

# AM 1 Thessalonians 1

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. It's on page 1187 of the Church's Bible. This was probably the second letter that Paul wrote of the letters of Paul in our New Testament.

The first being Galatians, being the earliest, and then 1 and 2 Thessalonians. And these letters were written by Paul from Corinth, perhaps just a few months, if that, after his visit and departure from Thessalonica.

Thessalonica is in the north of Greece. And it was a very strategically placed city. It was on the Via Ignatia, which was one of the great Roman roads between Rome and the east.

And it was also on the coast. So it was a very prosperous and thriving seaport. So it had good communications by land, by road, and also very good communications by sea.

Paul had, you remember, received the Macedonian call. He had come into Europe and had preached the gospel in Philippi.

[ 1 : 43 ] He met with considerable success, but also great opposition. Do you remember how he was shamefully treated, as he says in this letter, in Philippi?

How he was arrested, and without being tried, even though he was a Roman citizen and had a right to a trial, he was then beaten. And Paul and Silas, his companion, were put in the stocks in the innermost dungeon.

And at midnight, they were heard singing psalms and praises to God. And then there was the earthquake and, you know, the story about the Philippian jailer being converted and having a complete change of heart and mind and life.

And how then Paul was honorably released from prison, left the city, took the gospel to Berea. Berea, again, met with success in Berea. But the Jews of Philippi, hearing that he had gone to Berea, sent some men to Berea, stirred up disreputable elements within the town there, and they were forced to leave.

And from there, they went to Thessalonica. And in Thessalonica, they preached the gospel. A church is established very quickly.

[ 3 : 04 ] And again, opposition is met. You remember how the crowd came to Jason's house, where Paul and Silas and Timothy were lodging, expecting to find them, to haul them out, perhaps even to kill them if they could.

And they were not there. And so they hauled Jason and his companions before the city officials. And the city officials demand security from Jason and his companions before letting them go. But by this stage, Paul, Silas and Timothy have left Thessalonica earlier than they had hoped and had travelled as far as Athens.

And you remember how Paul was left alone in Athens when he sent Timothy and Silas back up north to see how the believers were doing.

And then after his short trip at Athens, where he preached to the Areopagus and Mars Hill, he then went to Corinth. And it was at Corinth that he heard the good news of the reports that Timothy brought about the work in Thessalonica.

[ 4 : 24 ] And so we read in the first chapter of this letter something about the way God had blessed the apostle in his visit to Thessalonica.

This passage speaks about the church and it speaks about the gospel. We're going to think mainly about the church, what this passage teaches us about the church.

The church is formed by the gospel. And then the church preaches and passes on the gospel that has formed it.

So if I come back, we'll look at the second part of the first chapter. But this morning we're going to look at the first part and what we can learn about the church.

So let's read this portion of God's word together. Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. To the church of the Thessalonians and God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 5 : 38 ] Grace to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly. Mentioning you in our prayers.

Remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you. Because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord.

For you received the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit. So that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

[ 6 : 43 ] For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia. But your faith in God has gone forth everywhere.

So that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you. And how you turned to God from idols.

To serve the living and true God. And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead. Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Amen. May God bless his word to us. Bow together in prayer as we come before God. Our Heavenly Father, we are conscious that in your world today there are many thousands, many tens and hundreds of thousands of gatherings of your people taking place.

Or that will take place. And we pray that as your word is proclaimed. Not only here but in all of these assemblies of the children of God.

[ 7 : 57 ] That you would take your word and that you would put it within the hearts and minds of those who hear it.

That you would open the eyes and open the ears and open the hearts. And that as you did with Lydia of Philippi of old.

You would open their hearts to receive and to attend upon the things that are spoken of by the Apostle. And we pray for conversions. And we pray for changed lives.

We pray for new births to take place. We pray for new births to take place. We pray for new births to take place. We pray for new births to take place. Active in his regenerating power. And we pray for the transformation of our world through the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

O Lord, you have said to him in the psalm, Ask of me and I will give you the nations as your inheritance. The ends of the earth as your possession.

