

# Guest Preacher - Rev. George Macaskill

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Preacher: Rev. George Macaskill

[ 0 : 00 ] 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. To the church of the 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, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers, loved by God, that he has chosen you.

Because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we prove to be among you for your sake.

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord. For you received the word in much reflection with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need to not say anything.

For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception 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, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

[ 2 : 26 ] May God bless the very reading of his own truth to us. As God would help me, I would like to concentrate perhaps on verses 4 and 5.

So we'll read them again. 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 verses 4 and 5. For we know, brothers, loved by God, that he has chosen you.

Because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit. And with full conviction, you know what kind of men we prove to be among you for your sake.

Several things amaze me about this church of the Thessalonians. The first is this. This church was planted after three weekends of preaching.

Imagine a church planted after three weekends of preaching. You get it. The record in Acts chapter 17 and verse 2 says, And Paul went in as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures.

[ 4 : 19 ] Three Lord's days, and there's a church planted. Could you do that nowadays? God is the same.

It's God's work. Three Sabbath days, a new church is planted in this pagan city of Thessalonica. I think that's amazing. That God can do that things. And God is the same today as he was then. But you know, the really amazing thing about the church in Thessalonica is not that the church was planted after three weekends of preaching.

I find it more amazing that the church of Thessalonica survived where there was so much opposition to it after three weekends of preaching.

If you continue to read in Acts chapter 17, you'll find out that Paul had to run for his life. There was so much hatred, so much opposition to him.

[ 5 : 33 ] He had to leave them. After three weekends, he had to leave them. And you see, in chapter 3, just the next page, Paul, no wonder, he wonders, I wonder what's happening.

I wonder, do they continue to meet? Chapter 3, verse 1. When we could bear it no longer. He's worried about them. He's anxious about them.

So he said, I wonder are they still meeting together. When we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind alone in Athens. And we sent Timothy to find out how are they doing.

And word comes back, they're doing great. They're meeting together. I think that's even more amazing. Now just think of it. No apostle.

No minister. No elder. No deacon. Not even a mature Christian.

[ 6 : 47 ] Well, how can there be after three weekends of preaching? How could there be a mature Christian to guide them and help them and support them and strengthen them? But there they are.

That leads to the fourth thing that amazes me about this church. Paul calls them a church. I mean, after three weekends. The fourth weekend back the way, they were worshipping idols. Eh? That's amazing. You see, Paul, in his evangelism, planted churches. People today say, oh, we can do without the church. Oh, Paul planted churches after three weekends.

[ 7 : 52 ] Not Christian groups. Churches. Churches. I'm sure there was still ringing in his ears. The great commission which Christ gave the eleven apostles before he joined them as the twelve.

Go tell every creature. And what does he say to them? Make disciples. Make disciples. Now, the word disciple, by the way, do you know where it comes from? It comes from the word discipline. Disciplining them.

Disciple them. Baptize them. Is that important? Really? The great commission is disciple them. Baptize them.

Teach them to observe all that I command them. So that's what Paul's doing after three weekends. Driven away.

[ 8 : 59 ] But do you know what I consider to be the, probably the most amazing thing of all? Sorry, that was the third thing. I said fourth. It's actually the third. I can't count.

The fourth thing is this. It's the words of our text. Verse four. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you.

He knows they're the elect of God. After three weekends. Now, those who study this, scholars who study these things tell us that this letter was probably the first letter in the scriptures, the first canon of the scriptures, the first epistle that was written.

And it was written only 11 months after Paul visited them. And he says, I know you're the elect of God.

Would you dare do that after 11 months? Think of it. 11 months ago, they were worshipping idols. But they've given it up. And now, they're worshipping God.

[ 10 : 14 ] And he says, I know you're the elect of God. I find that amazing. I would hesitate to say it after some, well, you know you've got a sign on this island.

Ah, you don't know someone until you burn a stack of peats with them. Not Paul. Not Paul. Well, I suppose after 11 months, he would have burnt a stack of peats.

I suppose he would have. Just done no more. Now, how can you tell if someone's the elect of God, the chosen of God?

How can you tell? Well, it's very important to understand. No one is simply elected.

No one is simply chosen. People are elected and chosen to do something.

[ 11 : 25 ] To be something. So how do you know they're elected and chosen? They do what they've been elected to do. They are what they become what they've chosen to become.

You see, it's not actually correct to say. You hear some people say, well, if I'm elected, I'll be saved anyway. Not strictly true.

