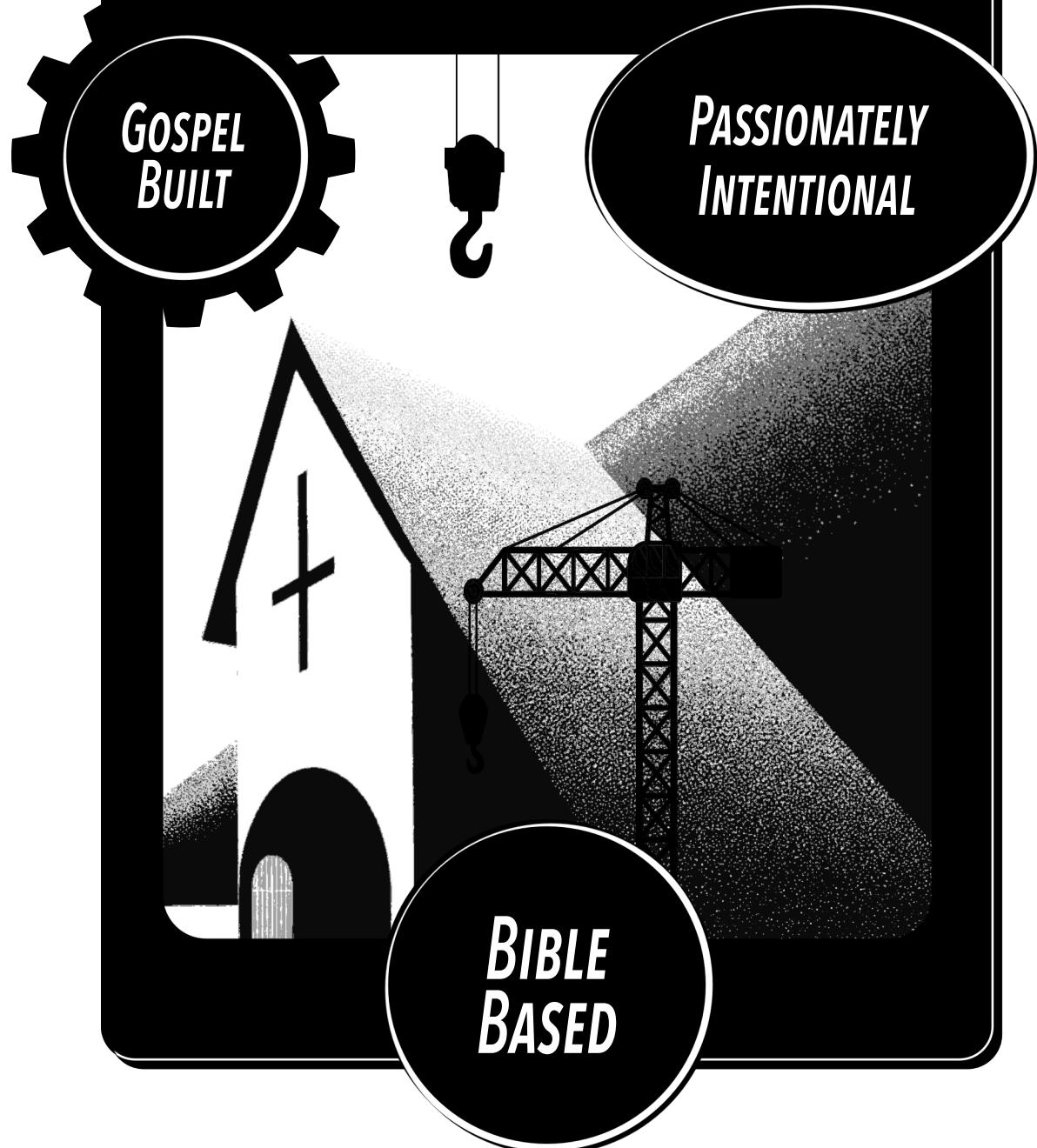


# THE CHURCH THE LORD BUILDS



1. The Lord began building this church based on the Scriptures and blessed the ongoing construction with his grace and peace, 1:1.