[ 9 : 02 ] And so we pray. We pray this day. That the nations of this world. Might come unto the saving power of Jesus Christ.

That you would give him these people. That he would rule over them in his grace and love and mercy. And that the places where they live will be transformed.

By a multitude of individuals coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. O Lord, we pray for a mighty movement of your spirit.

We pray for revival in our own land in particular. In all its great need and darkness and increasing degradation. We see such things all around us every day.

We read of them in our newspapers. We see of them on our television news. And we pray. And we pray, O Lord. To you who alone can turn the tide.

[ 10 : 16 ] To you alone. Who has the power to give nations new life. And a new beginning. We pray that you would do that in our own land.

As you have done it in your grace and mercy so often in the past. We pray for our government. For our ministers of state.

In both Scotland and in the United Kingdom. And we pray for our king and queen. O Lord, you have asked us to pray for those in positions of authority and leadership.

That we might live peaceable and quiet lives in all godliness. And we pray that our leaders might know the light of the gospel.

Influencing every decision that they make. We pray that they might rule as those who know. They will be called to judgment.

[ 11 : 26 ] And will have to give an account of the things done in the body. Whether good or evil. Have mercy, O Lord, upon our world.

In all its turmoil and confusion. In all its pain and misery. We see the results of the fall of man. On every hand. But we pray. That the grace of the gospel. May appear in all its wonderful fullness and glory.

And that wherever the curse. Is found. We pray that Jesus Christ may come. In all his healing and saving power.

To undo. The effects. Of that curse. Because of the fall. So. Heal our land we pray.

[ 12 : 30 ] Heal our world we ask. And we pray these things. For your glory sake. And for the glory of our saviour.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Well please turn with me to 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. And to these opening four verses. Of this passage. Where we read again. Paul. Silvanus. That's the Latin form of Silas.

And Timothy. To the church of the Thessalonians. In God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace. We give thanks to God.

Always for all of you. Constantly mentioning you in our prayers. Remembering before our God and Father. Your work of faith. And labour of love.

[ 13 : 32 ] And steadfastness of hope. In our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know. Brothers. Loved by God. That he.

Has chosen. You. This passage begins. With. Paul.

Silas. Or Silvanus. And Timothy. Writing to. The church. Of the Thessalonians. And I want us to think about. What we are told. About this church.

And what we can learn. For ourselves. From what we are told. About. About. This church. What are we told. About them. Well before.

Looking at that. Remember the background. Here is a church. That has lost. Its ministers. If you will. Paul. Silas. And Timothy. Have had to move on.

[ 14 : 31 ] To Berea. Athens. And. Corinth. Where this letter. Has been written from. It was a church. Experiencing. Persecution. There was opposition.

To be faced. From Jews. Who. Opposed the gospel. And who opposed. The preaching. Of the apostle Paul. And so forth. You remember.

How they. Brought. Jason. To the. City official. And. Sort of pointing the finger at him. And to his. Absent. Friends.

And saying. These men. Who have turned the world upside down. Have come here. And are advocating. This new religion. Which they.

In order to carry the favor of the. Authorities. Said. Was against. Rome. And against the emperor. And they. Stared up trouble.

[ 15 : 29 ] And they sought. To get the authorities. To clamp down. And oppose. And persecute. The Christians. At Thessalonica. And I think it was also.

A church that was facing. A measure of division. There was. In the church. Some who. Question. Not Paul's. Authority. And apostleship. But they did question. His message. They questioned. His motives. And they questioned. His methods. And if you read on.

Through. First Thessalonians. You'll see. How Paul. Addresses. These. Objections. That some. Within the church. Were making. Against.

The apostle Paul. And he has to. If you like. Remind them. Of his character. To tell them. What his motives were. And.

