

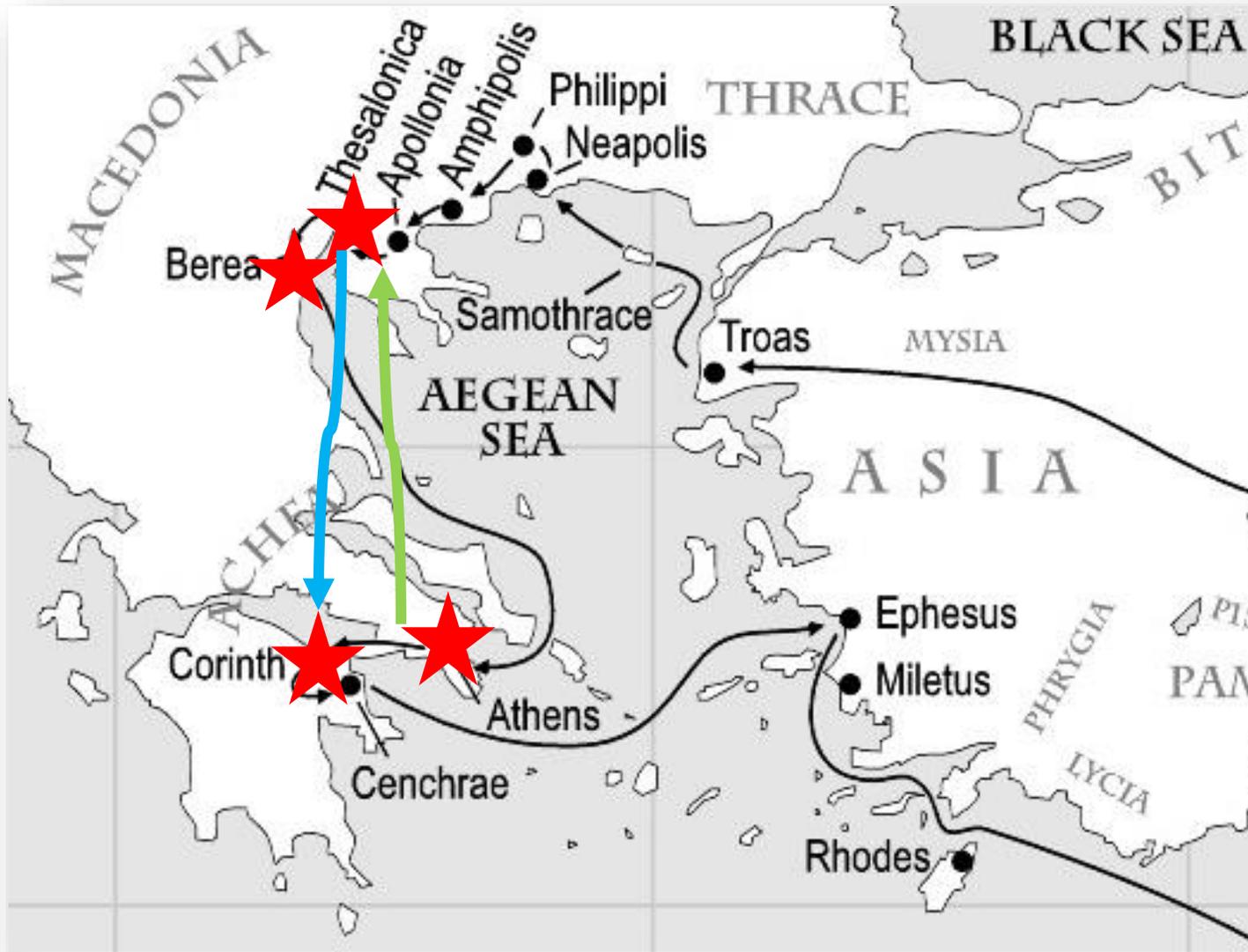


# Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians

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Powerful Impacts of  
God's Good News

# Context from Acts 17-18 and 1 Thessalonians 3:1



- Paul and Silas in Thessalonica ~3-4 weeks (17:1-10)
- Paul, Silas, and Timothy in Berea (17:10-14)
- Paul, Silas, and Timothy in Athens (17:15-34)
- Paul sends Timothy to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:1)
- Paul in Corinth (18:1)
- Timothy returns from Thessalonica and meets Paul in Corinth (18:5)