- (1 Thessalonians 1:1 ESV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

A. It is important to note that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were missionaries.

B. This is important because it demonstrates that the biblical approach for sharing the gospel is the same at home and abroad.

This church began on Paul's second missionary in the region of Macedonia in northern Greece when he taught in a synagogue for three Sabbath days.

- (Acts 17:1–2 ESV) Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, **they came to Thessalonica**, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, **and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures**.

C. The building of this church began with the Scriptures.

D. The church was blessed with the grace and peace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The church the Lord builds evokes deep, overflowing, thankfulness, 1:2.

- (1 Thessalonians 1:2 ESV) We **give thanks** to God **always** for **all of you**, **constantly** mentioning you in our prayers.

A. Paul, and the other human builders, were overflowing in their thanks to God for the work he was doing in this church.

B. They gave thanks to God always for all the people in the church in which God was working.

C. These people were constantly on their minds and in their prayers.

3. The church the Lord builds elicits high praise for its authenticity as displayed in the forever attributes of faith, love and hope, 1:3.

- (1 Thessalonians 1:3 ESV) Remembering before our God and Father your **work of faith** and **labor of love** and **steadfastness of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. **Work of faith:** They believed God and were doing his

work according to his will.

B. **Labor of love:** They loved God and worked hard to please God and to accomplish his will.

C. **Steadfastness of hope:** Standing in grace they rejoiced in the glory of God, rejoiced in their sufferings and became people who believed, endured, were dramatically changed and abounded in hope.

- (Romans 5:2–4 ESV) Through him we have also obtained access by faith into **this grace in which we stand**, and we **rejoice in hope of the glory of God**. 3 Not only that, but we **rejoice in our sufferings**, knowing that suffering produces **endurance**, 4 and endurance produces **character**, and character produces **hope**.
- (Romans 15:13 ESV) May the God of hope **fill you with all joy and peace in believing**, **so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope**.

4. The church the Lord builds is loved by God himself and is notable as being chosen by God, 1:4.

- (1 Thessalonians 1:4 ESV) For **we know**, brothers loved by God, **that he has chosen you**.

A. It was obvious to Paul that they were loved by God, that God was working in their lives and that God had chosen them.

B. It was obvious to the spiritually discerning that they had been called out from the idolatrous world of Thessalonica.

5. The church the Lord builds is distinct in its relationship to Paul's gospel, 1:5.

- (1 Thessalonians 1:5 ESV) ... **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 proved to be among you for your sake.

A. The church the Lord builds is distinct in how the gospel comes into the lives of the people.

1:5 Came ... *γίνομαι* [ginomai] – to become or enter or assume a certain state or condition; to become as in coming into existence, coming to come to pass; to arise, appear in history, come upon the stage.

B. Paul articulates four aspects of the presentation of the gospel in regard to the way it came into the lives of the Thessalonians.

- i. The gospel was presented to them **in word**.

- ii. The gospel was presented to them **in the Holy Spirit**.
- iii. The gospel was presented to them **in power**.
- iv. The gospel was presented to them **with full conviction**.

C. The gospel is to be brought into people's lives in a very specific way—in word, in the Holy Spirit, in power and with full conviction.

D. These four aspects of the presenter speak to the solemn passion for the word of the truth of the gospel and the loving devotion to Christ Jesus that are necessary for reverent, productive service.

E. These four aspects of the presentation also speak to the attitude and receptivity of the audience to the gospel which the Lord uses to build his church.

F. Approved builders are passionately attentive to the task at hand and to the uniqueness of the message.

- (2 Peter 1:19 ESV) **And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place**, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.
- (1 Peter 4:11a NIV) If anyone speaks, **they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God**.
- Hebrews 2:1 ESV) **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.**
- (Mark 4:24–25 NLT) Then he added, **"Pay close attention to what you hear.** The **closer** you listen, the **more** understanding you will be given—and you will **receive even more**. 25 **To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given.** But for those who are not listening, **even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.**"

6. The church the Lord builds has as its foundation **the exclusive saving word of truth** as revealed in the gospel that Paul preached—**our gospel**, 1:5.