[ 16 : 23 ] To. Also. Remind them. Of the gospel. The message. That they. Had received. So. In chapter 2. For example. Verses 1 to 16.

Paul. Defends. His manner of life. While he was. In Thessalonica. He defends. His message. And. His. Way.

Of. Of. Conducting himself. His methods. And. He. Goes on. Then. In chapter 2. Verse 17.

To 20. And even. Into chapter 3. Verse 5. To defend. Himself. Against the charge. That he had. Forsaken. And left. The church.

And he shows. There's something. Of his inner. The inner workings. Of his heart. He was. He was so. Anxious. About. The believers.

[17:20] Whom he describes. As his joy. And his crown. And wanted to know. Desperately. Wanted to know. How they were faring. In Thessalonica.

In his absence. So. That's a little bit. Of the background. To this church. It was experiencing. Persecution. It was. It had lost.

Its. Its ministers. And. It was. Facing. Division. Within. Its. Ranks. So. What are we told. About. This young church.

Recently established. And facing. These. Various. Difficulties. The first thing. We're told. Is. That it is a church. Of the Thessalonians.

Verse 1. And look at these words. In God the Father. And the Lord. Jesus Christ. What do these.

[18:20] Words. Convey. And especially. What does that little preposition. The little word. In. Convey.

To us. So often. We just. Read over. These introductory words. And we don't. Give them a second thought. But there's a wonderful truth.

Lying on the surface. Not hard to see. Not hard to find. In these words. So if we ask the question. What does this little word. In. God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Convey. I would say to you. Remember. Two. Other.

Passages. In scripture. That provide a key. To understanding. The spiritual significance. Of this expression. That the Apostle Paul uses. Think of John 15.

[19:20] Where Jesus speaks. About. Being the vine. And his disciples. Being the branches. The branches. Are in. The vine.

The vine. What a beautiful picture. That is. Of the vital unity. Between. God. The Father.

And the Lord Jesus Christ. And. His. Believing. People. Just as the branch. Is in the vine. So the believing. person. The living.

The living. Person. Is in. God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. And then think too. Of what Paul. Says.

About. The limbs. Of the body. In. First Corinthians. Chapter. Twelve. He speaks. About. The unity. Of the church.

[20:12] And he. He describes. The. The church's unity. In terms. Of. A body. With various limbs. Attached. To the head. And that again.

Speaks. About the vital. Organic. Unity. Of the believer. With God. The Father. And the Lord. Jesus Christ.

Christ. Both. Word. Pictures. The vine. And the branches. The body. With its limbs. Convey. The vital.

Relationship. And the organic. Oneness. And unity. Which. Makes. Possible. The.

Shared. Life. Of the church. Of Jesus Christ. Christ. The branches. Receive. The life. Giving. Sap. Of the vine. The limbs.

[21:11] Are joined. To the body. And are. Directed. And governed. By. The head. Of the body. And what Paul.

Is saying. At the beginning. Of this. Letter. Writing. Remember. To a church. That's just. Recently. Been planted. Facing. Tremendous. Opposition. And persecution.

Perhaps. There are. Doubts. In their minds. Will we be. Able to survive. And at the very. Beginning. He reminds them. Of who they are. They are united.

To God. The father. And the Lord. Jesus Christ. They are in. God. The father. And the Lord. Jesus Christ. Christ. And because of that. Vital union. They are alive.

What can effectively. Oppose them. If they are joined. And united. To the Holy Trinity.

[22:15] They. You remember. Elsewhere. In Colossians 3. Verse 3. Paul speaks. Of the new life. Of Christians. In the Colossian church. As.

Being hidden. With Christ. In God. That's the picture. That's the reality. You as a believer.

And you believers. As a church. Are hidden. With Christ. In God. So. What are we to understand. By this little word. In. Well. We could say. The church. Is living in. The church. Is rooted in. The church.

Is drawing. Its life. From. God. The father. And the Lord. Jesus Christ. Christ. And I wonder. Why Paul.

