

Can the Church Grow in This Very Unchristian Society?

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Intro:

1. When your society is dumping tempting immoral values at you from every side - can you survive?
2. We are so few & seem so insignificant - it seems like everyone is against our values.
3. Can we as a church or you as an individual make any kind of a spiritual impact on our world?
4. You can make a spiritual impact by continually showing off the Lord in your life within your sphere of influence.
5. Here are some ways our church can make a big spiritual difference!

I. v2-3 - Present to the World a Transformed Life

A. Your genuine Christian life is the most impressive Bible most people will see!

1. ILL: "Telling or Showing".

2. Most don't read the Bible because it's too intimidating - but they will notice a difference in your life.

B. **1 Cor 13:13** - And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. Your best witness is exhibiting these attributes in your life!

1. **v3** - Show the gospel message by your faith expressed through your work.

a. **Work** (ἐργον) = a deed, action, physical labor, employment.

b. Faith is best seen through actions. **Jam 2:17** - faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

c. In fact, faith needs deeds to make it real. **Jam 2:26** - As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

2. **v3** - Show the gospel message by your love expressed through your labor.

a. **Labor** (κόπος) = hard work, laborious toil, exhaustion or pain as a result of hard work.

b. Love & pain often go together. ILL: **Giving birth & nightly feedings.**

c. Have you ever exhausted yourself doing something for someone you love?

3. **v3** - Show the gospel message by your hope expressed through your endurance.

a. **Endurance** (ὑπομονή) = lit. to remain under, so to endure, be patient.

b. Hope is waiting patiently for the Lord to come again to take us home.

c. So - whatever cross you have to bear you can do it because of your hope. There will be an end & you will come out a winner!

II. v4-7 - Present to the World a Genuine Gratitude

A. **v4** - You were loved & chosen.

1. God loved you even when you were a dirty rotten sinner.

a. **Rom 5:6-8** - You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

b. **Jn 3:16-17** - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

2. God chose you when Lord Jesus died on the cross for you!

B. **v5** - You were presented the gospel message in both word & deed!

C. **v6** - You responded to the gospel message invitation & were saved!

1. As a saved person you began to imitate the Lord's character.

2. Responding to the Lord involves reading His word and following the godly example of other more mature Christians.

D. v7 - Your life was transformed.

1. Rom 12:2 - Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.
2. Salvation implies a transformed life. ILL: The Earl & the Fiji Chief.

III. v8-10 - Present to the World a Verbal Witness

A. There is no substitute for the verbal witness!

1. Witnessing is genuinely living the Christian life.
2. Witnessing is involvement in the church, her worship & ministries.
3. Witnessing is giving sacrificially to the church & the needy.
4. But, primarily - witnessing is sharing the gospel message with others!
 - a. Witnessing is telling to others the good news announcement: the story of the life, death, burial, resurrection & appearances of the Lord (I Cor 15:1-6).
 - b. Witness includes introducing others to a loving Savior.
 - c. Witnessing is sharing your life: what you have seen, heard & experienced.
 - d. Witnessing is showing others from God's word how to become a Christian.
3. People want good news!

B. v8 - So - ring it out with enthusiasm!

1. Ring out (ἐξηχέω) = sound forth like a trumpet, thunder out.
2. Rom 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.
3. The Great Commission says to ring it out wherever you go! (Matt 28:19-20).
 - a. Ring it out prayerfully - as you ask the Lord to send laborers to the field.
 - b. Ring it out financially - as you support missions & evangelistic outreach.
 - c. Ring it out in your life - as you allow the Lord to shine in it.
 - d. Ring it out verbally - as you share the good news of a resurrected Lord Who loves them.

This church can impact our world spiritually
as each of you live your transformed lives before it
& not be ashamed of the gospel & it's power!