- (1 Thessalonians 1:5 ESV) ... **because our gospel came to you** ...

A. **"Our gospel"** is not man's gospel but the gospel that Paul received from the Lord himself.

- (Galatians 1:11–12 ESV) For I would have you know, brothers, that **the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel**. 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, **but I received it through a**

**revelation of Jesus Christ.**

B. **"Our gospel"** is the gospel that Paul clearly and fully articulated and that Paul and the apostles preached.

- (1 Corinthians 15:1–4 ESV) Now I would remind you, brothers, of **the gospel I preached to you**, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, **if you hold fast to the word I preached to you**—unless you believed in vain. 3 **For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that** Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 **that** he was buried, **that** he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.
- (1 Corinthians 15:11 ESV) Whether then it was I or they **[the other apostles]**, so we preach and so you believed.

C. **"Our gospel"** is the gospel of God and the gospel of Christ as referred to in the Thessalonian letters.

- (1 Thessalonians 2:2, 8, 9 ESV) ... **the gospel of God** ...
- (1 Thessalonians 3:2 ESV) ... **the gospel of Christ** ...

D. Paul's gospel forewarns of the coming judgment.

- (Romans 2:16 ESV) ... **on that day when, according to my gospel**, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.
- (2 Thessalonians 1:8 ESV) ... **in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God** and **on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**

E. Paul's gospel was used according to the command of the eternal God to bring about the obedience of faith.

- (Romans 16:25a–26b ESV) Now to him who is able to strengthen you **according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ ... according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith.**
- (1 John 3:23 ESV) **And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ** and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

F. We must be passionately intentional in our devotion to the content **and** the presentation of the one true gospel if we are to honor our Lord.

- (Galatians 1:6–8 ESV) **I am astonished** that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ **and are**

turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

**G. SUMMARY:** "Our gospel" is the only word of truth that saves.

- (Ephesians 1:13 ESV) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.
- (Acts 4:12 ESV) And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
- (1 Timothy 2:5 ESV) For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

**7. The church the Lord builds cultivates and maintains a spiritual environment of people who imitate the words and behavior of the Lord and his faithful followers, 1:6-8.**

- (1 Thessalonians 1:6–8 ESV) And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 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 not say anything.

A. They became imitators of the men who came to them with the gospel in holding fast to and proclaiming the gospel with the same passion and careful attention.

B. They received the word in much affliction and with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

C. They themselves became examples of how to receive and share the gospel.

**8. The church the Lord builds receives the authoritative teaching of the apostles and turns from idols and consciously waits for Jesus to return, 1:9-10.**

- (1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 ESV) 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, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

- A. They became known for how they received the word of God as delivered by Paul, Silvanus and Timothy.
- B. They became known for not only turning to God from idols ... but turning from idols to serve the living God.
- C. They became known as those who live with a conscious awareness and a joyful expectation of the day of Jesus' return from heaven.

**Conclusion:** Being ready for the day of Jesus' return involves much more than wishful thinking ...

**The day of Jesus' return is not what many believe it to be ...**

Many religious pretenders hope for the return of Jesus but will be shocked and terrified "on that day" when they learn the truth of their relationship to him and instead of deliverance face his wrath ...

- (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8 ESV) ... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

**Old TESTAMENT EXAMPLE ... Amos warns of misconceptions regarding the day of the Lord ...**

- (Amos 5:18, 20–21 NLT) What sorrow awaits you who say, "If only the day of the Lord were here!" You have no idea what you are wishing for. That day will bring darkness, not light. ... 20 Yes, the day of the Lord will be dark and hopeless, without a ray of joy or hope. 21 I hate all your show and pretense—the hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies.

**New TESTAMENT EXAMPLE ... Jesus warns of misconceptions regarding "that day" ...**

- (Matthew 7:22–23 ESV) On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'