[ 23 : 12 ] Began his letter. With this glorious. Truth. To the Thessalonians. Well. He knew. The. Insecurity. They must have felt.

He knew. The fears. That they must have. Entertained. Would. The church. Survive. Without. Its leaders. Would. The church.

Be able. To stand up. Against. The opposition. Of the Jews. And the secularists. The secular authorities. Would they be able. To cope.

And survive. Even though. There were divisions. Within. Their small number. At the beginning. He. Lifts their eyes. To focus upon God. He's saying to them. Remember. Your security. Your security.

[ 24 : 08 ] Is in God. It is from him. The father. And the son. You.

Are united. To him. And from him. You draw your life. You get your strength.

And you maintain. Your stability. And then. The second thing. That we learn. In this passage. About the church. Is that.

It is an assembly. Of people. Marked. By faith. Hope. And love. Look at verse 3. Verses 2 and 3. Paul says. We give thanks to God. Always for all of you. Constantly. Mentioning you. In our prayers. Remembering. Before our God. And father. Your work of faith. And labor of love.

[ 25 : 09 ] And steadfastness. Of hope. In our Lord. Jesus Christ. Paul. And Silas. And Timothy. Always thanked God.

For them all. What an encouragement. That must have been. To them. They'd lost their ministers. They'd gone on. Because of the circumstances. Prevealing. In their city. But they were not forgotten.

They were remembered. And they were remembered. At the throne. Of grace. And as often. As they were remembered. They were prayed for. Mentioned.

Constantly. In their prayers. And. In their prayers. Three things. In particular. Are remembered. Before God.

In God's presence. Their faith. And how it worked. Their love. And how it labored. And their hope.

[ 26 : 07 ] And how it enabled them. To endure. Opposition. These are the three. Eminent Christian graces. These are the characteristics.

That the Holy Spirit. Produces. In the life. And heart. Of the believer. These are not. The result. Of nature. Or natural temperament. They only come. From the Spirit's work. And therefore. They are an evidence.

Of a true work of God. In the heart. So not only does Paul say. You are in. God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. As a church. But we really believe.

That a true work of God. Has been done. In you. Because there are things. In you. That we see. That can only. Have been planted there.

[ 27 : 08 ] By God. The Holy Spirit. Your love. That works. Sorry. Your faith. That works. Your love. That labors. And your hope. That endures.

Let's. Just think for a few moments. About these. Three graces. And particularly. The.

Outgoing nature. Of these. Graces. Faith. Does not look within. Faith. Looks out.

Or up. To God. God. Love. Does not look within. Love. Is directed.

Out. Towards others. And hope. Does not look within. Hope. Is directed. To the future. And in particular.

[ 28 : 05 ] To the second coming. Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. Christ. Also. When you think of. Faith. And hope. And love. You think of. Faith. As something.

That rests. Upon the past. What God. Has done. In Christ. In history. And faith.

Rests. Upon. That. Historical. Real. True. Christ. And his work. Love. Works.

In the present. And hope. Looks. To the future. And keeps. The future. Prospect.

Of the return. Of Christ. And the glory. Associated with it. Ever. In view. Or think of it like this. A Christian.

[ 29 : 01 ] Is a believer. A Christian. Is a lover. Hooper. And a Christian. Is a hooper. And when I say.

A Christian. Is a hooper. I'm not saying. That a Christian. Is an optimist. He may. Or he may not. Be. An optimist. Optimism. Is a matter.

Of personal temperament. Some people. Are born. Optimistic. Other people. As we say. The glass. Is never. Half full. It's always. Half.

Empty. It's a matter. Of temperament. But. A Christian. Is a hooper. Because. His hope. Is not based. On natural temperament. His hope.

Is based. On his. Theology. His doctrine. What the Bible. Teaches him. Especially. Concerning. The last things. And the return.

[ 29 : 57 ] Of Christ. And the glory. That is to follow. As I said. These character. Graces. Are the. Fruit of the spirit's work.

