

1 Thessalonians Ch1v1-6 - Roots And Fruits

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everyone. It's good to see you. And I invite you to turn in your Bibles, please, to Acts chapter 17. As Sam just mentioned, we're starting into a new study, a new series, arguably perhaps one of the first letters, earliest letters written by Paul. But we're going to start in Acts 17, where we have a background to the church in Thessalonica. So as you're looking that up, just to encourage you, if you have a background of these, to get one of these, maybe they're all gone, but one per family. I'll print up some more if there's not enough. But this little booklet will just give you an overview, and it will be helpful throughout the weeks to turn to it every so often and remember where we are. So that's written for you to help you and encourage you. So let's read from Acts 17, verses 1 to 10. So this is Paul. He's on his second missionary journey. He's been sent out by his home church, and he's traveled through modern-day Turkey, and he's arrived in Greece.

And he's teaching and sharing the gospel to see new churches planted. So let's start in verse 1. When Paul and his companions, so his companions there are Silas and Timothy, had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.

As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days, so over three weeks, he reasoned with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah, he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. But other Jews were jealous. So they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob, and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house, one of the new believers, in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting, these men, who have caused trouble all over the world, have now come here. And Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying there is another king, one called

Jesus. When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. Then they put Jason and the others on bail and let them go. As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea, and on arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue.

And Kirstie is now going to come and read Thessalonians, so you can turn to that now. So looking at 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, verses 1 to 6.

[4 : 24] Paul, Silas, and Timothy, to the Church of the Thessalonians, in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace to you. We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.

We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters, loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering, with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

Well, let's keep our Bibles open there, and we're going to pray. Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and deep conviction. Father, may we hear your word by the power of your Spirit.

may I speak with conviction, and may we all come to see the wonder and the beauty of your gospel. Please help us now, we pray. Amen. Well, it was an incredible start. Way back in 1985, a group of people began to pray for a small town just outside Cork.

[6 : 42] A children's club was started. Other people went and knocked on doors to tell people about Jesus. Later on, a project was put together whereby a Bible was offered to every home in the town. Three years later, a church was started with just eight people committing themselves to Christ and to each other.

Almost 40 years later, almost 40 years ago, Carigoline Baptist Church began. But the question today is, how is Carigoline Baptist Church today?

How are we doing? Maybe some of you are excited and encouraged with church life. Or maybe some of you have become disillusioned, disappointed.

It could be that you're brand new and you're still trying to figure out this Christian faith. Or maybe you've been a Christian a long time, and you've just lost your way.

[7 : 54] How is the church today? It was an incredible start. In just three short weeks, a church was planted in Greece, in a thriving city called Thessalonica.

But not everybody was happy with the beginnings of this new church. Those who were opposed to Christ and the Christians started a riot. And Paul and his team had to leave in fear of their lives. And they moved on to the next cities, close by from Berea, and then to Athens, and then down to Corinth. Separated by this time for a few months, they had no idea how this new church was doing. Had they given up? Had things fallen apart? Were they even still meeting together? In a time when there was no mobiles or emails, they did have something far superior.

People. Have a look at chapter 3, verse 1. This is Paul writing to the church. He says, When we could stand it no longer.

[9 : 20] Remember, they're separated. They're far apart. When we could stand it no longer. We thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. So we sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith.

So that no one would be unsettled by these trials. The trials, of course, was the opposition they were facing. For you know quite well that we are destined for them.

Verse 6. But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought us good news about your faith and love.

A deep sigh of relief. Timothy had been sent to find out how the church was going. He comes back to Paul and the rest of the team.

Guys, the church is still there. It's still going. But that didn't mean let's now forget about them.

[10 : 33] No, like any church, they needed ongoing encouragement. Chapter 3, verse 10. Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

The longing, the desire to get back to see them. And in the meantime, Paul sits down and he writes a letter to strengthen them in the faith.

You see, every church, whether it's Thessalonica in the year 50 or Carigoline in 2025, we need encouragement.

And to strengthen us, we're taken back to the very beginnings. To how it all started. The gospel.

The good news about Jesus. You see, the gospel, and here's the two big things we're going to be looking at today. The gospel forms the church.

[11 : 36] And the gospel shapes the church. The gospel is where it all began. And where we must always return.

So, our first big idea today is don't forget our roots. Don't forget our roots formed by the gospel.

You see, going back and remembering our roots takes us back to a beautiful work of God. It is the good news about Christ.

Look at verse 5. Chapter 1, verse 5. Remember, he says, our gospel came to you. Not simply with words, but also with power and with the Holy Spirit.

That means that, yes, it contained words. The gospel is a message. And it comes with the power of the Spirit. And Acts 17 reminds us what that gospel is.

