

1 Thessalonians 1

by Robert F. Adcock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God's word and having assurance of salvation, and warns against the dangers of doubt and uncertainty.

Duration: 37:33

Scripture: Romans 6:1, Titus 2:1

Topics: "Salvation Grace", "Second Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of the word of God and how it has spread throughout different regions. He highlights the transformation that occurs when individuals turn away from idols and serve the living God. The speaker also mentions the importance of waiting for the return of Jesus and how he delivered believers from the wrath to come. The sermon concludes with a prayer for spiritual enlightenment and a reminder of the grace of God in saving sinners.

Transcript

I'd like, of course, this morning to look in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 1, and we'll read from verse 5, For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that ye were an example to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God is spread abroad, so that we need not to seek anything.

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come. And shall we bow again before the Lord and pray? O gracious Heavenly Father, we bow in thy presence this day in this place, and indeed we sense the privilege that is ours to be assembled together in this place, and to be aware that you have afforded us these very pleasant circumstances. There are many that lie upon hospital beds, there are many that are confined to homes, and there are many that live in this world without any true spiritual light in their souls.

We pray thee this day that you will take thy word and take thy servant in hand, and indeed may there be enlightenment in this place for each of our hearts, souls, and minds, spiritual enrichment for each one of us. And grant, we pray thee, that the person of Jesus Christ our Lord, that he shall be seen in all of his

glory, not only as Savior and Lord, but in that exalted place at your right hand in the heavens. And may there be a sense in which we are aware that any moment that he might burst upon this scene and receive unto himself all of those that have by faith accepted him as personal Savior.

This we ask again, giving thanks in our Savior's name. Amen. In the course of sometimes speaking to individuals as well as groups of individuals, if you ask the question, are you saved? Do you know that your sins are forgiven and you're on your way to heaven? You get some varied response to that question.

There are just a lot of people that profess to be Christians that still say, I sure hope so. I hope that my sins are forgiven, and I hope and I pray that one day I'll go to heaven. Well, you know, that saddens me when an individual that says, I have personally received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, and still they insist upon saying, I hope that I'm saved.

That's contrary to the word of God. That's not consistent with this book the Bible has to say. I know that I've heard some that I thought it was with a sense of a false humility that they would say, well, I really wouldn't go that far.

I'm a very humble person, and I think you're being presumptuous when you say that you know you're saved, you know your sins are forgiven, you know that you're on your way to heaven. You're bragging. Well, I only want to go as just as far as God wants me to go in reading and understanding the word of God.

I don't want to go beyond what God says in his word, but believe me, as we look at this idea and concept of the assurance of salvation in the word of God this morning, I trust that you'll be fair enough to see when we finish that indeed we have not gone beyond what God tells us in his word. When we insist, God wants us to know without any shadow of doubt that when a man receives Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, his sins are forgiven, and he is eternally saved, and he is on his way to heaven. The apostle Paul was a man that believed that he had the message that indeed was the answer to the problem of this sin question in the life of every individual that lived on the face of the earth.

He believed that the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ was the power of God and the salvation for everyone that believed it. The man believed that message. The apostle Paul believed and taught that that man's sins were forgiven, that man was eternally saved, and that man could say with assurance, I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

He knew the value of the work of Jesus Christ and what it meant to God. What the Lord Jesus did meant infinitely more to God than perhaps any of us have ever been able to understand. God with assurance would tell us, you can know that you have eternal life.

You can know that your sins are forgiven. There's some interesting things that you discover when you look at the passage that we've just read. The apostle Paul preached the gospel wherever he went, and when he went to Thessalonica, he preached the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the church there.

It wasn't only in just words. Words are knife. They convey thought, but you've got to go beyond that.

So often, just rhetoric is not enough. The words have got to be the right words, and those words have got to be empowered by the wonderful Spirit of God. It's God's power behind His word that is indeed infallible.

Men's words are ever so fallible, often filled with error, often filled with misconception, often even filled with lies and deceit. But the word of God, it is true, and we can trust it. Its authority should never be questioned, and when I read that as a result of preaching that message of the gospel in the power of the Spirit of God, we read that there was much assurance.