In regeneration. They are the outcome. Of the new birth. Faith. Hope. And love. Reshapes. And changes. The whole outlook. And direction. Of the life. Of someone. Who comes to faith. In Jesus Christ. When a man.

Or a woman. Is born again. One's life. Is. Drawn. Upwards. To God. In faith. It is drawn. Outwards. Towards others. In love. And it is drawn. On. To the day. Of Christ's. Return. In hope. And so.

[ 30 : 52 ] In one way. This is the test. The acid test. We might say. Of new life. In Christ. Have we been. Pulled. Out of our.

Fallen. Introspection. And selfishness. And have we been.

Redirected. Towards. God. And Christ. And our fellow. Human beings. God. And the other important thing. To notice.

As we. Think about. What Paul says here. About faith. And hope. And love. Is that. These. Christian. Graces. Are. Productive. Active. They produce.

[ 31 : 50 ] Certain things. So. When we speak. About faith. And hope. And love. You might be forgiven. For thinking. That we're speaking. About. Airy. Fairy.

Subjects. But not. So. With. The apostle Paul. Here. He talks about. Your work. Of faith. Your labor. Of love. Your steadfastness. Of hope. Think of it like this.

What are these. Characteristics. Producing. In the life. Of the believer. Well.

If I. Say. That I have faith. Then you should be able. To see that faith. At work. Because. Faith.

[ 33 : 00 ] Is not dead. And lifeless. And workless. But faith. Produces. Work. Likewise. Love.

Labors. And hope. Endures. They all. Produce. Something. Tangible. Something. That. Changes. Lives. Something. That affects. Other people. Too. True. Faith. In God.

Leads. To good works. Now. Sometimes. People say. You know. Paul says. That we're saved. By faith. And not by works. And James says. We're saved. By works. And not by faith. And there's this great controversy.

Between the two. But. Look at what Paul says. About faith. Here in this passage. There's no controversy. There's no argument. With James. Paul may stress.

[ 33 : 59 ] The faith. That produces works. James may stress. The works. That is. That are produced. By faith. But both.

Agree. Faith. Is not just. A thing in itself. It is something. That is lively. Active.

Energetic. Working. True faith in God. Leads. To good works. Otherwise. Faith. Is dead. We remember.

He says. Your work of faith. True love. For people. Leads. To labour. For them. Otherwise. It just becomes.

Sentimentality. And the word. Labour. Here. Speaks about. This strenuous. Exertion. That springs. Springs. From a genuine.

[ 34 : 54 ] Love. Of others. It leaves. A person. Tired. It leaves. A person. Exhausted.

But that's. How a person. Feels. When. They labour. Out of love. For another. True hope.

Looks expectantly. To the Lord's return. To the Lord's return. And. This. Prospect. On the horizon. Energises.

That person. To endure. Any hardship. Any difficulty. It produces. A patient.

Fortitude. In those. Who face. Opposition. It is. Worthwhile. Because. They look. Into the future.

[ 35 : 54 ] And they see. The glory. About. The dawn. One. And that. Gives them. The courage. The fortitude. To endure. It's not surprising.

Then. That John Calvin. When he. Was commenting. On these. This portion. Of. Verse. Three. Speaks. About. What Paul says.

Here. As. A brief. Delineation. Of. True. Christianity. A faith.  
That works. A love. That labors. And a hope. That patiently. Endures. And then. That brings us. To  
the last. Thing. That we can learn.

In this. Little. Introduction. To the. Letter. To the Thessalonians. What does it tell us. About the  
church. It's in God. The Father. And the Lord.

[ 36 : 48 ] Jesus Christ. It is. Characterized. By faith. Hope. And love. A faith. That works. A love.  
That labors. A hope. That produces.

