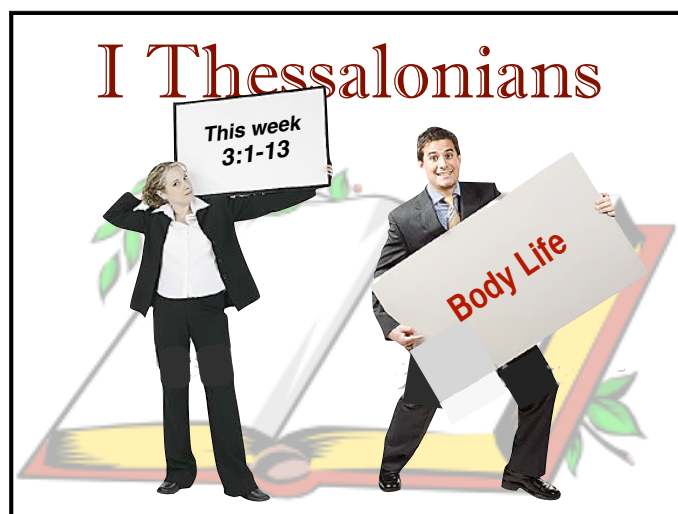




1



2

I Thessalonians

What marks a Disciple of Christ?

- ch. #1 - **Respect** for the Word & Way of the Cross.
- ch. #2 - **Response** to life's circumstances.
- ch. #3 - **Radiating** God's love and holiness.

What does it mean to be a part of the Body of Christ?

3

1 Thessalonians 3

"1 Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone; 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and **encourage you as to your faith**, 3 **so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions**; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. 4 For indeed **when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know**. 5 For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, **I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain**. 6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, 7 for this reason, brethren, **in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith**; 8 for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord. 9 For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account, 10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly **that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith**? 11 Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; 12 and **may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you**; 13 so that He may **establish your hearts unblamable in holiness** before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints."

4

An abbreviated Interpretive paraphrase

We made it clear to you that the Way of the Cross would include suffering for us and you. We are encouraged to know that you are not yielding to the temptation to follow both Jews and Gentiles, who find the Gospel of the Cross to be a stumbling block, and foolishness.

We need each other's help if we are to live lives that, are abundant and holy.

(Mutual support is an important function of the Body of Christ.)

5

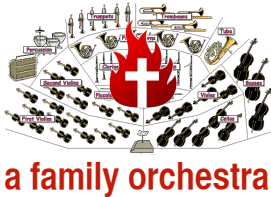
Levels of spiritual life

- The Indwelling Spirit in the Body of Christ
- Justification of all who are of the faith
- Image of God on all humans

6

The Indwelling Spirit in the Body of Christ

It is the **present incarnation of Christ's Spirit** through His disciples as a universal church of God's adopted, anointed, alien, ambassadors.



The church functions as the Body of Christ, when the members **put their best foot forward** without losing their balance or kicking their neighbors.

7

The Body of Christ is not:



- clones
of one template



- body parts
disconnected



- a class system
of values

Its diversity is designed to be **cultivated, celebrated & connected** as a unified spiritual family.

8

The Indwelling Spirit in the Body of Christ

How do we see the Body of Christ expressed in 1 Thess. 3

1. Shared dramatic experience (Cross of Christ)
2. Selfless empathy (humility & vulnerability)
3. Showing up to encourage & edify

Note that we may "show up" in several different ways.

9

Galatians 6:2

"Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."

The Love of God both comforts and controls us as we walk in the Word and Way of the Cross as the Body of Christ.

1 John 4

"10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (Word of the Cross).

11 **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (Way of the Cross)."**

10

love one another (John 13:35 - this command comes 16 times)
be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)
honour one another **above yourselves** (Romans 12:10)
live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)
be likeminded towards one another (Romans 15:5)
accept one another (Romans 15:7)
care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)
serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
bear one another's **burdens** (Galatians 6:2)
submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5)
look to the **interests** of one another (Philippians 2:4)
bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)
teach one another (Colossians 3:16)
comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13)
show hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9)
pray for one another (James 5:16)
confess our faults to one another (James 5:16)
build up one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
forgive one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)
be patient with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)
be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
consider others **better than yourselves** (Philippians 2:3)
stir up one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24)
clothe yourselves with humility towards one another (1 Peter 5:5)
speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19)
employ the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of one another (1 Peter 4:10)

The two greatest commands, on which, according to Jesus, all the others depend, are concerned with relationships, with God and one another.

(Matthew 22:36-40)

Ministering with and to one another is not a preparation for the main thing, it is the main thing.

11

Christianity is the only religion that celebrates the death of its founder,



and calls its participants to share His suffering, in this life.



12

We are called to know him through the sharing of his suffering.

Romans 8

"¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him** in order that we may also be glorified with Him. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

Philippians 3:10

"that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death;"

13

URGENT ALERT!

1 Peter 5:8

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."



Satan is everywhere seeking to misdirect our faith, hope, & love as he did **Eve in the garden (Gen.3)** and **Jesus in the wilderness (Matt.4)** so as to try to find "fullness of life" in this world's power, pleasure, popularity, and prosperity.

14

"Suffering" / "death" are God's visual aids leading us to the Word and Way of the cross of Christ.

They also can be Satan's opportunity to lead us away from the Word and Way of the Cross.

Satan's
"WARCHEST"
starts with the **Fall**,
focuses on our **Failure**,
and leads to his **Fix**.

Suffering
(Life is painful.)

Shame
(We are a mess.)

Skepticism
(Don't trust God)

Sedation
(Lots of painkillers.)



15

Abundant life via the "Way of the Cross" is something the world can't give or take away.

1 Corinthians 7

"²⁰ Let each man **remain in that condition in which he was called**. ²¹ Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. ²² For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brethren, **let each man remain with God in that {condition} in which he was called.**"

The Jews (under the Law of Moses) found this to be a "stumbling block".

The Gentiles (under natural law) found this to be "foolish".

16

When disciples of Jesus faced tribulation in life they prayed for Godly wisdom, not worldly wealth and escape.

James 1

"² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵ But **if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God**, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ **being double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.** ⁹ But the brother of **humble circumstances is to glory in his high position**; ¹⁰ and **the rich man is to glory in his humiliation**, because like flowering grass he will pass away."

17

Satan wants to encourage our faith, hope, and love,

only if he can control the subject and object of our faith, hope & love,

by shaping our eyesight & mindset, leading to our **Disillusionment**, & eventually our **Apostasy**.



18

Our FUNCTIONAL MESSIAH
is that which makes us feel alive
(serene, secure, significant, sociable)

When we seek life in all the wrong places



we mock Jesus and view him only as a
“FIGUREHEAD MESSIAH”.

19

Psalm 37:4

“Delight yourself in the Lord;
and He will give you the **desires of your heart.**”

What do we expect the Lord to do
in giving us the desire of our heart?

Answer prayers
to **CHANGE** our
circumstances.

Renew our mind to find
abundant life apart from
unchanged circumstances.

Romans 12:2



“And do **not be conformed to this**
world, but be **transformed by the**
renewing of your mind, that you may
prove what the will of God is, that which
is good and acceptable and perfect.”

20

Psalm 37:4

“Delight yourself in the Lord;
and He will give you the **desires of your heart.**”



21

As the Body of Christ we now have
the baton of the Kingdom.

We are an incarnation
of the Spirit
of Christ,



not the
spirit of this
broken world.



Our calling is to take it & run with it.

22

I Thessalonians

Next week
4:1-13

Holy
Passions

23