Bible Snapshots

1 Thessalonians – The Model Church **Author** – Paul, A.D. 52

- Derives it s name from those at Thessalonica, to whom Paul was writing (1:1). Thessalonica (now known as Salonica) was a seaport town situated on the Thermaic Gulf, near Mount Olympus, and was the capital of Macedonia. I was largely industrial and thousands of Jews had gathered there. This church was planted by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-10), although he was there for barely a month. After a brief time with this new church persecution broke out when Paul spoke Christ being king (17:7) and he was driven our of the town to Berea. The majority of believers there were Gentiles (1:9), but Jews and converts from Judaism, along with "chief women" are also mentioned (Acts 17:4).
- This letter is written to comfort the saints there, since Paul had to flee because of persecution (3:2), which they were also suffering. Paul was in Corinth when Timothy, who was sent to Thessalonica, reported that Paul's character was being attacked and the saints were concerned about those who had died in Christ going to be with Him. The book has 5 chapters and 89 verses.

Themes

- The second coming of Christ and the need to live righteous lives so we inherit eternal life. Hope is another big theme in the book.

Key chapters/verse – 4, the life pleasing to God that leads to eternity / 1:9, 10

Key phrase / word / thought

- In Christ (4:13-18) / coming / waiting for His Son (1:10)

Outline

I. The Model Church – work of faith (1)
II. The Model Servant – labor of love (2)
III. The Model life – unblamable holiness (3)
IV. The Model Faith – hope of Christ's return (4)
V. The Model Action – walking in light (5)

The Thessalonian Walk – Received the word (1:6b; 2:13); were saved from wrath (1:10); turned from idols (1:9); followed God (1:6); served the living and true God (1:9); suffered persecution for living godly (1:6; 3:3, 6, 7); were joyful in spirit (1:6); had works of faith and love (3:6, 7); were examples to others (1:7, 8); supported missions (2 Cor. 8:3, 4), including praying for them; looked for Christ (1:10).

***The Rapture (4:1-18)* –** Simply put, the rapture is not found in 1 Thessalonians or any other book of the Bible. The word is never used within scripture. Neither is the idea present; the idea of some silent coming of Christ to take away the righteous from the world and leave behind the unrighteous, who will then suffer some period of tribulation. The text itself refutes this in describing what the return of Christ will look like. Notice the following points:

- ***Paul is writing so they will not be grieved as those who have no hope***. What does that mean? Of course he is referring to non-believers, but the idea of no hope points to the future, second coming of Christ and the ushering in of eternity. That's the topic.
- ***Second, Paul is answering a specific question about the dead in Christ***. What happens to them? He is not addressing what happens to the wicked. Second Thessalonians, however, does deal with this (1:7-9). He is just answering what happens to the righteous who died.
- ***Third, this coming of Christ is anything but silent***. There will be a loud cry of an archangel, the sound of a trumpet and the dead are going to come out of their graves to meet Christ who will be visible in the sky.
- ***Fourth, as the topic continues on into the next chapter it takes a darker turn***. Those who are living in spiritual darkness will be brought to destruction, wrath and will not be saved. All of this speaks to the final judgment and coming of Christ, not some silent rapture.

Test All Things (5:21-22) – Often misunderstood, each of us must know what we believe and why!