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LEADERSHIP DURING DIFFICULT DAYS
OVERVIEW
1THESSALONIANS

With the beginning of The 2nd regular session of the 121st South Carolina General Assembly upon us, I trust you will be encouraged by our continued study of First Thessalonians. Over the past sessions we have focused our time gleaning insights for "Leadership During Difficult Days". Given the state of the times in which we live and the nature of the duty set before you, I can assure that difficult days will come, if not already, and will impact your life and decisions. I trust our time studying First Thessalonians will encourage, strengthen and comfort each of you for the tasks that befalls you while your among the Capitol complex and in life generally.

We find ourselves working through the 4th & 5th chapters of the book of 1 Thessalonians. In the past we have noted that each of the 5 chapters deal with the "coming of the Lord". Each Chapter addresses the eschatological nature of the coming of the Lord (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23).

AUTHOR: The apostle Paul, joined in his salutation by Silvanus and Timothy (1:1), and with specific mention of his name again later in the epistle (2:18). Early sources in church history that attribute this letter to Paul include: Clement of Alexandria (200 A.D.), Tertullian (200 A.D.), and Irenaeus (200 A.D.).

THE CITY OF THESSALONICA: It was the capital and largest city of the Roman province of Macedonia. Located on the Egnatian Way, a major road from Rome to the eastern provinces, the city served as center of trade and commerce. Today, it is known as Thessaloniki, or Salonica.

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA: The establishment of the church is recorded in [Ac 17:1-9](#). On his second missionary journey, Paul and his companions (Silas and Timothy) had just left Philippi and passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia to arrive at Thessalonica. As was his custom, Paul immediately located the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews for three Sabbaths concerning Jesus Christ. While some of them were persuaded, including a great number of devout Greeks and leading women, the unbelieving Jews became jealous and created an uproar in the city. Therefore it became necessary to send Paul and Silas away secretly by night to Berea.

Despite such ominous beginnings, a strong church was established in Thessalonica (cf. [1:2-10](#)). Mostly Gentile (cf. [1:9](#)), its members included Jason ([Ac 17:9](#)), Aristarchus, and Secundus ([Ac 20:4](#)).

TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING: First Thessalonians is considered one of Paul's earliest epistles, if not the first. From the letter itself ([3:1-6](#)), and the record of Paul's travels in Acts ([Ac 17:10-18:11](#)), it appears that Paul wrote this letter soon after arriving in Corinth on his second journey. This would put it somewhere around **52 A.D.**

PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE: The abrupt departure from Thessalonica so soon after the beginning of the church naturally left Paul anxious about the condition of the brethren. When Timothy joined Paul at Athens (cf. [Ac 17:14-16](#)), his concern prompted Paul to send Timothy at once back to Thessalonica to encourage and ground the new disciples in the faith, and to learn how they were enduring persecution (cf. [3:1-5](#)).

When Timothy returned to Paul in Corinth (cf. [Ac 18:5](#)), the news was mostly encouraging (cf. [3:6-7](#)). Despite persecution they had remained strong ([2:13-16](#)), and even proved themselves to be an example to others ([1:6-8](#)). Yet, as with any young church, they needed further instruction concerning holy living (cf. [4:1-12](#)).

They also needed to be reassured that their loved ones who died in Christ would not miss out on the blessings involving the coming of our Lord (cf. **4:13-18**). Therefore we can summarize by saying that Paul's purpose in writing was:

- **To praise them for their steadfastness under persecution**
- **To instruct them concerning holy living**
- **To correct any misunderstanding, especially about the second coming of Christ**

In chapters 1-3 Paul is giving his **Personal Reflections**:

- A. REGARDING THEIR CONDITION (1:5-10)**
1. Their reception of the gospel (**1:5-7**)
 2. Their reputation in every place (**1:8-10**)
- B. REGARDING HIS CONDUCT (2:1-12)**
1. The manner of his preaching (**2:1-8**)
 2. The manner of his life (**2:9-12**)
- C. REGARDING HIS CONCERN (2:13-3:13)**
1. For their faithfulness (**2:13-3:10**)
 2. For their continued growth (**3:11-13**)

Chapters 4-5 Paul provides **Apostolic Instructions**:

- A. WALK IN HOLINESS (4:1-8)**
1. To please God (**4:1-2**)
 2. To abstain from sexual immorality (**4:3-8**)
- B. WALK IN LOVE (4:9-10)**
1. As they are taught by God to love one another (**4:9**)
 2. To increase more and more (**4:10**)
- C. WALK IN DILIGENCE (4:11-12)**
1. To work with their hands (**4:11**)
 2. To walk properly toward those who are outside (**4:12**)
- D. WALK IN HOPE (4:13-18)**
1. With no sorrow concerning those who have died (**4:13-14**)
 2. For we will be rejoined with them when Christ returns (**4:15-18**)
- E. WALK IN LIGHT (5:1-11)**

1. For the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night (**5:1-4**)
2. For we are sons of light and sons of the day (**5:5-8**)
3. For God has appointed us to salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (**5:9-11**)

F. WALK IN OBEDIENCE (5:12-22)

1. With respect toward those over us (**5:12-13**)
2. With concern for one another (**5:14-15**)
3. With joy, prayer and thanksgiving (**5:16-18**)
4. Don't quench the Spirit or despise prophecies, but don't be gullible either (**5:19-22**)

THEME OF THE EPISTLE: This book is unique in that every chapter ends with a reference to the second coming of Christ (**1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23**). With his emphasis on steadfastness and holy living, an appropriate theme might be:

"HOLINESS IN VIEW OF THE COMING OF CHRIST"

KEY VERSES: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

"And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."¹

LEGISLATIVE BIBLE STUDY

Blatt Rm. 317—Wednesday, 8:30am

Prayer Request-jeff.lingerfelt@capitolcom.org

¹ Adapted from <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/eo/1Th/1Th000.cfm>