Note those words. There was much assurance among those believers there, among those that had believed the message, that they had believed the right message, and that the word of God could be received with full satisfaction, that it would do everything that it had promised it could do. Because the word of God presents to us a person, and that person is the wonderful Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, and salvation is found in that person.

And, therefore, when a person receives Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, all of the benefits that flow from the throne of God into the soul of that individual, those benefits are so great they are almost innumerable, but I can assure you that in the word of God it promises that sins are forgiven. All of our sin is taken care of in the shed blood of Christ. Once we come and, as poor, feeble sinners, we cast ourselves upon the mercy of God and receive the value of the sacrifice that was made upon Calvary, sin is settled there.

The penalty of our sin is forever blotted out, and, praise God, the promise that he makes to us, you are now a child of the living God. Will you, pray, tell me why someone that has said that he has believed that message, that he's accepted that person, Jesus Christ, would ever say in answer to that question, are you saved? Do you know that you're on your way to heaven? They would respond and say, I hope so. Now, I'll tell you, that's pretty serious when you think about it.

You're saying, in a sense, that what God has said is not true, or at least you can't accept it as being true. You're saying, in a sense, God doesn't mean what he says, and that's serious business. God expects us to believe his word.

Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. God doesn't mention words. God doesn't say any meaningless words.

God says what he means, and indeed a very literal interpretation of the word of God is something that we need a lot of today. There's too much that is clouded in theological jargon that sometimes blinds men's eyes, and actually instead of making the word of God clear and simple as the spirit of God would have it to be, so often it actually creates confusion within the hearts and the minds of men and women. I think that this subject is one that we're probably not even aware of the scope of how many people there are in the world today that profess to be Christians that are not sure that they're saved.

I don't know what that does to you, but in talking with people, and I discover that they're hoping so. They say they're Christian. They say that they are resting upon the finished work that Christ did upon the cross, and they're hoping that they're saved.

I think you'd be startled if you knew how many people fall in that category. I'll tell you, the salvation that we have in the person of Christ, the assurance that comes with it as the spirit of God deals with us, it takes those doubts away, and all of this is based upon the authority of God's word. Not my opinion, not the opinion of some other man, not some doctrine, not some theological position that someone has adopted.

This is what the pure, unadulterated word of God teaches, and would have us to believe. I think one of the things that I discover that is so serious about this is that that attitude, in a sense, discredits the finished work of Jesus Christ. Now, the Lord said upon the cross it is finished, and he meant that everything that God was going to do to save a soul, it was finished there upon that cross.

God is not going to do anything else to save your soul in my house. Everything that he was ever going to do was done upon Calvary's cross, and it was so adequate, it was so sufficient, it was so satisfying to God that his righteous demand concerning the punishment of sin could be so perfectly fulfilled in the death of the sinless sacrifice of God's Son, the Lamb of God that could take away the sin of the world. And here is some poor sinner stumbling along and says that he believes the message of the gospel, he believes that what Christ did upon the cross was for his sin, and he accepts that, and he turns right around and then responds, Are you a Christian? Are you saved? Do you know your sins are forgiven? And he responds and says, I sure hope so.

That's a discredit to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's a slap in the face for the one that died upon that cross and said it is finished, because he did everything that is necessary, everything that is adequate to save and to keep saved eternally, the soul of the one that will entrust into his care the eternal destiny of our souls. The Apostle Paul believed this with all of his heart, and everywhere he went and he preached the gospel, he taught that.

Christ saves and he keeps you saved for all eternity. When I read a verse like 1 Corinthians 118, and it reminds us that the preaching of the gospel is to them that are perishing, it's foolishness. Now, I can understand that.

I can relate to that. I remember there was a time in my life experience, and perhaps you remember a time in your life experience when the gospel didn't mean anything to you. In fact, you could hear it and you heard about these things, and to you it was just foolishness.

It was just a lot of talk. What I can't understand is that the latter part of that verse tells us but that those that believe that message, the true believer, to him that is the power of God and the salvation. Now, man professes to be a Christian.

He says he's a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says that the gospel is the power of God and the salvation, and then you ask him, or you say, I hope so. I hope so.

You see, there's something inconsistent about the whole thing. I'll tell you what it is. It's not a matter of you not having confidence in yourself.

It's your weakness that is revealed by what you're saying is you can't trust God. You don't trust God. You don't believe what he says.

That's what you're doing. You're saying God doesn't mean what he says, and after all you can't really trust those things literally. You're going too far.

Well, I'll tell you what. There are a whole lot of things that we believe in this life, and we'd be insulted. For instance, that some of those dear people that I've seen stand right in this place right down here, and they've exchanged those vows, and they've said, yes, I will, and I do, and all the rest, and if they were leaving that door out there, and you would walk up to them and say, I am the presence of the other one, the man and the woman.

Well, how do you feel now? You're married. You belong to each other. How is it? And perhaps the bride would turn to the groom and say, well, I hope we are.

I hope we're married. Or the bridegroom might look down, I hope she's mine. I hope she is.

Well, you know, that would be an insult, wouldn't it? All that had been said here was just a sham, something vain and empty, had no meaning. An individual that had just made promises, taken vows before the Lord, and they go away and say, I hope I'm married. You know, well, you know just how silly that sounds.

Why is it that people can't see what a silly thing they're doing when they hear the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the promise of eternal life, the gift of eternal life, the forgiveness of sin? You say, do you know your sins are forgiven? I sure hope so. I sure hope so. I'm doing the very best I can.

Well, the best you can do is not good enough for God. And anyone that depends upon their own righteous acts to take them to heaven, the word of God comes down like a hammer upon it and smashes it to pieces and says, all of your righteousness, your self-righteous acts are as filthy rags in the presence of God. Let's face it, we can't save ourselves.

Let's face it, only Jesus Christ can save our souls. Let's face it, God has given us a message. It's the message of the gospel, and we've got to believe it.

We've got to accept it, and when we do, God wants us to stand up and with authority say, I know that I'm saved and on my way to heaven. And I'm not being presumptuous, and I'm not boasting. I'm just doing what God expects me to do, to have sense enough to believe and accept by faith what His word has to say, and with assurance I can go out and be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

How could a man possibly witness to someone else about salvation, the forgiveness of sin, and he himself is so reluctant to say, I don't know whether I'm saved or not, but I want to share this with you? It wouldn't be very convincing, would it? But when we take the word of God in hand, it's with assurance that we share the message of the gospel. Paul, in speaking to Titus in chapter 2 of that little book, tells us that the true believer should be fully assured before God that he has been saved from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin over his life, and ultimately he will be saved from the very presence of sin. The Apostle Paul believed that with all of his heart.

He told Titus to preach it and teach it. Now, I've heard this question raised, that the assurance of God's salvation receives that it tends to lead to careless and indifferent attitudes about sin. Well, the Apostle Paul, in the sixth of Romans, said, God forbid that such an attitude or even a thought come into your mind.

A man that is saved by the grace of God, that realizes that God has done something for him he doesn't deserve to have done for him. God has loved him, and God has given his son for the salvation of our souls. And you mean to tell me when a man sees and understands what Jesus Christ did for him upon the cross of Calvary, that in a sense it prompts him to have an indifferent attitude towards sin? The Apostle Paul could quite perish the thought.

How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer in it? And when there's that realization that in God's reckoning I died upon Calvary's cross with the Son of God, two people died upon that cross, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, and the poor sinner me, and you, and all the others in this world that will by faith accept the value of what he did there. The receiving of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior

transforms a poor sinner from his position as dead and trespasses in sin into that wonderful state of eternal divine life that comes through the person of God's Son, the Lord Jesus. Dead and trespasses in sin, lifeless, with no response to God, no understanding of God, and yet the Spirit of God divinely comes and speaks to our hearts through the wonderful Word of God, and tells us about that lovely person, Jesus Christ, and how much he loved us, and all that he did to save us.

We're born again into the family of God. We're liberated and set free. We begin to live in a whole new dimension, a spiritual dimension.

We become children of God. We're in the family of God. You know, the deeper you go into this and the fuller you realize just what you have as a Christian.

You would never dare say again, someone said, are you saved? Are you on your way to heaven? You say, praise God, I know I'm saved. Praise the Lord, I know my sins are forgiven. They're under the precious shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Did you deserve that? No, I didn't deserve it. It took the wonderful grace of God to make it available to me. He did something for me that I didn't deserve.

He gave me a gift that I couldn't afford, that priceless gift of eternal life that's found in Christ. So, there are some people that would deduce that if you say, I'm saved and I'm on my way to heaven, that you will just start living in an indifferent and careless way, because you're saved. And you say, so what? I'm going to heaven.

I'll do what I want to do. That does create some confusion, doesn't it? I'd like you to be reminded of this. There are a lot of people that profess to be Christians, but they're really not possessors of the personal trust.

Anybody can say something with his lips. A lot of people can say, yes, I'm a Christian. You've got to find out what they mean when they say that.

They may mean that they just joined a church. They may mean that, well, I've been baptized. They may mean that I take holy communion.

They may mean a lot of things short of receiving the person of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and I believe that's where the trouble begins. There are no too many people in the world today that are professors. Professors, they profess to be something that they have never really experienced within their souls, because I believe if a professing Christian persists in the practice of sin, he needs to read a passage like 1 John chapter 3. He needs to read it one time, he needs to read it two times, he needs to read it again, and again, and again, and again.

I'm going to read it for you right now. This is 1 John chapter 3. For someone that takes sin lightly as a part of his life, that professes to be a Christian, I want you to listen very carefully to these verses. Verse 7, Little children, let no man deceive you.

He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committed sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. If you look in the note of your Schofield Bible, if you have one, I hope you do, it says not practice sin. For his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. That seems like, to me, that's a pretty sure way to tell if a man that professes to be a Christian is really a Christian or not.

Does his manner of life, does he practice sin day by day and seem to be absolutely oblivious to any thought of conviction about the way he lives? Well, what we've read right now says that a Christian, a man that's been born again into the family of God, a man that has received Christ as his Savior, that man that has had that divine transfusion of new life in Christ, that man is not going to practice sin day by day in his life. And, the writer of Hebrews says, the Christian that sins can look for the chastening of the Lord. Now, a man goes on day after day, month after month, year after year, indifferent to what God says in his words about the claims of Christ and how he should live godly, how lives should be lived godly, godlike in Christ Jesus, and God doesn't chasten him, I don't believe he's in the family of God.

I believe that he's just one of those professors without really possessing that divine life that we're talking about. If your profession of Jesus Christ is your Savior, if it didn't produce a change in your life, your style of living, there's something wrong. You say you got saved, and two weeks later you were still going to those old places you used to go, you were still enjoying all those things you used to enjoy.

And, I'm not trying to suggest all of this negative thought about things in this world, what you can do and what you can't do, but listen, there are a lot of things that when you become a participant in it, it deceives of what's in your heart. And, if you still love all the things that are in this world, and a man, if he loves the world, he is not the friend of God. And, I'm talking about a world system that has rebelled against God and his authority, a world that rejected and crucified the Lord of glory.

And, you're going to be a friend of that world, and you're going to claim Christian liberty. Well, I can do what I want to. Yes, brother, you can.

You can. I have no testimony, but I'm questioning whether there is a true experience in knowing Jesus Christ when a man can do all the things that he used to do. Conscience doesn't bother him, and he's living in his world.

It reminds me of a passage in James that the dog has returned to his vine, and the sow has returned, and the pig has returned to her mud hole. And, I'll tell you what, reformation in a life, if it's encouraged in a religious way, and someone is made to believe that that was always necessary, just clean up your act a little bit and join the church and that sort of thing, doesn't really change the heart of the individual. He still has that strong urge and longing within his soul to again be a participant in all of those things that dishonor the Lord.