# We will begin by reading the letter

- We know for sure that public reading in the church was the way believers first heard the writings of Paul
- **5:27** I charge you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the brethren.
- Descriptive or prescriptive?
  - Descriptive: This is how they did it, but we don't have to do it this way.
  - Prescriptive: We must do it this way!
- Descriptive...
- But also, informative and beneficial
- Paul as the writer would have been aware that this is how the letter would first have been received by the hearers

# Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians

Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the assembly of 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, remembering to mention you in our prayers, never ceasing to remember your work of faith, your toil of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father; having known, brethren loved by God, your having been chosen, because our good news did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much certainty, just as you know what we were like among you for your benefit.

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all who believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place where your faith toward God has gone forth, so that there is no need for us to say anything. For they themselves tell about us what kind of welcome 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, the one rescuing us from the coming wrath.

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you has not been in vain, but having suffered before and having been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we were courageous in our God to speak to you the good news of God amid much conflict. For our appeal is not from deceit, nor from uncleanness, nor with guile; but just as we have been approved by God to be trusted with the good news, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, who tests our hearts.

For neither at any time did we come with words of flattery, as you know, nor with pretense to cover greed, God is witness, nor seeking praise from men, nor from you nor from others, although we could have asserted our importance as apostles of Christ. But we became little children among you. As a nursemaid cares for her own children, so we had great affection for you. We took great pleasure to share with you not only the good news of God but also our own selves, because you had become dearly loved to us. For remember, brethren, our labor and toil, how working night and day, so as to not burden any of you, we preached to you the good news of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how purely and justly and blamelessly we behaved toward you who believe, just as you know, how with each of you, as a father with his own children, we were encouraging you and comforting you, and urging that you would walk worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

And because of this we also give thanks to God without ceasing, so that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, as it really is, the word of God, which also works in you who believe.

For you became imitators, brethren, of the assemblies of God that are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men, preventing us from speaking to the heathen that they might be saved, always filling up their sins, but on them wrath has come to completion.

But we, brethren, having been separated from you for a short time, in presence not in heart, endeavored more exceedingly, with much desire, to see your face, because we desired to come to you—I, Paul, once and again—but Satan prevented us. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of boasting? Is it not even you before our Lord Jesus at his coming? For you are our glory and joy.

Therefore, when we could endure it no longer, we thought it good to be left behind in Athens alone, and we sent Timothy our brother and God's coworker in the good news of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you concerning your faith, so that no one should be shaken by these afflictions, for you yourselves know that we are appointed for this. Also, because when we were with you, we were telling you ahead of time that we were going to suffer affliction, just as it also came to pass, as you know. For this reason, when I also could no longer endure it, I sent to learn about your faith, lest the tempter might have tempted you, and our work might be in vain.

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and told us good news about your faith and love, and that you always have good memories of us, deeply desiring to see us just as we desire to see you, therefore, we were encouraged, brethren, about you in all our distress and affliction through your faith, for now we live, if you stand firm in the Lord. For what thanks can we repay to God for you for all the joy with which we rejoice before God because of you, night and day praying exceedingly to see your face, and to complete the things lacking in your faith?

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another, and to all, just as we also do to you, in order to strengthen your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

At last, brethren, we ask and encourage you in the Lord Jesus that, just as you received from us how you should walk and please God, even as you do walk, that you might superabound more. For you know what commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each of you knows how to keep his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the heathen who do not know God, that no one transgresses and takes advantage of his brother in the matter, because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, as we told you before and solemnly testified. For God has not called us for impurity, but in sanctification. Therefore, the one who rejects this, does not reject man, but God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

Now about brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another, for indeed you do this to all the brethren in all of Macedonia.

But we encourage you, brethren, that you superabound more, and that you make it your goal to live quietly, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, just as we instructed you, that you might walk properly before those outside and that you might have no need.

But we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, about those who sleep, so that you will not grieve as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are living and remain at the coming of the Lord will certainly not go before those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself—with a command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God—will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are living and remain will be snatched away together with them in clouds for meeting the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

But about the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need for anything to be written to you, for you yourselves know that the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night. When they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them just like birth pains in the womb, and they will not in any way escape.

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief, for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness.

So then, let us not sleep as the others, but let us stay awake and be sober, for those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk are drunk at night. But we, being of day, should be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

For God has not appointed us for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

Therefore, comfort one another and build each other up, just as you also do.

But we ask you, brethren, to recognize the ones who work hard among you, and lead you in the Lord, and warn you, and to regard them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

And we exhort you, brethren, warn the disorderly, comfort the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns to someone evil for evil, but always pursue the good, both for one another and for all.

Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; give thanks in everything; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophecies, but test all of them; hold firm to the good; abstain from every form of evil.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete, blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is the One calling you, who also will do it.

Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. I charge you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

# Reasons for writing

- Timothy's good report prompted Paul to thank God for their strong testimony and to encourage them in this (1 Thess. 3:6) especially amid conflict and persecution (1 Thess. 3:2-3)
- Paul also wanted to reinforce and correct some of their practices, such as people not working to support themselves (1 Thess. 4:1-12; 5:12-21)
- Some in the church had died, and the people were confused and worried about what would happen when Jesus returned. Paul wanted to correct these misconceptions and offer hope. (1 Thess. 4:13-5:11)

OUTLINE FOR

# Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians

Powerful Impacts of  
God's Good News

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Greeting and Prayer (1:1-4)

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Immediate Impact (1:5-2:16)

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Enduring Impact (2:17-3:13)

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Superabounding Impact (4:1-12)

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Future (and Present) Impact (4:13-5:11)

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Practical Impact (5:12-22)

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Ultimate Impact (5:23-24)

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Closing (5:25-28)

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# Theme: The Good News from START to FINISH!

- The Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον, *euangelion*) = Good News
- From **START** to **FINISH**
  - **1:5a** “Our good news did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much certainty...”
  - **9b-10** “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, the one rescuing us from the coming wrath.”
  - **5:23-24** Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete, blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is the One calling you, who also will do it.
- The coming of the Lord is mentioned in every chapter!  
1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:14-18; 5:23

# Emotional arc through the letter

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4

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Thankfulness (1:2; 2:13; 3:9)

**1:2-3** We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering to mention you in our prayers, never ceasing to remember your work of faith, your toil of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father.

**2:13** And because of this we also give thanks to God without ceasing, so that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, as it really is, the word of God, which also works in you who believe.

**3:9** For what thanks can we repay to God for you for all the joy with which we rejoice before God because of you...



Thankfulness

# Emotional arc through the letter

1

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5

Thankfulness (1:2; 2:13; 3:9)

Tenderness, Care, and  
Concern (2:5-3:13)

**2:7-8** But we became little children among you. As a nursemaid cares for her own children, so we had great affection for you. We took great pleasure to share with you not only the good news of God but also our own selves, because you had become dearly loved to us.

**2:11-12** You know, how with each of you, as a father with his own children, we were encouraging you and comforting you, and urging that you would walk worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

**2:17** But we, brethren, having been separated from you for a short time, in presence not in heart, endeavored more exceedingly, with much desire, to see your face...



Tenderness,  
Care, and  
Concern

# Emotional arc through the letter

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Thankfulness (1:2; 2:13; 3:9)

Tenderness, Care, and  
Concern (2:5-3:13)

Hope and Joy (2:19-20; 3:8; 4:13; 5:8)

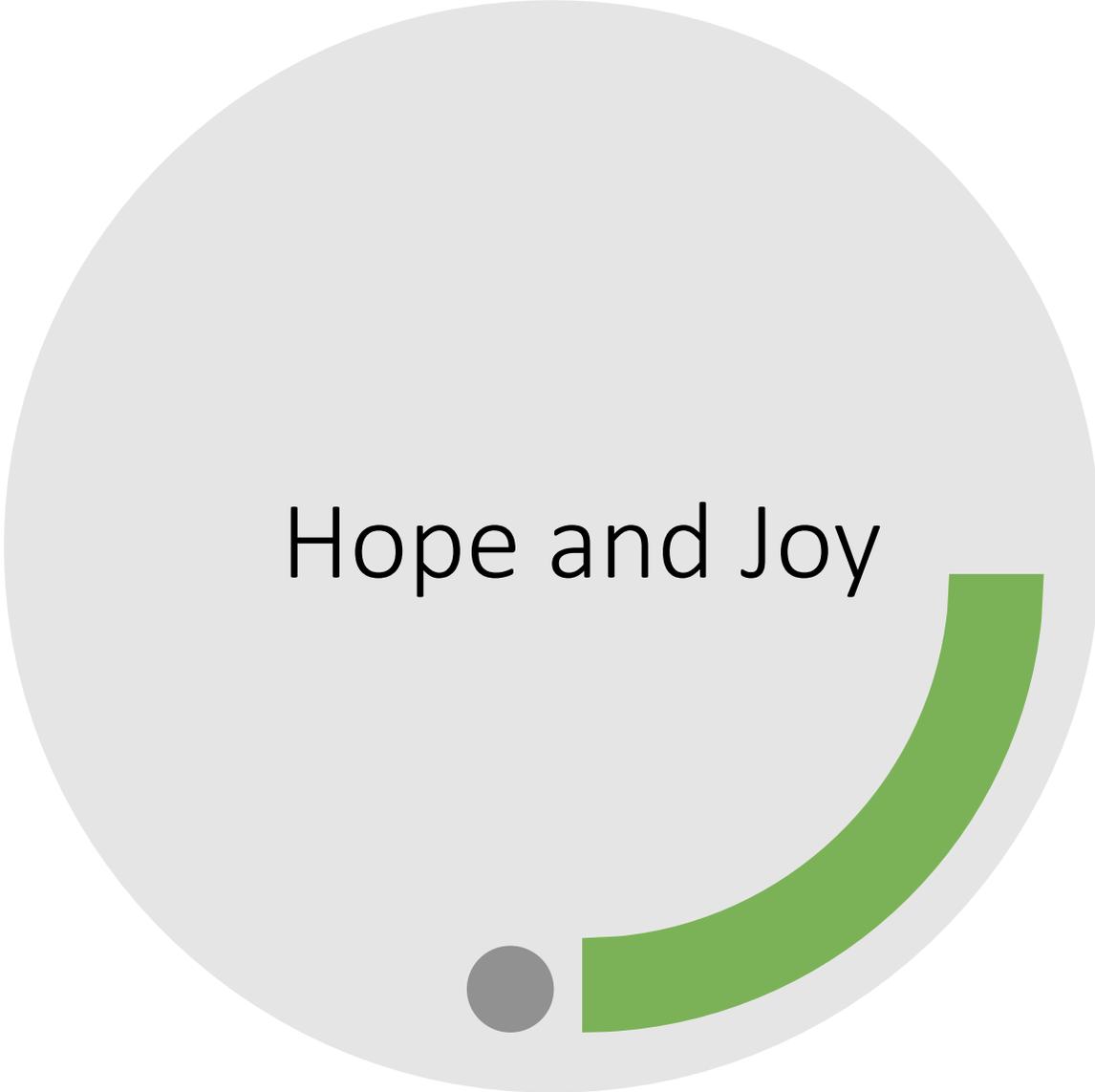
Encouragement and Comfort  
(3:2,7; 4:1,10,18; 5:11,14)

**2:19-20** For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of boasting? Is it not even you before our Lord Jesus at his coming? For you are our glory and joy.

**3:9** For what thanks can we repay to God for you for all the joy with which we rejoice before God because of you

**4:13** But we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, about those who sleep, so that you will not grieve as others who have no hope.

**5:8** But we, being of day, should be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.



Hope and Joy

# Emotional arc through the letter

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Thankfulness (1:2; 2:13; 3:9)

Tenderness, Care, and  
Concern (2:5-3:13)

Hope and Joy (2:19-20; 3:8; 4:13; 5:8)

Encouragement and Comfort  
(3:2,7; 4:1,10,18; 5:11,14)

**3:2** We sent Timothy our brother and God's coworker in the good news of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you concerning your faith...

**3:7** We were encouraged, brethren, about you in all our distress and affliction through your faith...

**4:1** We ask and encourage you in the Lord Jesus... **10** We encourage you, brethren, that you superabound more...

**4:18** Comfort one another with these words.

**5:11** Comfort one another and build each other up... **14** Comfort the fainthearted...



## Encouragement and Comfort

# Emotional arc through the letter

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Thankfulness (1:2; 2:13; 3:9)

Tenderness, Care, and  
Concern (2:5-3:13)

Hope and Joy (2:19-20; 3:8; 4:13; 5:8)

Encouragement and Comfort  
(3:2,7; 4:1,10,18; 5:11,14)

**The emotions  
flowed both ways!**