That is not strictly true. If you're elected, you'll be saved anyway. What's true is if you're elected, you'll be saved the one way.

Not anyway. If you're elected, you'll be saved only by repenting and believing on Jesus Christ.

Get that right. Whatever you get right. We're elected and chosen to repent of our sins.

[ 12 : 37 ] We're elected and chosen to trust Christ to take us to heaven. Are you doing that? Do you do that? That's how you know.

You're elected and chosen to turn from your sinful ways and follow Jesus.

Follow Christ. That's what you're elected to do. So how do you know if you're elected? If you do it. It's not rocket science. It's not rocket science at all. Paul knew they were elected. Paul knew they were chosen.

Because he saw their repentance. He saw their faith in Jesus. He saw their renewed behavior.

[ 13 : 37 ] That's how. It's the same today. That's how you can tell. Right. Right. We ask a question.

How were they converted? After three weekends. How were they converted? You know how? Surprise, surprise. Do you know how they were converted? The same way as everybody else is converted.

No different. There's only one way. They heard and believed the gospel. That's how they were converted. Verse five. That he has chosen you. Because. Our gospel. [14:40] Came to you. Not only in word. But also. In. Power. They heard the word. And they believed the word. They heard the gospel. And they believed the gospel. You see. Someone. Went. To them. With the gospel. Someone. Someone. Has come to you. With the gospel. Someone. Has given up. His trade of electricity. To come. And preach the gospel. To you. Have you believed? The Thessalonians believed. After three weekends. Do you believe. Do you believe. The gospel. Which your pastor. Preaches. Do you? The Thessalonians did. [15:39] And the Thessalonians. Will stand up. In the day of judgment. And say. You heard it. For three years. And you didn't believe. You know. I've done. Very little. Evangelism. Outreach work. Mission work. But I did go to Thailand. Once. And I did go to Malaya. Twice. I think. Oh no. It's the other way around. Anyway. Anyway. I remember. Being in. Thailand. And. Being in. A bible. Class. There. And speaking to the. People. But the. Young people. Young people. There. And. I had a reason to say. I can't remember how. But I happened to say. Well. There was someone in my congregation. That did say. He wasn't. He wasn't a Christian actually. But. And. At the end of. The talk. [16:34] This. Young boy. Came up to me. He said. Sir. Can I ask you a question. He says. Did I hear you correctly. Did I hear you say. That there were people. In your congregation. Who didn't believe. Who are not Christians. I said. Yes. I'm sorry to say. That's right. He says. I don't understand. He said. He says. Do they think. You're telling them lies. Why don't they believe. The Thessalonians. They just heard the gospel. And believed it. And it changed their lives. It changed their lives. Many. Hear. But don't believe. Now listen. If you believe. If you believe. [17:34] If you believe. The only way. You'll ever get to heaven. Is if Jesus. Takes you there. You're elect. You're the elect of God. I tell you. It isn't. Actually. Normal. People hear it. And don't believe it. So if you. Simply. Believe. It's because you've been. Chosen. By God. To believe. Rejoice. And be exceedingly glad. For great is your reward. In heaven. And you've done nothing about it. Christ. Has done it all. His spirit. Has changed you. And given you faith. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. Christ. Now you will note. That he. When he speaks about the gospel. Hearing. And believing it. [18:33] He calls it different things. For example. It's also defined. In this epistle. As. Receiving. And embracing. The world. The word. Sorry. Receiving. And embracing. The word. Verse six. You became imitators. Of the Lord. For you. Received. The word. In much affliction. And if you go to chapter two. Verse thirteen. He says. We also thank God. Constantly. For this. That. When you received. The word. Of God. Believing the gospel. Is. Receiving. And embracing. The word. Rejoicing. Loving it. Oh. That's good news. Christ died. For my sins. According to the scriptures. I love that. And I'm taking that. And I'm believing it. [19:29] That's the gospel. You see. There are some people. Who say. Oh. I love Jesus. Oh. I have. A lot of time. For Jesus. But. I'm not into this word. I'm not into the Bible. I'm not into reading. I'm not a reader. But the apostle Paul. And the Holy Spirit. Puts the two things together. Do you know what I say to people now. Who say that to me. They say. Oh. I'm all for Christ. I'm all for Christ. But. Oh. I'm not into the Bible. I'm not into that. And. Another thing is. Well. We'll. Maybe leave out there. This. The Bible. Defines. Believing. The gospel. As. Receiving. The word. And. Embracing it.