[12 : 45] What that word is. You can see it on the screen. He, Paul, reasoned with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead.

This Jesus that I'm proclaiming to you is the Messiah. Messiah simply means king anointed one. God's chosen king.

A king sent by God to renew this broken world and establish his loving rule in our lives. Now, that's good news.

But it's also confronting news. Because, well, we all live as if we're the king. It's my life. And I will do as I please.

The problem with that is everybody else lives as if they're the king. Which means it becomes clash of the kings every time we meet each other.

[13:50] And we make a mess of our lives and we ruin everyone else's life. So God, in his love, sends the Messiah, the promised one, who will put everything right.

A king who comes to demonstrate his authority not with weapons and force, but through gentleness and service.

For here is a king. Look at the verses there on screen. He says, who suffers for you and rises from the dead.

Here is a king who comes to you and who dies for you. Who takes the judgment that we deserve for rejecting Jesus as king.

And he defeats death for you by rising from the grave, giving you eternal life in his eternal kingdom. Jesus is the good and gracious king.

[14:55] Who comes not to crush you, but to bless you. Acts records for us the response from some of those in that city.

Some of the Jews were persuaded. They were convinced. And they joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks, some other religious folk there.

And quite a few, in other words, a lot of prominent women. Successful business ladies. You see, no matter who you are, or where you come from, or what you've done, this is the glorious gospel that has come to us.

And that means if we have accepted responsibility for our rebellion against Jesus, and if you've asked him to forgive you, that means he is now your king.

You're now part of his never-ending, life-giving, joy-thrilling kingdom. The gospel takes ordinary people like us, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, forms us to being children of the king.

[16:19] That is good news about Christ. But it's not just good news about Christ. It's good news about church.

Because when we believe this gospel, when we trust Jesus, we're not just made to be children of the king. We're saved into the church of the king.

Look at verse 1. Look how he begins. Paul, Silas, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians. You see, we're not saved to live isolated individual lives and do our own thing. No, we are to share in a committed community.

That's why the letter is written to the church of the Thessalonians. Or as we will say today, to the church of Carigaline. But we're much more than just a bunch of believers who live around the town of Carigaline, and this is our address.

[17:26] No, we also have another location. Not just geographical, but spiritual. Again, look at verse 1. To the church of the Thessalonians.

Where are they? In God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We're not just believers in Carigaline physically here today.

But we are in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, we've become united to him through the gospel.

So, the relationship that the Father has with the Son, we also get to share in. The love that the Father has with the Son, and the love that the Son has for the Father, is a love that we now get to partake in.

We belong to the Father, and we're joined to the Son, and we're bound to, and we're securing the most precious and treasured of relationships.

[18:39] These, my friends, are our roots. This is our story. If you're a Christian, this is where it all started.

The good news of Christ, who formed us to be children of the King, but took those brand new children and formed us into the church.

Now, doesn't that change how we think about ourselves as we gather here this morning? We're not lone rangers, and we're not isolated attenders, just doing our own thing and drifting in and out as we please.

No, we're a new community, committed to Christ, and committed to church. We've been saved by the King, and we are now children of the King.

A fellowship that has been incorporated into the very love of God, and bound together by the love of God. Of course, we can easily forget that, can't we?

[19 : 54] We can lose sight of our beginnings. We can drift from Christ, and we can become detached from the church.

So he's writing and encouraging them, and we are being encouraged. Don't forget your roots. We have been formed by the glorious gospel.

So, that's number one. Don't forget our roots. Second, give thanks for fruit.

Roots and fruits, easy to remember. Shaped by the gospel. You see, the good news about Christ not only forms us into the church, but it goes on transforming us.

Look at verse 2. We always thank God for all of you, and continually mention you in our prayers. There's this joy, this thankfulness for the joy, and he can't contain it.

[21 : 12] Look again, chapter 2, verse 13. And we also thank God continually, because when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it.

Or chapter 3, verse 9. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?

Why this uncontainable, overflowing thanks? Because as he looks at the church, he sees lives that are not just coming to Christ, but have been shaped and transformed by the gospel.

Gospel fruit is on display. And it's beautiful. Because looking at the church is like walking through a Mediterranean orchard at harvest time.

Delicious fruit everywhere. So what are these fruits of the gospel? What happens when the gospel grabs a hold of our life and changes us from the inside out?

[22 : 31] Well, three things. First, there's the fruit of service. Living to serve.

Verse 3. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The work, the labour, the endurance, well, they're not different things. They're just different ways of talking about the one thing.

A normal Christian life. A life of serving. Because that's what happens when the gospel takes effect in our life. A church that serves one another.

Look at verse 3. The end of verse 3. It's all rooted in, see the little phrase at the end of verse 3? In our Lord Jesus Christ.

[23 : 36] So our work, our labour, our endurance, our service, all comes from, all flows from our relationship with Christ.

So whatever you do in the life of the church here in Carrigline, whether you're somebody who welcomes, or somebody who helps out at Polo, or The Rock, or Rooted, or Core, or praying, or visiting, or phoning up someone to encourage them, or texting them.

Our work comes from our work, or something like that.

Our work comes from our work, or something like that. We know that we can keep on going. Now maybe you're finding serving hard.

Perhaps you're feeling a little bit low and tired. Instead of being a fruitful tree, maybe you feel like a dried up tree. Well, what we need then is to be soaked afresh in Christ.

[25 : 08] To put down our roots, as it were, into the waters of Christ. To soak him up afresh. To remind ourselves of the wonderful gospel.

To remember his faithfulness of doing his work in and through us. That we would experience his love afresh. That we would rejoice in the hope to come.

You see, a church that is rooted in the gospel will grow into a beautiful tree, displaying a life full of fruitful service.

And as I look out from here, and as you look around at each other, look at a church full of fruitful service.

Of people who do things week by week. Who ring, and who pray, and who care. A life filled with the gospel will be full of fruitful service.

[26 : 17] Our second fruit is assurance of salvation. Another reason he gives is thanks for this assurance. Look at verse 4.

For we know, brothers and sisters. So we're to know something. He's telling us we're to be convinced and certain of something.

What are we to know? Well, read all of verse 4. For we know, brothers and sisters, loved by God. And here's what we're to know.

That he has chosen you. Incredible. In eternity past, before time began, before you came into being, God chose you in love.

Wow. He chose me? Well, what did he choose me for? What was the purpose in God choosing us in love?

[27 : 23] Well, we've got a helpful verse if you go to 2 Thessalonians. Which I think fleshes out the verse we've just looked at.

2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 13. 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 13.

And here we see the reason for choosing us in love. Let's read verse 13. But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, loved by the Lord.

Because God chose you as firstfruits. To be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

Do you see there? That's the reason. God chose you in love to save you.

[28 : 30] So that you would know and experience his salvation. Let's go back to 1 Thessalonians and verse 4.

So he chose us that we would be saved. But you're asking, well, how do I know if I'm chosen? How do I know if I'm going to be saved?

Well, look at verse 4 again. For we know, brothers and sisters, loved by God that he has chosen you. Chosen you for salvation. Verse 5. Because our gospel came to you.

Not simply with words, but also with power and with the Holy Spirit. So if you have heard the gospel. If you've heard this good news.

And the Spirit has been at work in you. Convincing you that Jesus died for you. Defeating death for you. And if you have trusted in Jesus.

[29 : 31] God has chosen you in love. You have the assurance of salvation. Because salvation comes through the gospel.

But let's be clear. I'm not saved because I was worthy or deserving. It's not like God looked down and says, oh, Johnny Grant. You couldn't get a better person.

I think I'll save him. And you're not saved because you're wonderful or lovable. No, do you remember what we read at the very beginning in Romans?

While we were still what? Sinners. Christ died for you. God chose you because he loved you.

And he loves you because he loves you. That's his motivation. He loves you. You see, if you're a Christian today, it's because God chose you in love.

[30 : 34] And that's very humbling. Because we always want to contribute something. It's my life. I do all this. No, it's what God does in us.

And it is deeply reassuring. It brings about assurance. Let me explain how. If you're a Christian and I ask you, why are you a Christian?

And if you respond to that by saying, well, I'm a good person. I had faith. Or I chose to believe. Well, okay.

But what happens when you're not good? What happens when you lose faith? What happens when you start to disbelieve?

Well, then we have no assurance of salvation whatsoever. Because it's all dependent on me. We end up living fearful and joyless lives.

[31 : 36] But if I ask you why you're a Christian and you say, oh, Johnny, God chose me in love. Well, then it's all dependent on God.

And you have assurance of salvation. There is no fear. Because you will never be separated from his love. And there is wonderful. There is joy.

You see, a church that is rooted in the gospel will have the fruit of assurance.

Lives gathering together, reminding one another that we have salvation for eternity. And there's nothing and no one, no matter what you go through in life, that can ever separate you from Christ.

What a beautiful church that is. Well, there's one more fruit that we need to look at. Not just living in service or having assurance of salvation.

[32 : 39] But joy in suffering. Joy is a remarkable fruit. And it is ours to experience. Look at verse 6 with me.

You became imitators of us and of the Lord. And you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

This church, brand new, only a few months old, had faced terrible opposition. From the word go, there was a riot in the city and they were taking Christians off down to the local police station. As they continued to live their lives. Look at chapter 2, verse 14. For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus.

You suffered from your own people the same thing those churches suffered from the Jews who killed the Lord Jesus. It wasn't safe to be a Christian.

[33 : 43] You could lose your life. Now we mightn't suffer extreme persecution here in Carragalline. But there is a sense in which we suffer for the gospel, don't we?

You know what it's like. It might be rejection from family or friends who think you've gone a bit bizarre. It could be isolation in work that people don't really like what you think or believe.

But it can also mean the struggle of being involved in gospel ministry. And I know you know what that's like. People who promise to come to something, but they don't show up.

Or praying for growth and change, but there seems to be no growth. Don't you get disillusioned and disappointed sometimes in ministry?

That's a suffering that we bear in our lives that can break us and crush us. But look at verse 6.

[34 : 51] We can be joyful in our suffering. That doesn't mean let's put on a fake smile and dance and pretend we're all happy.

No, look where the joy comes from. It's a joy given by the Holy Spirit. You see, once again, we're called to drink from the well of the gospel.

To put our roots deep down afresh into Christ. To be refreshed in the reality that I am chosen in love by God. And that no matter what my suffering is, my salvation is secure.

That I can go on serving because I have a glorious and certain hope. And the Spirit takes that message and drives it deep and applies it to our heart.

So we can pray. Lord, fill me with the power of your Holy Spirit. And give me a joy so that I may be able to rejoice in all things.

[35 : 59] You see, the promise here, a Spirit-filled life, is not the absence of suffering. I want you to hear that.

A Spirit-filled life is not the absence of suffering. But the presence of joy in our suffering.

Isn't that amazing? That the Spirit of God so works in us a joy that will sustain us and keep us.

You see, a church that is rooted in the gospel will display a life filled with the fruit of joy.

What a beautiful image. A beautiful picture as we look at one another this morning. That there is joy in the Holy Spirit.

[36 : 58] So, Carigalline Baptist Church, don't forget your roots. Remember the good news of Christ.

The good news of the church. We are children of the King. Formed together as his new community. Don't forget your roots. And second, give thanks for the fruit.

Look around at one another over tea and coffee. How about saying, Thank you so much. I really appreciate you. The fruit of God's work in our life, overflowing.

In thanks and praise for one another. Verse 2. We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.

Well, let's thank God now for one another and for this church. Let's pray. Amen. Father, thank you so much for your church here in Carigalline.

[38 : 19] for the people who you have brought to yourself, who you have loved and have formed into this community. We thank you for the wonderful fruit of service, of assurance, and of joy in struggles.

And we pray that you will continue your work of transforming us more and more into the people you call us to be.

Thank you, Father. Thank you, Father. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Spirit. Amen. Well, we're going to sing as a way of thanking God and praising Him.

There is one gospel on which this church stands. Let's stand, let's sing to encourage one another in our walk with Him.

And we pray that it is Thank you.

[40 : 45] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Please take your seats. We're going to come now to the Lord's table. We've just been reading in 1 Thessalonians about how Paul addressed his brothers and sisters there in the church.

[43 : 04] And he says in verse 1, he says to the church in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't that amazing?

And we eat and we drink to remember how we who were once enemies of Christ came to be in Christ, tethered to him, safe with him forever.

Everything that Christ, everything that Christ earned, we get. And the punishment that we deserved, he got.

This meal reminds us of how Christ achieved all of this. And like the bread is broken, Jesus' body was broken for our sin so that we could be made right with God.

It's a physical reminder for us. Thank you.

[45 : 04] Thank you.

Thank you.

Lord Jesus, we thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Lord Jesus, we thank you.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for your body broken for us on the cross so that we could be united to you in faith.

[47 : 03] faith. We eat together now in remembrance of you. Amen. There are some words from Romans chapter 5 on the screen. Verse 12 says this, When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death. So death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Verse 18, Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness, what he did on the cross for us, brings a right relationship with God, a new life for everyone. As we drink the cup, we remember Jesus' blood, which was poured out for the forgiveness of our sins. It was the only way that God could make atonement for our sin. And because his life is now our life, Jesus' righteousness is credited to us.

Everything he deserved becomes ours. So as you drink, this is a chance for us all to say thank you to Jesus.

To thank him that we are tethered to him and that his life is now our life. So please drink as you receive. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[51 : 56] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We're going to finish by saying the family blessing together. It's found on your news sheet, if you have one with you. And just to say thanks again to everyone for coming this morning.

It's been such a blessing to share with one another now. And also we have this opportunity over tea and coffee to continue to encourage one another and express our thanks for one another in the church family. But let's finish now by saying the family blessing together.

May God, our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ encourage you in faith, love, and hope so that we will be strengthened in our service in the church and in the world. Amen.

Thank you. Thank you.

[54 : 18] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[56 : 48] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[59 : 18] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.
Thank you.