



Valley Forge Baptist
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What are the Biblical Marks of a Healthy Church? **I Thessalonians 1:1-3**

Jesus Christ threw the “Proverbial Rock” in the lake and the ripples have impacted the shores of the world for 2,000 years.

Population of Christianity

100 AD	30,000
200 AD	200,000
300 AD	6 million
400 AD	10 million
500 AD	15 million
600 AD	30 million
2026 AD	930 million - Sage Journals - journals.sagepub.com

The early church turned the world

_____!

There are no perfect churches. Even the first church that Jesus started was not perfect. The people in that church family messed up, made mistakes, and said dumb things. They had to deal with lying, racism, neglect of widows, and persecution. The Jerusalem church was not a perfect church, but they were a healthy church. They turned on the spiritual light in a dark world and thousands came to Christ in those early years.

Jesus planted a church on July 29, 1984, and He threw a rock in the pond of a small town called King of Prussia. And only He knew on that day how many lives were going to be affected by the ripples of this brand new church family.

Paul's Compliment to the Thessalonian Christians

Their work of faith - Their salvation.

Their labor of love - Their service and evangelism.

Their patience of hope - Their anticipation of Christ's return.

In 1860 Charles Spurgeon was asked, "What are the qualities of a healthy church?" His answer:

1. Purity of life
2. Sound doctrine
3. _____
4. Service - devoted to good works
5. _____

What are the Biblical Marks of a Healthy Church?

1. A _____ Church, v. 5

Of the 350,000 churches in America, more than half are filled with people who are not even saved. They have a religion, but not a relationship with Christ.

America is now the fourth largest unchurched country in the world followed only by China, India, and Indonesia. When you drive out the front entrance, please let the sign motivate you to share your faith with others...

You are now entering

the _____

Of 195 countries in the world, we live on the 4th largest mission field. Surveys show that of unchurched adult Americans, 63% of Americans said they were open to being invited to church by a friend or relative.

v. 5a - What is the Gospel? The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The ONLY way to heaven, I Cor. 15:3-4

This message came four ways, v. 5:

In Word – preaching and evangelism.

In power – salvation changes lives.

In the Holy Spirit – He convicts, saves, and seals.

In assurance – we do not live with fear or worry or stress, because we know we are heaven bound.

Satan's goals are very specific:

1. _____ the church with unbelievers.
2. _____ the Christians from their main mission.

Don't get distracted. Keep your eyes on Jesus, not me, not others. Keep your eyes on Jesus. When you spend more time talking about other people and their faults than you do about Jesus, you have become distracted. It's time to refocus...

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."
Heb. 12:2

2. A _____ Church, v. 6a

A. They became followers of Paul, v. 6a

"Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ."
1 Cor. 11:1

The word follower is the word for "mimic." Paul says, "I have tried to be a role model for you." God wants us to be unique and different. Being like Christ does not diminish your individuality, it improves it. The more you are like Christ, the more beautiful you become.

B. They became followers of Christ, v. 6b

Spurgeon said, "Remember my son, it is not great ideas that God blesses, it is not great talent that He honors, it is great likeness to Jesus Christ." Jesus is our example of a surrendered life.

What does a surrendered life look like?

Two qualities:

1. _____
2. _____

Are you surrendered to God? To His Will? As you face trials at home, at work, at school, at church... when you have difficult days with your health, that is a great time to surrender your will to God.

Sometimes when we pray, God changes our circumstances.

Sometimes when we pray, God changes us – our attitude in our circumstances.

3. A _____ Church, v.6b

In Acts 17 the enemies of Christ "assaulted or attacked the house of Jason." What was their charge? These are the men who have "turned the world upside down."

4. A _____ Church, v. 7-9

- A. *These Christians were Examples all over Greece, v. 7.
What kind of Christian Example are you?*

"What you do speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"A good example has twice the power of good advice."

- B. *These Christians sounded out the word of the Lord all over Greece, v. 8a.*

They sounded out the Gospel. The word means to echo.

5. A Second _____ Church, v. 9b-10

- A. *They were waiting for Jesus to return, v. 10a. Wait. Who likes to wait? But notice how they waited, v. 9b-10...*

"ye turned to God from idols" Past

"to serve the living and true God." Present

"and to wait for His Son." Future

Waiting is serving. The word for serving is the word for bond slave. They were once enslaved to dead idols, but now they are free to joyfully serve the living God.

- B. *These rejoiced in their deliverance, v. 10b*

1. They were delivered from the coming tribulation.

2. They were delivered from the eternal wrath of God.

Lessons from the World Cup

1. Give every ounce of effort, and then give some more.

2. Be a _____ Player – we never win by ourselves.

3. We play for our God and our team.

4. We share the _____.

5. The Judgment Seat of Christ is so much more important than the World Cup.

Christian, when you remember that you are going to spend eternity in heaven and not in the Lake of Fire, you can have a good day, even in difficult times and you can give your all to Christ every day.