[ 20 : 27 ] Because. You see. You're chosen. To believe. The Bible. You see. It's all very well. To say.

I love Jesus. I believe in Jesus. I trust in Jesus. But tell me. You say you love Jesus. Where do you get information about Jesus?

To love. Why do you love him? Where do you get information about Jesus? Do you just. Think about something. And say. Oh. That's him. Do you just. Do you have a dream?

Or someone tell you. Where do you get reliable information about Jesus? The word. You get it from the Bible. It's because.

We believe the Bible. We believe Jesus. It's because. The Bible says. Christ. Died. For our sins. According to.

[ 21 : 23 ] The scriptures. You can't love Jesus. And not love the scriptures. Not love the word. It's the word. It gives us. Reliable information.

About Jesus. What he's done. What he's like. How he saves. You can't separate the word. From Jesus. Now.

For the rest of our time. I want to look at some. Marks. We can learn. Marks of Christians. Marks of believers. Which gave Paul this confidence.

I know. You're the chosen of God. We go back to what we said earlier. What did their conversion. Make them do? What did their faith. Make them do? What made them different. From people who just say it.

[ 22 : 22 ] And don't really believe it. One. They followed. They followed. And imitated. Christ. And the apostles. Verse 6.

And you became imitators. Or followers. The same word. The word to follow. And the word to imitate. Is the same. And you became imitators. Followers of us.

And of the Lord. God. You see. Their heart and mind. Was open. To identify. And recognize. And love.

Those. Who are of. Those who brought the good news. To them. I suppose. Really. The equivalent. Today's equivalent. Of what he's saying.

In verse 6. Is. Joining the church. Oh. This is like. What Ruth said. My people. Your people. Shall be my people.

[ 23 : 26 ] People. Say. Some people. Say. Oh. I'm all for Christ. But I have no time. For the church. Well. You can't blame them. You can't blame them.

For what they see. Sometimes. But. Do you know what I say to them now? Do you know what you've done? If you say. You're all for Christ.

But not for the church. I'm sorry. But you have decapitated Christ. Christ. Is the head. The church. Is the body. Of Christ. Don't. Decapitate. Christ. The church. Is his. Body. They became followers. They recognized. This truth. This glorious. Good news. These people. Have it. This is the. Community. The organization. On earth.

[ 24 : 27 ] That. Where God dwells. Where Christ dwells. This is where the blessing. Come. For the blessing. Dwells on earth.

It's to go out. As we'll come to notice. It's to go out. But this is where. It's deposited. On earth. The people. Of God. Gathering. Together.

To worship. Second thing. We noticed about them. They were willing. To suffer. For their Christianity. Again.

Verse 6. Says the same. You received the word. In much affliction. In much affliction. Again.

Chapter 2. Verse 14. For you suffered. The same things. From your own countrymen. You suffered.

[ 25 : 25 ] They were not. Fair weather. Christians. They suffered. For their Christianity. As we said. The people.

Who brought. The good news. To them. Had to run. For their lives. After three weekends. Run. For their lives. But they stayed. And faced.

The hostility. And they were willing. To suffer. For being Christian. Now listen. Don't let anyone. Tell you.

That it's easy. To be a Christian. It's not. I tell you. It's wonderful. I tell you. It's glorious. I tell you. It's well. Well. Worth. While. But it's not easy. It's not easy. The trouble.

[ 26 : 18 ] With so many Christians. Today. Is they want their heaven. On earth. And they're surprised. When they're converted. That things don't run smoothly.

I don't know how many people. Have come to me. And said. Ever since I was converted. There's been trouble. What am I doing wrong? Well. I know.

Say. You're probably doing everything. Spot on. Jesus said to his disciples. As clearly as he could. In the world. You will. You will. Have. Tribulation. But be of good cheer. I've overcome the world. There's a better day coming.

There's heaven. There's glory. There's glory. There's far better. Than you ever dreamed of. Heaven's coming. But in this world. In this world. You will have tribulation.

[ 27 : 15 ] Chapter 3. Verse 3. That no one. Be moved. By these afflictions. For you. Yourselves. Know. That we're destined. For this. For when we were with you. These three weekends. For when we were with you. We kept telling you. Beforehand. That we were. To suffer. Affliction. Just as it has come. To pass. It's not wise. When you're running. Christianity. Explored. Or some outreach. To think. It's not wise. To say. Just become a Christian. And everything. Will be wonderful. I tell you. Everything will. Be wonderful. In the next world. Far. Far. Far. Greater. Far. Far. Happier. Than you ever imagined.

