

A Body of Action

1 Thessalonians 1:5 – 10

I. Intro

- A. Mark VIDEO**
- B. Continuing messages on Discipleship, this year – the Church Prepared**
- C. In 1 Thessalonians – last week, being a church body/people of power and influence in our community**
- D. Today, a church body/people of action; mentioned few weeks ago the church is to be a living/breathing/active body, not one that's just surviving, or even dead**
- E. Tomorrow, memorial day – remembering those who paid ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms as Americans, AND even as Christians; we wouldn't be in here able to worship the Lord today if it wasn't for their sacrifice; lives would be whole lot different, church life would be a whole lot different if it was even allowed to exist**
- F. Patrick Henry quote (member of Continental Congress, first and sixth post-colonial Governor of Virginia – most famous quote, *Give me liberty or give me death*): *"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ."***
- G. Real/true life in an individual comes from presence of God's Spirit within them, and their life's power source is the power of the Gospel of Christ**
- H. The life of the church comes from presence of God's Spirit within it, and its power source is power of the Gospel of Christ**
- I. So, what can we see in these new believers in Thessalonica and the action they took in order to make an impact on their community and the world**
- J. READ 1 Thessalonians 1:5 – 10 – they were ...**

II. An Example [SLIDE]

- A. They lived out what they spoke about – faith/trust in Gospel of Christ for their salvation**
- B. They had believed the Word of God and followed it**
- C. They followed the example set by their leader – Paul; mainly, they lived as imitators of their Savior, Jesus Christ**
- D. Their example was noticed by all believers in Grecian regions of Macedonia and Achaia – and even beyond**
- E. They were examples even while dealing with affliction/persecution**
- F. The behavior/actions of believers in the body of Christ/the church should stand out as completely different than behavior/actions of those of the world**

G. The Lord has called us to be a holy people, set apart for His purposes

H. 2 Timothy 1:8–9 (ESV)

⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but **share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,**

⁹who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,

I. READ v. 8 – would that the same be said about this church, especially today in our community, state, and nation

J. Romans 8:28–29 (ESV)

²⁸And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he (**Christ**) might be the firstborn among many brothers. (**As believers in Christ, we are the many brothers and sisters (church) – we are to be the examples of Christ by which many other brothers and sisters are brought to salvation**)

K. We are to be the examples of Jesus to those beyond the walls of this church

III. Evangelistic [SLIDE]

A. Mentioned before few weeks ago that Thessalonica was a major port city; just off major Roman highway called Via Egnatia – thoroughfare connected Rome with its eastern provinces; today’s terms, just like a city just off an interstate

B. This new church of believers was placed in a very strategic location when it came to spreading the Gospel

C. Churches die, or become as good as dead, when they become self-centered and cease to be soul-winners

D. Last week – this church wasn’t established in this location to serve our own purposes; God placed FBC Mt. Vernon in Mt. Vernon to serve the purposes of God and this community – need for a Christ-exalting, Bible teaching church here

E. READ EXCERPT FROM CHURCH HISTORY

F. We exist today not because of work/dedication of some men, but because God worked through these men to place a Baptist church on this property that still exists today, 123 years later

G. The purpose for our existence, just like the existence of group of early new believers in Thessalonica, is to be evangelistic and work together to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Mt. Vernon, Ailey, Montgomery Co. and beyond

IV. Energetic [SLIDE]

- A. Before Paul came to them, shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them, these people were pagans, were idol worshipers**
- B. But the Gospel completely changed them, instead of worshiping idols they were now servants of God; talked about last week Thessalonians' works of faith and labor of love**
- C. That's what all of us were at one time – pagans, separated from any kind of relationship/fellowship with God our Creator because of sin; worshiped other “idols,” other things were more valuable, had greater priority in our lives than God – doesn't matter if you've been in the church your whole life – I know this from experience myself**
- D. Not only did the Thessalonians serve the Lord energetically, but they also served Him expectantly**
- E. Question: When we gather here on Sundays or Wednesdays, what do we expect the Lord to do, if anything?**
- F. Question: For VBS (opportunity we have to be examples of Christ, to be evangelistic, to serve energetically), what are we expecting the Lord to do, if anything? Are we as body of Christ looking forward to this opportunity or dreading it?**
- G. New Thessalonian believers were also looking forward to Christ coming back again; they lived each and every day waiting and hoping for this glorious event; but while they were waiting they never stopped working energetically for the sake of Christ and the Gospel**

V. Close

- A. Granted, not every church is like this early church in Thessalonica, every church is different; know don't like to compare ourselves to other churches**
- B. Some churches doing outstanding work for the kingdom of God; churches that are outwardly focused instead of inwardly focused, churches that place emphasis on missions and the spreading of the Gospel, churches that start other churches, churches that prioritize ministries that disciple/grow their people spiritually, those are the churches that other churches need to imitate**
- C. The character/reputation of any church is reflection of the behavior/action of its members**
- D. In order for the church to be a body of power and make an impact on it's community and world it has to be a living/breathing church body of action**