3:5)
 - 3) Good news from Timothy (3:6-9)
 - 4) Paul still wants to return to Thessalonica (3:10) 5) A wish prayer (3:11-13)

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does Paul tell us about the basic nature of the "church of the Thessalonians?"
2. What are the characteristic marks of the church according to Paul in 1 Thessalonians?
3. What does Paul mean by the parental images that Paul uses to describe his relationship with the Thessalonians?