

***Cover to Cover: From Genesis to Maps***  
**Sermon # 52 – “I Thessalonians”**  
**April 26, 2009**

***I Thessalonians: Some Background Information***

**The Audience:** The Apostle Paul was writing to the young believers that made up the church at Thessalonica. Although Paul had planted that church, it seems the he may have actually spent as little as three weeks in the city of Thessalonica (Acts 17:2).

**The Date of the Letter:** Paul wrote I Thessalonians in AD 50-51, during his stay in Corinth. With the possible exception of Galatians, I Thessalonians is the earliest letter of the Apostle Paul.

**The Purposes of the Letter:** Paul wrote this epistle: (1) To commend the Thessalonians for their faith and their love, and to encourage them to continue in it; (2) To encourage them, in the face of bereavement and persecution, to have hope in the return of Christ; (3) To warn them against immorality and laziness in view of Christ’s coming; (4) To defend his own character, which was under attack by his opponents.

**The Theme of the Letter:** Hope in Christ.

***I Thessalonians: An Outline***

**1. Paul remembers the church at Thessalonica. 1:1-10**

- They had a solid foundation. 1:3
  - Work produced by faith
  - Labor prompted by love
  - Endurance inspired by hope
- They had a spiritual beginning. 1:4-6
- They had a strong reputation. 1:7-10

**2. Paul remembers his ministry in Thessalonica. 2:1-16**

- The purity of Paul’s motives. 2:1-6a
- The purity of Paul’s conduct. 2:6b-12

- The receptivity of the Thessalonians. 2:13-16

### 3. Paul responds to the church's need. 2:17-3:13.

- Paul's original plans are thwarted. 2:17-20
- Paul sends them a helper. 3:1-10.
  - Timothy's mission. 3:1-5
  - Timothy's report. 3:6-10
    - There is indeed a need. v. 10
    - The specific need is implied. v. 6 (hope)
- Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians. 3:11-13

### 4. Paul readies the church for the future. Chapters 4-5

- Grow in your pursuit of holy living, especially sexual purity. 4:1-8
- Increase in your practice of brotherly love. 4:9-10
- Seek to live a responsible and productive life. 4:11-12
- Be prepared for the coming of the Lord.
  - Be aware of what that day will be like. 4:13-18
    - The righteous dead will not miss out on Christ's return.
    - At the return of Christ, there will be both a resurrection and a reunion.
  - Be attuned to the suddenness of that day. 5:1-11. (Note v. 8)
  - Be prepared for that day by living in a continual state of readiness. 5:12-28.