"The Blessing of Encouragement"
1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

C.I.T.—Paul encourages the Thessalonians by letting them know why he is thankful for them.
C.I.S.—We should encourage others by letting them know why we are thankful for them.
Purpose—I want to develop an atmosphere of encouragement in our church.
Introduction—Know someone that makes you feel better about yourself? Worse?—Don't we want to be around those that encourage instead of discourage.

I. ***Encourage through Fellowship***. Vs. 1-2
   a. **Acts 17:1-10**—effective, troubled, short visit
   b. Paul, Silas, and Timothy
      i. One of the few times that Paul did not expound upon who they were.
      ii. He didn't need to emphasize anything about himself.
   c. Church of the Thessalonians in God
      i. Ekklesia—called out ones
         1. Used in Greek culture for a gathering, typically democratic gathering of citizens for decisions
         2. Jesus used it in Caesarea Philipi, 'Upon this rock, I will build my church"
      ii. In God
         1. Up until the time of the church, the Jewish people were in God.
         2. But now, the church, made up on Jew and Gentile believers, were
   d. Grace to you and peace
      i. Grace is the extension of God's favor
      ii. Peace is the result of that grace in our lives
   e. Give thanks—mentioning in prayers constantly
   f. Paul was reconnecting relationally and the mere presence of this letter and the fellowship that it represented would be encouragement.
   g. Illus.—Excited to get mail
   h. Application
      i. When we intentionally go out of our way to connect and develop a relationship, it serves to encourage others.
      ii. Our church should be about growing relationally with others.
      iii. This it the beauty of our Sunday School classes, growing relationally in the Lord.
      iv. That cannot help but encourage.

II. ***Encouraged through Fruit*** vs. 3
   a. Remembering/recall
      i. Recollecting and bringing up this content
      ii. Before God—refers to bringing this up to God in prayer
      iii. This participle serves to modify the prayers in what brings them on
   b. Your work of faith
      i. Work is a general term referring to duties or tasks
      ii. Faith refers to believe/trust/believing faith
      iii. Preposition reveals that this work stems from faith, not work to obtain faith.
      iv. **Eph. 2:8-9**—Saved by grace through faith
      v. **James 2:17-18**—Faith w/o works is dead.
   c. Your labor of love
      i. Labor—strenuous energy and effort, not the task itself, but the energy put into it.
      ii. Love—agape—sacrificial love for Christ, from Christ, and for others

iii. The love that we have received from Christ overflows to work for others.

d. Endurance of hope
   i. This endurance is the steadfast resolve in trying times.
   ii. Used in this context, it refers to faithfulness in seeing it through, especially in the midst of persecution and difficulty
   iii. That hope is in Jesus Christ and His return.
e. These are all fruit of salvation and repentance: faith, hope, and love.
f. Illus.—Storms came through, and our DR teams went to work on people's houses
g. Application
   i. There is not doubt that the reason for this type of labor and service was out of the overflow of what Jesus did for us.
   ii. This is the fruit of salvation and repentance and His work in our lives.
   iii. This fruit serves to encourage others.

III. ***Encouraged through Faith*** vs. 4-5

a. Having known
   i. This knowledge came by experience, they discerned and understood.
   ii. This served as the evidence for their reason to rejoice.
b. Brothers, beloved of God, your election
   i. Brothers—used as a term for the saved people
   ii. Beloved of God—term used in the Old Testament for the nation of Israel, but now the member of the church are included in those whom God loves—not as an object of his love—he loves the whole world, but in relationship
   iii. Election
      1. Chosen unto salvation
      2. We are elected for salvation collectively in Christ.
c. Proof of this election
   i. Paul and the missionaries evangelized.
   ii. Word alone=just words with no impact
   iii. In power—dynamite—used of miracles
   iv. In Holy Spirit—power of the Holy Spirit
   v. In full assurance—complete conviction
   vi. Could refer to Paul's preaching style.
   vii. But how would he know it was powerful?
   viii. The only way to know if the Spirit was working is if there was a response.
   ix. Therefore, based on their response to the missionaries' preaching, Paul could say that it was with power and the Holy Spirit.
d. Those who accepted Christ revealed that they belonged to the elect, the beloved of God, and the family of God.
e. Illus.—Testimony services
f. Application
   i. I am uncertain when I share the gospel
   ii. Did they really mean it? Get it?
   iii. When that faith is confirmed, it is extremely encouraging.
   iv. When we hear what God has done in others, doesn't it move your heart?
   v. Do you know what else encourages me and our church, when someone comes forward during the invitation.

Conclusion

- I don't know about you, but I want to be someone that is always encouraging.

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- Genuine fellowship, fruit, and faith will encourage me to follow Jesus more closely.
- It should also encourage you to accept Christ if you have not.
- Gospel invitation.