

International Bible Lessons

“Teaching the Truth in Love”

Sending International Sunday School Lessons and Bible Studies Around the World

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

For What Does Your Church Give Thanks?

The *International Sunday School Lesson* for Sunday, June 6, 2010

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father” (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3—NASB-U).

“We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3—NRSV).

“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father” (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3—KJV).

The Apostle Paul thanked God for all the consecrated Christians who helped establish the church in Thessalonica, Greece. He knew that the Father had expressly chosen each one of them for this great task, because the word of God had come to them “in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (1 Thessalonians 1:5). He knew that in spite of persecution they had turned from worshiping their Greek and Roman idols, including their Roman emperor, to worshiping God the Father and obeying their Lord Jesus Christ. They had stopped living as their neighbors and became imitators of Jesus Christ. In addition, even while suffering at the hands of evil doers, the Holy Spirit filled them with joy. Therefore, Paul thanked God constantly for totally transforming their lives through the good news they trusted.

But whereas today some believers might thank God primarily for all the material things God has bestowed upon their church, Paul thanked God for the fact that the believers in Thessalonica demonstrated to others the three most important biblical virtues: faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Their faith in God the Father and their Lord Jesus Christ led them to work hard when doing God's will. Furthermore, their love for God and others motivated them to labor together for the achievement of God's goals for His church. Finally, in spite of opposition, persecution, and suffering, they placed their hope in Jesus Christ instead of in themselves or in their eventual worldly success. — Copyright 2010 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Questions for Further Thought or Class Discussion

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1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

1. Today, what might a church look like, or behave like, for the Apostle Paul to be able to thank God for all of her members? How might it look or behave differently from the church in Paul's day?

2. Today, do we use a different measure from the one Paul used to know whether or not a person is "chosen by God"? What are the benefits from knowing this fact about ourselves and about others?

3. How does the Holy Spirit give us joy? How does living a virtuous life in the Holy Spirit give us joy? How does this type of joy help us when we are suffering?

4. What kind of examples does your church provide others? Are there any "bad" examples in the life of your church that need to be changed? Pray about changing the examples that need to be changed, and give thanks to God for the good examples you show others.

5. Why must the gospel be both demonstrated and explained, both "caught" from our examples as well as "taught" with our words from the Scriptures, both seen and heard?

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