[ 28 : 12 ] In the next world. But in this world. You'll have tribulation. Opposition. From surprising sources.

Suffering. But remember. You were appointed to it. Chapter 3. Verse 3. You. You. You. Yourselves. Know. That we're destined. For this. Paul didn't hide the truth. He said. It's wonderful. Believe in the Lord.

Jesus Christ. All your sins are forgiven. You have a guarantee. For glory. When this world is over. But in this world. You'll have affliction. You'll have trials. You'll have tribulations. And you'll many times. Have to say. Oh Lord. I don't understand. Why you allowed this. To happen to me. But you must believe.

[ 29 : 10 ] He knows what he's doing. And at the end of the day. All things. Really do. Work out. For the good. Of the church. And the people.

Who loved. God. Another mark. Verse 8. They were eager. To spread the gospel. From you. Went out. The word of God. To Macedonia. And Achaia. You are an example. From. This. Small. Fledgling. Church. An example. Of evangelism. I find that amazing. With all the affliction. With all the suffering. They still went out. And spread the gospel. Until they were an example. To the bigger churches. I mentioned already. Being in Thailand. And Malawi. And that. It really astonished me.

[ 30 : 08 ] We went out there. To teach. The pastors. You see. In these countries. Where English. Was not the main language. If you could speak. English fully. You're almost. Almost. Made a pastor. Right away. If you're a Christian. If you can speak English. English. So we went out. To train the pastors. And. We trained them. In the word. As far as we could. After a week's training. We said. Right. One day. The last day. Open. For them. To ask. Any question. They want. I was astonished. In Thailand. It was. A jungle village. We were speaking to. First question. After a week. Of teaching. First question. Can you tell us. What is. The best way. To go to the next village. And preach the gospel. We hadn't said one word. About mission. We hadn't said one word.

[ 31 : 07 ] About evangelism. We hadn't said one word. About outreach. But that was in their heart. We can't keep this. To ourselves. We've got to spread this.

To the next village. What's the best way. To do it. That was God. Working in them. It wasn't us. We never mentioned a word. In fact. We felt rebuked. We hadn't mentioned anything. About evangelism. Malawi. It was. It astounded me. First question. First question. I found it amazing. How can we go. To Mozambique. And get that message over. Malawi is bordering Mozambique. And those. Full of Muslims. And oppressed. They wanted to go. And tell the next nation. To them. We'd never say it again. We never said a word. About evangelism. Or outreach. But that's the first thing. That came to them. But here it is.

[ 32 : 03 ] Here in the Bible. From you. Sounded forth. The gospel. And you're an. You're an example.

To the other. Big churches. Yes. You showed them. How to do outreach. The next verse. Nine. Another mark. They served. The living. And true. God. You see. You're saved. To serve. We're saved. To serve. Now. Are you like me? When I felt. It's funny. I used to think. The only way you can serve God. Is become a minister. I used to think like that. It's not true.

Do we need Christians. In society. I tell you. We do. You can serve God. In your work. How you do your work.

[ 33 : 00 ] Do we need. Christian. Politicians. To stand up. And tell the truth. Don't put spin in things. That's how you serve God. Telling the truth. Do we need. Christian lawyers. Who stand up. For the truth.

What do they do? They look for a loophole. In the law. They're more concerned. About furthering. Their career. They're more concerned. About getting. A guilty person. Off. Through a loophole. In the law. Listen. We need. Christians. In every sphere. Of society. Businessmen. Looking for a loophole.

In the law. To make money. To get one. Up. Over employees. We need. Christians. To tell the truth. Christians. To be honest.

[ 33 : 58 ] We need to serve. God. By. Keeping. Truth. And honour. And not. Being. A disgrace. It's significant.

The wording there. In verse 9. They were. Serving. Idols. Who can't. Who aren't. Alive. They were serving. Wood. And stone. God. But now. You're serving. The living. And true God.

A shape. And a stone. Doesn't make it. Living. Or true. Carve out. A shape. And wood. And bow down to it. Just doesn't.

It's not logical. But that's what they were doing. But now. They're serving. A God that's living. A God that's true. A God that can interact on your life.

[ 34 : 58 ] So when he saw that. He knew. It was chosen. By God. To serve him. Oh.

Right. One. Final thing. He ends. Verse 10. And to wait. For his son. From heaven. What do you do to wait?

