

“A Church to Rejoice Over” (Part 2)

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

May 12, 2024

This is a personal letter written to a specific congregation, and we should read it that way.

The world cannot see your salvation. It cannot hear God declare a person righteous. So, how will they know? They know by what they see. *“By their fruit you will know them,” (Matthew 7:21)*

Good works should be a natural outcome, the evidence of true salvation.

Labor looks at the effort expended, and the sacrifices made, to yield the work the work that is done

Endurance under difficulty. You have spiritual staying power. You overcome the trouble. You persevere. You continue.

We do not expect a world of comfort, and we are willing to endure whatever comes in this life because we look to the life which is ahead. That kind of enduring hope sustains the church through the long haul.

They had newness of life. They were “born again.” There was a dramatic change on the inside. They had become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

They were not without suffering. Yet, in the midst of the suffering they had “The joy of the Holy Spirit.”

They were an illustration of how a church of *fully devoted followers* should work. They showed others what it means to be like Christ.

Their behavior was so distinctly Christian; God-honoring and Christ-exalting. They were committed to living the truth to such a degree that others could follow their pattern.

Everywhere the people of this church went - into their homes, their workplaces, their schools their community...everywhere!...the message of the gospel went with them.

They did not weaken their convictions to the to the cultural norms around them as a flawed theory of evangelism.

They were waiting for Jesus Christ. They knew the end of history and they lived in the light of that hope.

We are not looking for a time of tribulation. We are not looking for the antichrist. And we do not live in fear.

Bottom line, we live in the light of eternity. We are to have an eternal perspective.

Why did Paul rejoice over this church?

- #1: They had faith that worked.
- #2: They labored (hard) in love.
- #3: They had hope that endured through trial and hardship.
- #4: They were fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.
- #5: They had the joy of the Holy Spirit.
- #6: They showed Christ-like behavior, meaning, they were different.
- #7: They had a strong witness.
- #8: They were loyal to the Word of God.
- #9: They greatly anticipated Christ’s return.

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