

Series: Marks of a Healthy Church
Sermon #5: Conversion
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

March 10, 2024
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“Conversion is turning from our self-serving, self-trusting sin to trusting only in Christ to reconcile us to God.” —Mark Dever

Sermon Aim:

To have a correct, biblically-informed understanding of conversion as a church family. To be convinced that true conversion always has a noticeable and ongoing impact in the life of every Christian.

Sermon Outline:

1. The fruit of true conversion: faith, love and hope (vv. 2-3)

“Every Christian without exception is a believer, a lover and hoper.” —John Stott

2. The root of true conversion: divine election (vv.4-5a)

What God did ‘behind the scenes’—in eternity past—is being played out in real time in history. Your conversion to Christ is a testimony to God’s sovereign grace in salvation; this is how God creates the church. And when we understand how all the pieces of the puzzle in our conversion go back to God’s election, He gets all the praise!

3. The lifestyle pattern of true converts: ‘Copycats’ who produce more ‘copycats’ (vv.5b-7)

The Thessalonians are not only following Jesus but they’re also helping other Christians follow him. Their faith, love and hope, their patience under trials, their joy in the Spirit... all of this and much more is now being passed on to more churches.

Gospel + Conversion = Discipleship

4. The reputation of true converts (vv.8-9a)

True conversion propels us towards evangelism!

Ordinary means (evangelism) by an ordinary church to communicate an extraordinary gospel with the full weight and authority of God Himself (it is the word of the Lord)... that's always going to leave a mark!

5. The heart of true conversion: repentance and saving faith... and an eager expectation (vv.9b-10)

Why is repentance essential in true conversion? Because Jesus is not simply an add-on to the comfortable lives we possess.

The three tenses of true conversion:

- 1) Past tense: once and for all forsaking our idols and treasuring Jesus above all things.
- 2) Present tense: serving God as the practical outcome of the gospel is seen in our lives.
- 3) Future tense: living everyday with watchful expectation for the second coming of Jesus.

Recommended Resources to Go Deeper:

Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health (Donald Whitney)

Conversion: How God Creates a People (Michael Lawrence)

Convert: From Adam to Christ (Emilio Ramos)

From Death to Life: How Salvation Works (Allen S. Nelson IV)

A New Birth (J.C. Ryle)