Steadfastness. In the face. Of opposition. And then. The third thing. That he teaches. These  
people. About the church. Is that the church. Is a body. Of believers. Which is loved. And chosen.  
By God. Look at verse four. For we know. Brothers. Loved by God. That he. Has chosen. You.  
Election.

Now. Election. Is a. Sensitive doctrine. I know. But. It is a doctrine. That one. Finds right. Through  
the whole.

Of the Bible. You think. Of the Old Testament. And the call. Of Abraham. In Genesis 12. Or you  
think. Of God's later choice. Of Jacob. Or Israel. In Exodus chapter 19.

[ 37 : 44 ] The Old Testament. Language. Of election. That we're so familiar with. Is then. Adopted.  
And. Used.

To describe. Christian believers. In the New Testament. You think. Of. The words. Of. First Peter. If  
you turn. To that.

Just as an example. This is. One example. Of many. But if you look. At the first. Letter. Of Peter.  
And chapter. Two.

And verse five. You yourselves. Like living stones. Are being built up. As a spiritual house. To be a  
holy priesthood.

To offer. Spiritual sacrifices. Acceptable to God. Through Jesus Christ. These are words. Taken  
directly. From. The Old Testament.

[ 38 : 41 ] That speaks about. God's choice. Of Israel. And how he was going. To make them. Into  
this. Holy. Priesthood. This spiritual. Nation. Or you think again.

Of. First Peter. Chapter. Two. And verses. Nine and ten. But you are a chosen race. A royal  
priesthood. A holy nation. A people. For his own possession. That you may proclaim. The  
excellencies of him.

Who called you. Out of darkness. Into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people. But now  
you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy.

But now. You have received mercy. One of the features about the Bible's teaching on the doctrine  
of election. Is that it is always. Connected.

With. Enforcing. Practical purpose. It. Is always mentioned.

[ 39 : 39 ] To encourage. Assurance. But never presumption. When it is taught. It is always.

Done so. To promote holiness. Not moral carelessness. Or to instill a sense of. Humility. In the  
believer.

Who has been chosen. Not a sense of. Pride. Or it is to encourage. Zeal. In evangelistic witness.  
And not. Lazy selfishness. And when we think of the doctrine of election. There is nothing.

That the Bible teaches us. That enables us. To get beyond. This simple. Statement. That God.

[ 40 : 38 ] Chose his people. Because he. Loves his people. And he loves his people. Simply  
because.

He loves. His people. And we can't get beyond that. That is what he has revealed. And in that.  
We must rest content. And you notice. And you notice. That here. In. First Thessalonians. One  
chapter. Four. The love of God. And his choice.

Of these people. In Thessalonica. Are. United together. Where he says. We know brothers. Loved  
by God.

That he has chosen you. But how did Paul. And Silas. And Timothy. Know.

[ 41 : 35 ] The election. Of these Thessalonian believers. Surely. Surely that is something. That only  
God knows. How did they know.

Two reasons are given. The first. Reason. Is related. To. The evangelism.

That took place. In Thessalonica. The way. The gospel. Came to them. Was remarkable. And was  
attended.

By clear. Evidence. Of the spirits. Presence. And power. God was at work. And this led. Them. To the conclusion.

That these people. Were loved. By God. And chosen. By him. And were now. Being brought. Out of the world. And into the. Church.

[ 42 : 34 ] Of Jesus Christ. And the second. Reason. Given. Is related. To the. Thessalonians. Holiness. Of life. Both.

Were evidences. Of the spirits. Activity. The power. With which. The gospel. Came to Thessalonica. That can only. Be explained. In terms. Of the spirits.

Presence. And power. And activity. And the change. That that gospel. Made. In the lives. Of these people. Could only. Be explained. In terms.

Of God's purposes. Being fulfilled. In the world. How closely related then. Is the doctrine of election. And the work. Of making the gospel known. And proclaiming it to all. Who will hear. It is through the preaching.

[ 43 : 30 ] And the receiving of the gospel. That God's secret. Purposes. Come to light. And are made known.