Oh. You see. Buffers. You don't do anything. You don't do anything. Well. This is why I believe. In what they call. The verbal. And plenary. Inspiration.

Of scripture. It's not just the message. That's inspired by God. It's every word. The word. Translated. Word. Wait here.

I am told. And assured. By those who. Know the Greek. A lot better than I do. They tell us. There's a certain word used. There's a word. In Greek. That could be used.

[ 35 : 57 ] For waiting. But it's the kind. Of waiting. You do. When you're waiting. For the result. Of a biopsy report. Tension.

Oh. I'll not relax. Till Tuesday. I get that. Biopsy report. Is it negative. Or is it positive. Waiting. Tension. That is not.

The word. Paul uses here. For waiting. For his son. From heaven. Another word. In Greek. Could have been used.

It's a word. You'd use. For a prisoner. Once. He's found. Guilty. And he's waiting. For his sentence. The judge. Says something like.

I'm waiting. I'll sentence you. Once I get. Background reports. He's waiting. With. Forboding. He knows. It's going to be bad.

[ 36 : 57 ] But he doesn't know. Exactly. How bad. How are you waiting. For Christ's return. With tension.

Not knowing. Or are you waiting. Knowing perfectly well. And it's. It's sad. You hear people. I'll wait for them. I'll wait for them. My friend.

It's too late. It's too late then. Mercifully. The Holy Spirit. Prompted Paul.

To use the third word. He could have used. In Greek. For waiting. It's a word. You use. For a bride. Waiting. For her wedding day.

With excitement. Can't wait. The middle of my wedding. It's a word. It's a word. You'd use. For a prince. Waiting. Till he's crowned. King.

[ 37 : 57 ] That's the way. Christians. Are to wait. Are you waiting. With excitement. There's a.

Denomination. Of Christians. Which I'm told. Are full. Of. Of. Christ's return. And I'm told. Some of them. Are so enthusiastic.

That when they get up. In the morning. The first thing they do. Is go over to the window. And. Wind open the curtains. And look in the. Clouds. And say. I wonder.

Is he coming. Today. Do we wait. Like that. For his son. From heaven. He's coming back.

With glory. To. Pick up. To. Bring back. His. People. To glory. To heaven. Are you waiting.

[ 38 : 55 ] With excitement. Or are you waiting. Forboding. My last word. I go back.

The beginning. Every single one. In here. Has been. Chosen. By God. To hear.

The gospel. You've been. Chosen. By God. To hear. Today. That Christ. Offers you.

Instant. Complete. Final. Pardon. For all. Your sins. You've been. Chosen. To hear it.

That's the first step. Be sure. You believe. Be sure. You confess. Your sins.

[ 39 : 50 ] Be sure. You depend. Only. On Jesus. To take you. To take you to heaven. Have no other hope. But him. And we'll be able to say like Paul.

We. Know. You are. The God. Has. Loved of God. And chosen by God. To repent. And believe.

May God. The Holy Spirit. Make his word. Effectual. To every one of us. Let's bow our heads. Our. Father. In heaven.

Please. Take. The things. Of Christ. And make them ours. Unite us. To him. In a living. Saving. Faith. Keep us.

In your love. Keep us. In your fear. For we pray all. In Jesus name. And for Jesus. Sake. Alone. Amen.

[ 40 : 50 ] We conclude. Our service of worship. By singing. From Psalm 73. Verse 25. That is page.

3. 1. 6. In the Scottish altar. On your blue praise book. Page 3. 1. 6. It's verse. 25. Of Psalm 73.

Whom have I. In the heavens high. But thee. O Lord. Alone. And in the earth. Whom I desire. Besides thee.

There is none. To the last verse. But surely. It is good. For me. That I draw near. To God. In God. I trust.

That all thy works. I may declare. Abroad. Psalm 73. Verse 25. To the end. Psalm 74.

[ 41 : 48 ] Chorus 5. V ■■■■■ topics.illah.■. I falou noe. Why? In the heavens I will be, O Lord of all.

And in the earth through my desire, Besides thee there is none.

My pleasure, God, the pain that failed, The God that failed me ever.

For all my heart, Lord, is the strength And portion forever.

For though they not are far from thee, Forever perish thou, Than thou shalt, O Lord, from thee, O, Thou hast destroyed all.

[ 43 : 36 ] But surely it is good for me, That I run near to thine.

In God I trust, And all thy words, I may ye bear abroad.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, Now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen.