

Sermon Title: Introduction To: The Picture of a Christian-Filled Church

Sermon Text: Various Scriptures in 1 Thessalonians

Sermon Purpose: To provide a survey of the picture of a Christian filled church.

Sermon Proposition: There are 9 purposes of a Christian filled church.

Introduction: The Church of Thessalonica is first introduced in the book of Acts on Paul and his companion's 2nd missionary journey. (**Acts 17:1-9**) The first of Paul's two letters written from Corinth to the church at Thessalonica is dated ca A.D. 51. (**Acts 16:1-18:22**)

The city became the capital of Macedonia (ca 168 B.C.) and enjoyed the status of a "free city" which was ruled by its own citizenry (**Acts 17:6**) under the Roman Empire.

Acts 17:6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."

Because it was located on the main east-west highway, Via Egnatia, Thessalonica served as the hub of political and commercial activity in Macedonia and became known as "the mother of all Macedonia." The population in Paul's day reached 200,000 people.

As was Paul's custom upon arriving in a city, he sought out the synagogue in which to teach the local Jews the Gospel (**Acts 17:1-2**). On that occasion, he spoke with them concerning the Old Testament concerning Christ's death and resurrection in order to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was truly the promised Messiah (**Acts 17:2-3**). Some Jews believed and soon after, Hellenistic proselytes and some wealthy women of the community also were converted (**Acts 17:4**).

Acts 17:1-4 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. **2** Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **3** explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." **4** And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

Because of their effective ministry, the Jews had Paul's team evicted from the city (**Acts 17:5-9**), so they went south to evangelize Berea (**Acts 17:10**). There Paul had a similar experience to Thessalonica with conversions followed by hostility.

[**The MacArthur Study Bible NKJV, p.1841**]

Acts 17:5-9 But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. **6** But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. **7** "Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king-- Jesus." **8** And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. **9** So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

Acts 17:10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Thessalonica was a large port city on the Aegean Sea in modern day Greece. The city was filled with pagan worshippers of idols, the full pantheon of Greek and Roman gods, and was well known for its emperor worship. Thessalonica was loyal to Caesar, and he had granted its citizens many privileges. [**HCSB Study Bible, Nashville, Tennessee, p.2064**]

Timothy reported to Paul (**1 Thessalonians 3:2-6**) that although the church at Thessalonica was suffering affliction, they were holding fast to the faith. And though they had some doctrinal misunderstandings, they were laboring for the Lord out of love, and patiently eagerly anticipating His return. Paul wrote to encourage the church in their perseverance of faith, to remind them that sanctification was God's will for them, and to correct their understanding about end-time events. [**Ibid. p.2065**]

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- I. The 1st purpose is to provide encouragement to the church. 1:2-10**
- II. The 2nd purpose is to provide answers to false allegations. 2:1-12**
- III. The 3rd purpose is to provide comfort for the persecuted flock. 2:13-16**
- IV. The 4th purpose is to provide an expression of joy for their faith. 2:17-3:13**
- V. The 5th purpose is to provide encouragement for moral purity. 4:1-8**
- VI. The 6th purpose is to provide condemnation for the sluggard lifestyle. 4:9-12**
- VII. The 7th purpose is to provide a correction on prophetic events. 4:13-5:11**
- VIII. The 8th purpose is to provide solutions for tensions within the church. 5:12-15**
- IX. The 9th purpose is to provide the basics for Christian living. 5:16-22**