

**Sermon, April 29, 2012**  
***“Know Where You’re Going?” - Thessalonians 4:13-18***  
**Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy**

**The 27 Books of the New Testament**

- Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- Early Church: Book of Acts
- 13 Letters of Paul: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, **1 Thessalonians**, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon
- 8 General Letters: Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude
- Prophecy: Revelations

**Overview of 1 Thessalonians:**<sup>1</sup>

- Paul wrote to the new believers in Thessalonica around 51-52AD, a major military and commercial port located along the Egnatian Way (an important Roman road connecting Asia Minor with the Adriatic Sea).
- Thessalonica had a population of about 200,000, making it the largest city in Macedonia.
- After having planted a church in Thessalonica, Paul was abruptly forced out of the city (Ac 17:1–10), leaving the new Christians there with only minimal teaching in Christian doctrine.
- Paul dispatched Timothy to check on the Thessalonian Christians while he himself remained in Athens (1Th 3:1–2). Upon his return Timothy found the apostle in Corinth (Ac 18:1–5).
- Although Timothy could report that the Thessalonians were steadfast in the faith, he relayed the need for additional teaching in matters of Christian ethics and eschatology (matters relating to the end times).
- Paul wrote this letter to assure the Thessalonian Christians that his abrupt departure had not signified lack of love for these believers (1Th 2–3), to encourage them to avoid sexual immorality (4:1–8) and to clear up confusion in some of their minds regarding the resurrection and second advent of Christ (4:13–5:3).

**General Outline of 1 Thessalonians:**

- I. Greeting, Thanksgiving (1:1–10)
- II. Paul’s Defense of His Actions and Absence (2:1–3:13)
- III. Exhortations (4:1-5:22)
  - A. About Personal Life (4:1-12)
  - B. About Jesus Coming (4:13-5:11)
  - C. About Church Life (5:12-22)
- IV. Concluding Prayers, Greetings and Benediction (5:23–28)

**Major Themes of 1 Thessalonians:**<sup>2</sup>

- *Persecution*: Paul applauded the Thessalonians for their progress in the faith and urged them to stay the course (4:1, 10; 5:11), asserting that the trials believers endure because of their faith are not just chance happenings. On the contrary, suffering for the faith is to be expected (3:3). Christ’s return.
- *Christian living*. While believers await the Lord’s coming, they are to live quiet, respectful, holy and productive lives (4:1–12), to encourage and help each other and to be patient and kind to everyone (5:14). While a moral life is not a precondition for acceptance.
- *Christ’s Return*: The subject of eschatology seems to be predominant in both Thessalonian letters. Every chapter ends with a reference to the second coming of Jesus, with chapter 4 giving it major consideration. Thus, the second coming seems to permeate the letter and may be viewed as its major theme.

---

<sup>1</sup>Kaiser Jr., Walter C.; Garrett, Duane (2010-10-19). NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture (Kindle Locations 109015-109019). Zondervan. Kindle Edition..

<sup>2</sup>Kaiser Jr., Walter C.; Garrett, Duane (2010-10-19). NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture (Kindle Locations 109575-109577). Zondervan. Kindle Edition..

**Sermon, April 29, 2012**  
**“Know Where You’re Going?” - Thessalonians 4:13-18**  
**Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy**

**Your journey through life is not aimless wandering; it is filled with God-given purpose in God-given knowledge of your final destination.**

**1. Not knowing where you are going is a cause for grief and hopelessness.**

- **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** <sup>13</sup> *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.*
- Life for the Christian is one in which you will go through the storms of life living in a fallen world with fallen people.
- Others also go through the storms of life, but are either aimlessly wandering about (uninformed) or heading through life with bad, worldly directions (end up grieving without hope).

**2. Life without Christ is a life that is uninformed with bad directions that continues in hopelessness and ends in hopelessness.**

- Those around the Thessalonians (as those around you) are in darkness; uninformed and with bad directions=aimless wandering without purpose...sexual impurity, transgressing and defrauding one another
- **1 Thessalonians 4:3-7**
- Have you ever had times in your life when you were at a fork in the road of life decisions and were unsure of which path to take; a sense of purposelessness, hopelessness, not knowing where you are going, no idea of how to get where you don't even know where you're going?
- Life is meaningless, filled with misery, lost...very unsettling, disturbing, frightful...
- This is how many around you live...disguised until the still of the night...sad...
- You will be in the midst of stormy weather...bad people doing bad things...
- Those around you will die, some with and some without knowing Jesus as Savior.
- Paul is encouraging you that you do not have to grieve, be uninformed, and hopeless...the end of life is not the end of everything for you, but the beginning.
- Your life has purpose and meaning and destiny, ending in destination with God.

**3. Your purpose is to be a light to others around you**

- The Thessalonians were examples to others, **1 Thessalonians 1:6-7**.
- Paul encourages us to continue to live a life as imitators of the Lord Jesus continuing His mission of spreading the gospel and making disciples, also as Paul had done.
- You have been set apart for the Lord, you are moving ahead in the journey of life with purpose, direction and destination in mind...remember that! **1 Thessalonians 5:4-6**
- You are light to the world, enabled to enjoy the tumultuous journey of life with its ups and downs, knowing where you are going.

**4. Those who have preceded you in their journey with Christ have not lived a wasted life but will reach the same destination as you**

- **1 Thessalonians 4:14-18**
- Belief in the message of the gospel is your road map; the way and truth and life of Jesus that leads you
- Your journey and the journey of those who have lived before are not lived in vain as those lost without Christ.
- Be encouraged that your final destination will be a glorious one

**Conclusion:**

- Knowing where you are going is a great source of relief and hope.
- Storms are easier to bear when you know where you are going.
- Great excitement and wondrous anticipation for the child of God as you journey through life in Christ!
- Because you know where you will end up
- Remember your destination, fulfill the purpose God has given you...be a light to others, spread His Word, share the gospel, and make disciples.
- **Your journey through life is not aimless wandering; it is filled with God-given purpose in God-given knowledge of your final destination.**