

Paul's Thanksgiving And Prayers For These Brethren

1TH 1:2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;

1. "We give thanks to God always for all of you" (1 Thess. 1:1).
 - a. "We" refers back to Paul, Silas and Timothy.
 - b. They gave continual thanks "to God" for "all" these brethren as indicated by "always." This was likely in individual prayers and perhaps group prayer as suggested by the pronoun "we."
 - c. They did not give thanks to the "false gods" many of these brethren had previously worshiped, but to the one true God.
2. "making mention of you in our prayers" - The idea is they were continually mentioning the brethren there in their prayers.
 - a. "Mention" does not denote a casual reference of them occasionally in prayer, but indicates earnest and regular petitions for them.
 - b. We need to continually pray for others.
 - c. Prayer is powerful and will make a difference in our lives and in the lives of others.

1TH 1:3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness [endurance] of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

1. "constantly bearing in mind your work of faith" - NIV translates "work of faith" as "work produced by faith." "Constantly" refers back to "making mention of you in our prayers."
 - a. They never failed to recall the efforts that resulted from their active faith.
 - b. They did not have "a dead" faith (Jas. 2:17) nor a "vain" faith. (Jas. 2:20).
 - c. Saving faith is active (Gal. 5:6; Jas. 1:22; Matt. 7:21).
 - d. "Work of faith" is not defined by Paul, but would include caring for the sick and needy, comforting the bereaved and discouraged, restoring the fallen, and teaching the lost.
2. "and labor of love" - It was labor prompted by their love.
 - a. "Love" should be the primarily motivation for labor.
 - b. Love makes labor easier and more abundant.
3. "and steadfastness [endurance] of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" - "steadfastness" is from "hupomone" [hoo pah mah **na**y] meaning "endurance, steadfastness."

- a. It was patient endurance motivated [inspired] by hope. Hoping is not merely a wish or desire, but is full expectation of heaven.
 - b. They had an unwavering expectation of heaven because of the “Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - c. It is vital today that Christians have this unwavering expectation of heaven and keep their eyes on heaven. (Col. 3:1-2).
4. “in the presence of our God and Father”
- a. “in the presence” means “before our God and Father.”
 - b. It is translated from “emprosthen” [em prahs then] meaning “before.”

1TH 1:4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;

1. “knowing, brethren beloved by God” - These brethren were dearly loved by God as God dearly loves all His children.
 - a. Paul frequently refers to these believers generically as “brothers” in this epistle. (1 Thess. 1:4; 2:1, 9, 14, 17; 3:7; 4:1, 10, 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25, 26, 27). This is not a title, but a relationship.
 - b. The church is the family of God (1 Tim. 3:15), and these people were his brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - c. He calls these “brothers” “beloved by God.” See also Rom. 5:8.
2. “His choice of you” - Lit. “the choice [election] of you”
 - a. “His” is in italics being supplied by translators trying to make clear the literal wording “choice of you.”
 - b. They had been chosen by God through the gospel. (2 Thess. 1:13, 14).

2 TH 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

2 TH 2:14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- c. 1 Peter 2:9, 10 describes believers with these words.

1 PE 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

1 PE 2:10 for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- d. “God is not a respecter of persons.” (Acts 10:34,35; Rom. 2:11).

ACT 10:34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,
ACT 10:35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

ROM 2:11 For there is no partiality with God.

- e. God gave His Son on the cross for all. (Jn. 3:16).

1TH 1:5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full [deep] conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

1. “for our gospel did not come to you in word only” - “Our gospel” refers to the good news they had proclaimed. The heart of their message [the gospel] was the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. (1 Cor. 15:3,4).
 - a. It had a powerful effect on them.
 - b. It was not something they merely heard and did not act upon from the heart.
2. “but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction”
 - a. The Holy Spirit changed them through the gospel and gave them full assurance that what the apostles and other inspired teachers taught was true.
 - b. Preaching was often accompanied by miracles to confirm the message was from God. (Heb. 2:4).
 - c. Miracles are not needed now because the word has been confirmed as true and from God, and does not to be confirmed over and over again.
3. “just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.”
 - a. They had been good examples to them. See verse 6.
 - b. They knew full well the kind of life they lived before them.

1TH 1:6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

1. “You also became imitators of us and of the Lord”
 - “Imitators” is from “mimetes” [mee may **tace**].
 - a. Paul was imitating Christ in his life (1 Cor. 11:1), and Silas and Timothy were also seeking to imitate Christ.
 - b. Those imitating them would then be imitators “of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 11:1).
 - c. Paul called upon others to imitate him. (1 Cor. 4:16).
- 1 Cor. 4:16 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.
- d. These brothers should only imitate them insofar as they imitated Christ. (1 Cor. 11:1).
2. “having received the word [the gospel, saving truth] in much tribulation” - In spite of suffering they received the gospel. See Acts 17:5-9.
 3. “with the joy of the Holy Spirit”
 - a. The Holy Spirit produces His fruit of “joy” in believers. (Gal. 5:22, 23).
 - b. He inspired [produced] “joy” in them by His presence and through His precious promises.

c. The blessings of God produce “joy” in Christians. (Lk. 10:20; Phil. 3:1; 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:6, 8).

1TH 1:7 so that you became an example [a model] to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia [Athens, Corinth].

1. “so that you became an example to all the believers” - Explained in 1 Thess. 1:8.
2. “in Macedonia and in Achaia” - throughout Macedonia and Greece.

“The Word Of The Lord”

1TH 1:8 For the word of the Lord [the gospel] has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

1. “For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you”
 - a. “The word of the Lord” [the gospel] spread out or rang out from them.
 - b. NIV “The Lord’s message rang out from you.”
 - c. They were a missionary church by word and example.
 - d. Churches today who live and proclaim the will of God will lead others to Christ.
2. “not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth”
 - a. Like the church at Philippi they were seen “as lights in the world.” (Phil. 2:15).
 - b. The fact of their faith had been broadcast [became known] everywhere.
 - c. “in every place” denotes regions outside of Macedonia and Achaia and may refer to Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor.
3. “so that we have no need to say anything”
 - a. They did not need to tell others about the faith of the Thessalonian Christians.
 - b. News of faithfulness spreads fast just as lukewarmness and sinfulness quickly spreads to those near and far.

1TH 1:9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

1. “For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you”
 - a. These brethren had received Paul and Silas and treated them very well.
 - b. Others spoke of the warm reception they had given Paul and the others.
2. “and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God”
 - a. Luke indicates not all of them had been idolaters. (Acts 17:4).

- b. Many of them had been idolaters, and no doubt had participated in the evils associated with idolatry.
- c. The gospel had changed these men and women and led them to worship and “serve a living and true God.”
- d. They were now voluntary “slaves” of the “living and true God.”
- e. They had formerly been slaves to sin like those in Rome. (Rom. 6:16-18).

ROM 16:16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

ROM 16:17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

ROM 16:18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

- f. Idols represent non-existent deities, but God is living and real.
- g. Idols are powerless and loveless, but God is omnipotent and loving beyond our comprehension.

1TH 1:10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers [rescues] us from the wrath to come.

1. “and to wait for His Son from heaven” - This means they were eager and ready for the Lord’s return.
 - a. He speaks here of Christ’s second coming that is a subject mentioned often in 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
 - b. Christ is now in heaven reigning as King, but one day will come again.
 - c. Christians do not live in fear of Christ’s return, but look forward to the Lord’s return.
2. “whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus”
 - a. Paul shows the death of Christ that was universally accepted even by His enemies.
 - b. None were contending Jesus merely fainted on the cross and did not really die.
 - c. “He” here refers back to God. (1 Thess. 1:9).
 - d. God raised up His Son through the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 1:4; 8:11).

ROM 1:4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

ROM 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

- e. The Bible also affirms Christ raised up Himself. (Jn. 2:19-21).

JOH 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days **I will raise it up.**"

JOH 2:20 The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

JOH 2:21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

- f. He actually did this through the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 8:11).

ROM 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

g. The corpse of Jesus was in the tomb, but not His Divine Spirit. (Lk. 23:43, 46).

LUK 23:43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

LUK 23:46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last.

h. "His Spirit" was in Paradise and later returned to His body that was raised on Sunday morning. (Lk. 23:43; Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:1; Matt. 28:1).

3. "who delivers us from the wrath to come"

a. Jesus "delivers us from the wrath to come."

b. He saves those who are obedient to Him. (Jn. 3:36; 15:14; Heb. 5:9).

c. The "wrath to come" is hell. (Matt. 10:28; 25:41, 46; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9).

d. Here are a few other times Paul emphasized the wrath of God. (Rom. 1:18; 5:9; 12:19; Col. 3:6; 1 Thess. 5:9).

Observations

1. Paul wrote of a number of things in this chapter that are characteristics of a strong church.

"work of faith" - 1:3	Obedying the gospel - 1:5	Preaching the word of the Lord - 1:8
"labor of love" - 1:3	"imitators of the Lord - 1:6	Turning from idols - 1:9
"steadfastness of hope" - 1:3	Example to all believers - 1:7	Looking for the Lord's return - 1:10

2. These are essentials for a strong church in every age.

3. The church will never be strong without putting emphasis on all these characteristics.

4. Strong is not defined by numbers, but by faithfulness to the Lord and His teachings. (Lk. 6:46).

5. Neither is strong defined by a small church that is indifferent to these essential characteristics

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