We know. Brothers loved by God. That he has chosen you. Because when our gospel. Came to you. God was at work. And the way you responded.

Indicate. That this response. Could only have been produced. By the spirits. Work. In your hearts. So my friends.

What. An instructive summary. We have here. In the opening verses. Of 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. About the Christian church.

The church is chosen. And loved by God. In a past eternity. The church is rooted. In God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. And it draws. Its life and strength.

[ 44 : 29 ] From him. And the church. Displays. This. Life.

This. Life. That is supernatural. That cannot be worked up. But must come. Down from heaven. In a faith.

That works. In a love. That labors. Strenuously. For others. And in a hope. That produces. Faithful endurance.

In the face. Of opposition. And difficulties. The church. Is not a human institution.

The church. Is. The product. Of God the Father.

[ 45 : 32 ] The Lord Jesus Christ. And the work of the Holy Spirit. Do you know yesterday. I was reading the news. And on the BBC News website.

There is an article. About the Church of Scotland. It's. General Assembly season. So the BBC inevitably. Produced stories. About the Church of Scotland.

God. And it was a story. That would break your heart. In many. Many ways. The church. Is going to be faced. With closing. Hundreds.

Hundreds. Hundreds. Of churches. Across the country. And the elephant. In the room. Is. Never mentioned.

But you and I know. It is because. The Spirit of God. Has departed. The glory. Has departed.

[ 46 : 27 ] Ichabod. Is written over the doors. Of many. Of these. Once. Great. Assemblies. Of the people of God. And the response.

Of the Church authorities. Is all. At a human. Man. Centred. Level. There is no acknowledgement. Of sin. No acknowledgement.

Of heresy. And false teaching. No acknowledgement. That we stand. In need. Of God's intervention. But lest we throw stones.

In greenhouses. We need to learn. The lessons. Of 1 Thessalonians. Chapter 1. And to believe. What we read. In this passage. That if we are true. Believers. We are united. In God the Father.

[ 47 : 29 ] And the Lord Jesus Christ. And we must draw. Our life from them. That. Our faith. Our love.

Our hope. Must be. Productive. Working. Labouring. With a great exertion. And enabling us.

To be steadfast. In the Lord's work. In the face of opposition. And we must remember. That the only reason. Why we are here.

Is because of God's. Sovereign. Grace. And yet. What he did for us. He can.

And surely will do. For others. Was this not the great encouragement. For Paul. Who wrote this letter. From Corinth. When things were hard.

[ 48 : 24 ] In Corinth. In Corinth. God came to him. And said. Paul. Do not be afraid. Keep on speaking. Do not be silent. Why? Because of God's.

Sovereign purposes. He says. I have much people. In this city. And Paul. Paul stood there. In spite of all the difficulties. And persecutions. And oppositions. Preaching the gospel.

Because he knew. God. Had. Lit a lamp. In that dark place. Because he had many. Lost coins. Defined. To use the words of the Lord's parable. In Luke 15. And perhaps. Here in Dumfries. The Lord has kept.

You. Together. And the light. Continues to shine. Because he's got many people. In this. Town and district. Who will come.

[ 49 : 23 ] To faith in Jesus Christ. Through your life. And witness. Testimony. Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father. We.

Commend ourselves. Into your care and keeping. We are. Unworthy. Of the least of your mercies. We have nothing. To boast of. In ourselves.

It is because of your grace. And mercy. That we are found here. And we thank you. For the grace. That has saved us. In spite of ourselves. And for Jesus Christ.

Who died for sinners. And who died for us. And we pray. That. You would. Write these. Simple lessons. Upon our hearts.

Remind us. That our life. Our prosperity. Our blessing. Comes only from you. And we ask. That you would bless us.

[ 50 : 21 ] And prosper us. In the days ahead. Help us to live out our lives. In such a way. As to bring. Glory and praise.

To your name. The God of grace. And the God of salvation. Hear us we pray. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.