

Theme: Knowing who we are as God's holy, chosen people shapes how we live — joyfully receiving His Word, turning from false gods, faithfully proclaiming His Gospel, and eagerly waiting for His Son from heaven.

## I. How Marines Form Their Identity

- A. The Corps constantly recounts its history to Marines to shape their identity.
- B. Trip to the National Museum of the Marine Corps
- C. Story of a young Medal of Honor Winner
- D. “I didn’t know I had a choice; I just did what I was told a Marine would do!”
- E. Paul wants the Thessalonians to know their identity as God’s holy, chosen people and what that means.

## II. Identity: A Holy Chosen People

- A. A holy people are loved, chosen, and set apart by God  
For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup> because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. 1 Thess 1:4–5
  1. The Thessalonians were loved and chosen by God
  2. Paul says the same thing in 2 Thessalonians  
But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.  
<sup>14</sup>To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
  3. This is the fulfillment of God’s election of Israel

It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup> but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Deuteronomy 7:7–8

4. The basic meaning of the word ‘holy’ is to be separate and distinct, to be set apart.
  5. We are holy, not because we love God but because He first loved us, not because we chose Christ but because God chose us.
- B. God’s holy, chosen people believe the Gospel through the powerful work of the Spirit  
For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup> because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. 1 Thessalonians 1:4–5
    1. Paul can’t see divine election, but rather its results
    2. He knows they are loved by God and chosen because the Spirit worked powerfully in them through the Gospel.
    3. When the Word was proclaimed to them, it was not mere words, but the Spirit powerfully worked to draw them to God.
    4. Paul says the same thing to the Corinthians  
My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

- a. Paul did not trust in his eloquence or wisdom, but in the power of the Spirit.
  - b. This led to believers who did not trust in Paul or human ability but rather in God!
5. This was not an empty proclamation, but the powerful Word used by the Holy Spirit to draw them.

C. God's holy, chosen people joyfully receive the Gospel  
 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for [you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit](#), 1 Thessalonians 1:6

1. The Thessalonians joyfully embraced the Gospel
2. This joyful embrace of the Word of God is the same as that of Jesus and the apostles!
3. They received the Gospel with joy despite affliction
  - a. When Jesus and the apostles obeyed the Word of the Lord, it brought them into conflict with the world.
  - b. The same was true for the Thessalonians (Acts 17)!
  - c. Those who receive God's Word with joy will inevitably find themselves out of step with the world and will often experience pressure and even persecution to abandon the Word and embrace the lies of the age.
  - d. But when God's Spirit is at work, even persecution can not stop the reception of the Gospel!
  - e. The Gospel brings joy to those who believe, despite persecution, because we know we are loved and chosen by God!

D. God's holy, chosen people turn from idolatry  
 For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and [how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God](#), (v9)

1. God's holy people turn from idols to the true God

2. Jesus is the living and true God in contrast to idols that are dead and false.
3. This is a reference to Jeremiah 10, where the chosen people were called away from idols to the true and living God.

But [the LORD is the true God; he is the living God](#) and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation. Jeremiah 10:10

- a. Same language - the living and true God.
  - b. 1 Thess. 1:10 also speaks of God's coming wrath.
  - c. The Thessalonians - even the Gentiles who were formerly idolaters - were now God's holy, chosen people through faith.
4. The essence of holiness is turning from the false gods of our age and embracing the True, Living God by faith - no matter the cost!
  5. As we will see in future weeks, this will lead to conduct that is distinct from the impure and immoral conduct of the world, but that is the fruit, not the root, of being set apart by God through the Gospel.

### III. Outgrowth: A Holy Mission

A. The Thessalonians had a mission to model true holiness  
 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup> [so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia](#). 1 Thess 1:6-7

1. Their joyful reception of the Gospel, even in affliction, was a model for others to follow.
2. Their rejection of the false idols of the age and embrace of God and His Word was a model for others to follow.

3. They had followed Jesus and the apostles - and now others should follow them!
4. As those who have responded to the call of the Gospel, believers are an encouraging model for other believers and those whom the Spirit is now calling.

B. The Thessalonians sent forth the word to other people and places

For not only has [the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia](#), but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. 1 Thessalonians 1:8

1. God's Word was ringing forth from Thessalonica
2. Although they were new to the faith, small in number, and suffering persecution, they were taking God's Word forth!
3. They were taking the Word locally (Macedonia) and far away (Achaia - Athens and Corinth)
4. As the Word went forth, so did word of their faith!

C. A holy people have been set apart for mission - to send forth God's Word to other people and places. God's holy people are blessed to be a blessing!

#### IV. Holy Waiting: Sustained By Hope

A. God's holy, chosen people are sustained by hope

For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> [and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come](#). 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

1. The Thessalonians were a people of hope, looking forward to the return of Christ.
2. Their hope was in Jesus, raised from the dead!
3. They were imitators of Jesus (v6) in holding to God and His Word even under suffering, and if they follow Him in suffering, they also follow Him in glory!
4. The final day will be one of wrath for those who refuse God & the Gospel, but one of deliverance for all who embrace God & His Gospel by faith!
5. A holy people look forward and long for the day when Christ returns, when evil is vanquished, and faith is rewarded.

B. Holy Waiting: eternal hope is central to our identity and sustains us until Christ returns

remembering before our God and Father your [work of faith](#) and [labor of love](#) and [steadfastness of hope](#) in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 ESV

We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and [your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ](#). 1 Thess 1:3 (NIV)

1. As we saw last week, faith, love, and hope are the root, and work, labor, and steadfastness/endurance are the fruit.
2. The fruit of our hope in Christ and His certain return in the future is steadfast endurance in our lives now, even in the face of persecution or difficulty.
3. A holy people are sustained & inspired by our hope in the return of Jesus Christ to complete God's plan.

4. Our hope in the triumphant return of Jesus inspires us to live for Him now, no matter the consequences.
5. No one should be more hopeful than God's people - for we know Who rules, how the story will end, and the glorious life that awaits us!

## V. Applying the Word

### A. Do I understand my true identity?

1. Identity is powerful, shaping our understanding of reality and our behavior.
2. We live in an age that offers us identities based on ethnicity, sex, political party, or nation.
3. This month, many are proclaiming "pride" in their sexual identity and behavior.
4. These are all modern idols, clamoring for our worship so they can shape us into their image.
5. As Christians, our identity is found in Christ as God's holy, loved, and chosen people.
6. Is my identity rooted in Christ, or something else?
7. Daily remind yourself that you are loved and chosen by God - that is your identity and what defines you!

### B. Does our eternal hope sustain me?

1. God's people should be people of hope.
2. But our hope is not anchored in the things of this age, but in God's reign and the return of Christ.
3. This world clamors for our focus and hope to be in it rather than in eternity! ("So heavenly-minded...")

4. If we are truly "heavenly-minded," we will be of great earthly good - for it sustains us in mission!
5. Do I believe and look forward to the consummation of all things at the return of Christ?
6. Does this hope inspire & fuel me for mission now?
7. Let our eternal identity and hope shape the way we live now!

### C. The Table of Holy Waiting

1. This Table reminds us we are loved and chosen
2. This Table reminds us of our future hope
3. This Table strengthens us to live as God's holy, chosen people
4. Titus 2:11-14

## A Holy, Chosen People

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10 ESV

June 7, 2026

Communion

Psalms 128:5-6

Teaching keywords: Election; holiness; idolatry and false gods; evangelism and missions; eschatology; second coming; hope; endurance

May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem, <sup>6</sup> and may you live to see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel. Psalms 128:5-6