We have babies in that nursery about every Sunday, and I've seen them in there, just little babies. And, you know, those babies, they express themselves, and it's hard to keep them quiet sometimes. They cry.

They express themselves in the only way that they know to express themselves, and if a man becomes a child of God, if there is divine life in that soul of yours, it's going to express itself. I've heard so much about secret discipleship. I'm a believer, but I'm a quiet, submissive, secret believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's hard for me to believe. Just like that baby, you can't keep that life quiet. That thing is breathing, it's pulsating with life, and it's going to cry out.

Men and women that say they've had that experience of being born again into the family of God, and yet there's never the evidence of life, divine life. Apostle Paul says when a man becomes a believer, he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things pass away.

Behold, all things become new. We're living in that new dimension that God has provided for us. We're in the family of God, and if what you profess is salvation, if it hasn't changed your conduct, your manner of life, you could have some pretty serious thoughts about how vain and empty that profession of faith in Christ really is.

Has Christ changed your life? If he hasn't, there's just a good chance he's not in your life, and what you may have done, you may have had an intellectual understanding of the gospel, but you haven't received Christ. I remember a preacher on the radio one time, riding down the road, and he said, really there's not but about 18 inches between a man going to heaven and going to hell. About 18 inches.

I thought for a moment, I really didn't know what he was talking about. He said, yes, and he'd been talking about a head knowledge of salvation. There are so many things that you can believe in your mind that you never act upon, or you may give mental assent to the fact that is true, but believe me, from this part up here where we're supposed to have some mental capacity down to right along here is about 18 inches, and it's within the heart of the individual that this business of salvation and that transaction takes place.

All that we assimilate here in our minds concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ and God's provision for salvation, it has to one day leave the mind and take hold of the innermost part of our being referred to as the heart of man, and it has to be believed. And there may be a whole lot of people in this world, and the understanding of the gospel that they have is right up here in this gray matter, and it's never gone down into this heart. It's never been accepted, never been able to unreservedly cast ourselves without any reservation upon the authority of the word of God and believe that method.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That's God's word. For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that's not of yourselves.

It is a gift of God. Salvation is a gift. Everlasting life comes to the individual that believes in his heart the message of the gospel.

If someone asks you this morning at this very moment, and I'm going to ask you, are you saying, what's your answer? You say, I hope so. Are you saying, well, I'm not sure. I wouldn't go so far as to say that.

Well, then you don't believe the word of God, because the word of God is so crystal clear on this matter of salvation. When God says something, he means it, and when God offers us a gift, he's not an Indian giver. He values the finished work of his son upon the cross so much that at the very moment you say, yes, I want the value of what Jesus Christ did upon that cross to be put to my account.

When you accept and believe that, God forgives you of all your sins. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses from all sins. The penalty of your sin and everything about it and everything that's associated with it is put into the sea of God's forgetfulness.

Your problem may simply stem from this one thing. You don't believe God's word. You see, you'd rather speculate about it, and you'd rather go on raising these theological questions.

I just don't think it's right to say with such authority that you know that you're saved and your sins are forgiven and you're on your way to heaven. But when I say that, I'm only saying what the word of God has to say. That's what it says.

You want to really know that you're saved and on your way to heaven this morning? Very simple. Believe God's word. Believe the word of God.

Someone says, how do you know you're saved? The word of God says I'm saved. I didn't say it. God said it, and I believe my God.

Does that clear it up for you? I hope so. Just believe the word of God. There might be someone here, and you're not sure that you're saved, and you have some of those serious doubts.

We've got just a few moments. We're going to sing just a couple of verses of a hymn, and softly and tenderly, Jesus is called. And while he calls you, while he seeks to get a response from your heart, you come and receive Christ.

You believe God's word. Step out of that condition of spiritual death into life in Christ. You can do it this morning simply by receiving the Savior.

Shall we sing just a couple of verses? I believe it's number 365, fellas. Softly and tenderly, Jesus is called.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7867.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/robert-f-adcock/1-thessalonians-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net