

A Chosen People – 1 Thessalonians 1

Is there hope for the world today? The answer is _____!

The hope of the world is the Church! Matthew 5:14

But what if the Church has lost its purpose? Matthew 5:13

Is there hope for the Church today? The answer is _____!

The hope of the Church is the world! Matthew 9:37

Jesus also said, ***"I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also..."*** – John 10:16 As long as there is a harvest there is hope for the church!

Hope for the Church is found in rediscovering its need to bring hope to this world!

The Church is a chosen people, called by God to represent Him in this world, so that the world might come to know Him, receive Him and follow Him!

The problem w/ the Israelites was that they lost sight of this! It became more about their status as God's chosen, instead of what God had chosen them to do

This is why 1 Thessalonians is so helpful for us today. The Apostle Paul had planted a church, a people, in the city of Thessalonica for this very purpose!

And it was happening, and I believe it can happen today as well, with us!

It wasn't easy, there will always be those who will want to stop the purposes of God from coming to fruition! Some of which will come from within the Church.

Paul, Silas & Timothy were run out of town & a forced penalty tax was given in hopes that their message, their Christ, would be removed along w/ them!

But Christ is not bound, the gospel cannot be silenced, and the presence & purpose of the Church will not be removed from this world until Christ returns!

God had chosen a people to be His presence in Thessalonica! And God has chosen us, the people of BRC, to be His presence here in Brunswick as well.

This letter from the Apostle Paul to the Church in Thessalonica starts with affirmation that they were living into that which they were chosen for!

It was evident that the gospel was not only heard, but received w/ power!

Lives were changed! People turned from their idols & began to serve the true & living God - Vs. 9. This is what Holy Spirit power on display looks like!

It was the Holy Spirit who brought conviction, hope, and joy into their lives! In this letter, Paul gives credit where credit is due! But what was the effect?

A group of people whose "work of faith", "labor of love", and "steadfast hope in the Lord Jesus Christ" was remembered & on display for all to see!

The Thessalonian Christians had a faith that worked, a love that labored for others & a hope that was secured in the promise of Christ's return!

Can the same be said of the Christians of Brunswick Reformed Church?

- The faith is not just a belief system, it's a life to be lived out among others!

- Love is not just lips service, it's an action! It labors for the good of others!

- Hope is not just wishful thinking, it is a deep-rooted assurance in the promises of God!

The Thessalonian Christians got it! They understood what they were chosen for, & they were living in light of Christ's coming, His first & second coming!

- Jesus' first coming made this new life of faith, hope & love possible!

- Jesus' second coming will bring all things under His good & eternal reign!

Vs. 7-8 tell us that their example impacted people far beyond their city limits, that their actions spoke louder than even the Apostle Paul's words could have!

You've heard the phrase, ***"Share the gospel, and if necessary use words!"***

This was what the church in Thessalonica was all about! What about us?

What if we started to live out of the belief that the Church is here for the world & not for itself? How would it change how we "Do church?"

- How would our worship services look and sound different?
- How would our Bible studies & small groups look & function differently?
- How would our ministries & outreach strive to reach that target audience?

It starts with a few people, chosen by God, stepping out to be the hope this world needs! The Thessalonian church was serving that purpose! Are we?

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