

LESSON 4

TURNING TO GOD

I THESSALONIANS 1:9-10

WAITING FOR JESUS MESSAGE: FOUR

Meet a group of people who really loved the Lord.

They were absolute pagans, they turned from all that they knew to God.

Listen as we read the entire chapter:

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, 4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. 8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. 9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to 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, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

The Apostle Paul is celebrating the new life Christ brings to all who come to Him. No less than 10 times he points out freshness of this

new life in Christ. Let me just trace them across the pages of this letter.

They had **A NEW PLAN IN LIFE**: Walk worthy of God [2.12]

They had **A NEW AUTHORITY IN LIFE**: Take God at His Word [2.13]

They had **A NEW MEASURING STICK IN LIFE**: Measure all by Christ's coming [2.19-20]

They had **A NEW PERSPECTIVE IN LIFE**: Accept suffering from God [3.3-4]

They had **A NEW RESOURCE IN LIFE**: Abound in love [3.12]

They had **A NEW APPETITE IN LIFE**: Stay pure [4.3]

They had **A NEW LIFESTYLE**: Be quiet, Mind own business, Work [4.11]

They had **A NEW OCCUPATION IN LIFE - MINISTRY** : Comfort one another [4.18]; Edify one another [5.11]

They had **A NEW HABIT IN LIFE**: Rejoice always [5.16]

They had **A NEW AWARENESS IN LIFE - CONTACT WITH GOD**: Pray always [5.17]; Be thankful [5.18]

THE FULLNESS OF TIME

What kind of world did they live in? Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (KJV). In God's estimation it was the fullness of times. This meant:

GLOBAL LANGUAGE Koine

GLOBAL TRANSPORTATION Roman Roads

GLOBAL LAW AND PEACE Pax Romana

GLOBAL RELIGION Pantheon

GLOBAL CULTURE Games

A NEW WAY OF LIFE CITIZEN OF HEAVEN OR EARTHDWELLERS?

They had A NEW ORIENTATION: 1 Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves shew 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; (KJV) The lost person has an entirely different orientation than we do.

EARTH-DWELLERS:

Earth-dwellers live for their **APPETITES** Philippians 3:19a Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. (NIV).

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Page 2

Earth-dwellers lived for their **APPEARANCE** Philippians 3:19a and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. (NIV). Earth-dwellers live for their **ADDRESS** Philippians 3:19c Their mind is on earthly things. (NIV). Did you know that in the book of Revelation the word the Holy Spirit uses to describe lost people most often is "earth-dwellers", people who only live for the here and now?

CITIZENS OF HEAVEN: What would this communicate to these saints? Citizens of Rome were little fragments of Roman society.

They:

- Spoke the language
- Wore the dress
- Observed the customs
- Bore the titles
- Kept the laws

Thus, a clear concept came to the mind. Now, they were to use that concept to know how to live in the world. "Romans were stubbornly and unalterably Roman - never dreaming of being assimilated into the people around them." Acts 16:20-21.

How do we live in the world as citizens of Heaven? What is it?

Our language changes

SPEAK TO YOUR SELF SPIRITUAL WORDS Ephesians 5:19

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; (KJV)

SPEAK TO OTHERS TRUTHFUL WORDS Ephesians 4:15 But

speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (KJV)

SPEAK TO NO-ONE EVIL WORDS Ephesians 4:31 Let all

bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (KJV)

SPEAK TO ALL HEALTHY WORDS Titus 2:1 But speak thou the

things which become sound doctrine: (KJV)

They had **A NEW DIRECTION IN LIFE:** First Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves shew 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; (KJV) Psalm 17:14 From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. (KJV)

WORLDLINESS: The Bible¹ defines worldliness by centering morality where we intuitively know it should be. Worldliness is the lust of the flesh (a passion for sensual satisfaction), the lust of the eyes (an inordinate desire for the finer things of life), and the pride of life (self-satisfaction in who we are, what we have, and what we have done).

Worldliness, then, is a preoccupation with ease and affluence.

Worldliness elevates creature comforts to the point of idolatry;

Worldliness wants a large salary;

Worldliness believes a comfortable life style has become a necessity of life.

Worldliness is reading magazines about people who live pleasure-seeking (hedonistic) lives and spend too much money on themselves and wanting to be like them.

But more importantly, worldliness is simply pride and selfishness in disguise.

Worldliness is being resentful when someone snubs us or patronizes us or shows off.

Worldliness means smarting under every slight, challenging every word spoken against us, cringing when another is preferred before us.

Worldliness is harboring grudges, nursing grievances, and wallowing in self-pity.

These are the ways in which we are most like the world."

WORLDLINESS IS A SIGN OF LOSTNESS 1 John 2:15-17 "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever." (NASB)

LOVE NOT a preoccupation with ease and affluence.

LOVE NOT the elevated creature comforts to the point of idolatry;

LOVE NOT a large salary;

LOVE NOT a comfortable life style that has become a necessity of life.

LOVE NOT reading magazines about people who live pleasure seeking (hedonistic) lives and spends too much money on themselves and wanting to be like them.

LOVE NOT pride and selfishness in disguise.

LOVE NOT being resentful when someone snubs us or patronizes us or shows off.

¹ Dave Roper, The Strength of a Man, RBC, p. 95.

LOVE NOT smarting under every slight, challenging every word
spoken against us, cringing when another is preferred before us.