The Thessalonian Church Acts 17; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Nearly every Christian has heard of “those noble Bereans” from all the invitations and sermons encouraging brethren to act like them. However, we seldom study about a distinctly different set of people just up the road who attacked the brand new believers and drove Paul, Silas and Timothy out of town (Acts 17:1-10).

The prosperous free city of Thessalonica had a large synagogue of Jews which had an influence on a large number of Greek citizens as well. Acts called them “God-fearing Greeks” (17:4). When Paul and his boys arrived they immediately went to the synagogue to preach Jesus as their long desired Messiah (17:2-3). Only a few of the Jews became believers, but many of the “God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women” turned to Jesus and were saved (17:4).

This infuriated the unbelieving Jews who were Driven to Jealousy instead of joy, Driven to Mob Violence, and Driven to relentless pursuit (17:5-8, 13). They were the ungodly ignoble men against whom those noble Bereans made such a sharp contrast.

Despite their worst efforts the gospel came to Thessalonica and a sound noble church was established. Which we know because they received two very special letters that were filled with praises for the brethren and only a few minor corrections.

In the introductory verses (1:1-5) we learn three very important facts about the church that are of significant value to every faithful Christian and congregation.

First we learn that the church was founded by Paul, Silas and Timothy. While Timothy and Silas are important servants among the early churches, they are secondary to Paul who was called directly by Christ and given the work and authority of an apostle (Acts 9:1-15; 22:1-21; 26:1-23). They were believers in Christ because they had heard and believed in Jesus as the promised one and been baptized into fellowship with Him.

Second, we learn the church was found in God. Their fellowship was located “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1), and “in the Holy Spirit” (1:5) showing for all the world who will see the triune nature of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is beyond me to explain so I can only note it and recommend we accept it by faith.

Third, we learn the Thessalonian church was found working diligently. It thrilled Paul to mention these brethren in his prayers for their “work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and father” (1:3).

That begs several important questions we must ask about ourselves and the Lilac Road church of Christ. Are we founded by the apostles teaching or the doctrines of men? Are we found firmly connected to God? Are we busy in the work of faith, labor of love, and steadfastness of hope?