

Blueprints for a Victorious Christian Life

I. Slide#1 **Announce:**

- A. **Slide#2 Shalom Almog, Coral Travel & Tours:** Shalom has had over 40 years experience in the Israel Tourism Industry. *More importantly is a friend.*

II. Slide#3 **Intro:**

- A. **Title:** *Blueprints for a Victorious Christian Life*

1. *Blueprints* are a plan for building something. No extra's. No fluff, just exact details.
2. As an electrician, I needed to know not only the **elec plans**, but I also needed to know how they coincided with everything else.
3. A good builder must know the plans & simply determine to follow its exact details.
4. Paul gives us the *Blueprints for a Victorious Christian Life*. *Blueprints for being Fully Alive*.

- B. **John Powell** describes in his book *Fully Human, Fully Alive* "Fully alive people are not necessarily happy all the time. No they experience failure as well as success. They are open to both pain & pleasure. They have many questions & some answers. They cry & they laugh. They dream & they hope. The only thing that remains alien to their experience of life is **passivity & apathy**. They say a strong "yes" to **life** & a resounding "**amen**" to **love**. They feel the strong stings of growing, but their sleeves are always rolled up, their minds are whirring, & their hearts are ablaze." [That sounds like the church members at Thessalonica]

III. Slide#4 **INTRODUCTION (1)**

- A. **The City** – Thessalonica = *Thessalos+Nike*; lit. *Thessalian Victory*.

1. The name of the city came from the name of a **princess**, *Thessalonike of Macedon*. So named because of her birth on the day of the **Macedonian victory** at the Battle of Crocus Field (353/352 BC). (Alex the Great's ½ sister)
2. **Slide#5 Inscription, To Queen Thessalonike, (Daughter) of Philip** (Alex the Great's ½ sis)
3. In Roman times **population** was over 200,000 in Thes.
4. It was the **largest city** in Macedonia, & the **capital** of its province.
5. It was located at **2 major trade routes**.

- B. **Slide#6,7 Today** – it is called *Thessaloniki*, & is a bustling center of northern Greece. **1 of the few N.T. cities still flourishing.**

1. An ancient gate thru which the apostle entered the city is **still standing**. It spanned the famous Egnatian Way.

- C. **Date** - This was written shortly after Paul visited Thes on his 2nd missionary journey (Acts 17).

1. Paul preached 3 Sabbaths there, then a big mob scene made them flee by night to Berea.

2. He writes from prob from Corinth. Known as 1 of his earliest letters (ad 51).

D. **Theme** – Last Days, Coming Judgments.

E. **Purpose** – Strengthen the Thes. believers. - **Give them assurance of Christ's Return.**

F. (1) **Silvanus** = Silas, prob Roman surname. (He took Barnabus place at the famous split)

1. **The 3 names** – Though Paul stands out as the main author, all 3 help in the authorship of this epistle.

G. **Grace** – **Paul** uses **twice as much** as all the N.T. authors. [known as Paul's **watch word**]

1. **Grace** - points **to God** as the Source of the highest good.

2. **Peace** - refers **to man** as the recipient of divine favor.

IV. Slide#8 **FAITH, LOVE, HOPE (2-4)**

A. Here is again Paul's **3 ingredients to the Christian Life**:

1. **Slide#9 Faith** rests on the **Past**; **Love** acts in the **Present**; **Hope** looks to the **Future**.

B. **Slide#10a Work of Faith** – We learn a lot about someone on **how** they work. (Barclay)

1. Some work in **fear of the whip**; some for **hope of gain**; some in **sense of duty**; & others are **inspired by faith**.

2. **Faith?** - Faith that **your work** has been **given & entrusted to you** by God, & that you are specifically working **for Him**.

3. Someone said, "The sign of true consecration is when a man can find **Glory in drudgery**."

C. **Slide#10b Labor of Love** –

1. The **storks** are so strong in their affection for their young, they are not afraid even to die for them. There have been instances of forest fires, in which they flew to and fro, with **water in their beaks**, to save their nests upon the burning houses. It once happened at Delft in Holland, that, finding it impossible to preserve their brood, they placed themselves upon the nest, spread over them their wings, and so perished with them in the flames. (That, is a **labor of love**)

2. Someone once asked Susanna Wesley which one of her 11 children she loved the most. She wisely replied, "I love the one who's **sick until he's well**, and the one who's **away until he comes home**."

D. **Slide#10c Patience of Hope** – Always in the Christian context Hope has **an air of certainty** about it.

1. When **Alex. the Great** was setting out on his campaigns, he divided all his possessions among his friends. Someone said, "**but you are keeping nothing for yourself**." "O yes I am," he said, "I have kept my **hopes**."

2. A man can endure anything so long as he has **hope**, **for then** he is *not* walking to the night, **but** to the Dawn.

- E. (4) **Beloved** - Everything starts with Gods **love** for us. Rom.5:8 **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**
- F. **Election** - Believer, God has chosen **you**...take comfort in those words.
1. **How do I know I've been chosen?** - **Here's a few things to look at:**
 - a) Are you **drawn** towards God? Jn.6:44 **No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.**
 - b) Do you have a **desire** for God? Ps.42:1,2a **As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.**
 - c) Do you have a **desire** for His Word? 1 Pet.2:2 **as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word.**
 - d) Do you long to be **different**? (vs.9 *turned*)

V. Slide#11 **THE 4-WHEEL DRIVE GOSPEL (5)**

- A. *Gospel signifies good, merry, glad, and joyful tidings, that makes a mans heart glad, and makes him sing, dance, and leap for joy.* William Tyndale
- B. **Slide#12a In Word** – The scriptures were preached, truth was declared there, says **Acts 17:1-10**.
1. **Acts 17:1-10** - **reasoned**(2); **explained**(3); **demonstrated**(3); **all**(vs.3); **persuaded**(4); **not persuaded**(4).
 2. **“The gospel is neither a discussion nor a debate. It is an announcement.”** Paul Rees
- C. **Slide#12b In Power** – Real, compelling, gripping, & changing power.
1. They **changed**, they were different (9).
 - a) **“The glory of the gospel is that when the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it.”** D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
 2. **Compelling** – because it is not mere *legend or myth*.
- D. **Slide#12c In the Holy Spirit** – Behind the power...was **God Himself**.
1. The H.S. touches the human spirit. He ministers to our deepest needs. He fills us. He ministers to our minds & our hearts from within.
- E. **Slide#12d In Assurance** – **“full assurance, conviction, confidence”** Lightfoot
1. **It moved the wills of the Thessalonians: They acted; They did** something about it; **They yielded** their lives to God.
 2. **“The gospel is not made to dominate the world(i.e. crusades). It's the grain of sand that upsets the world's machinery. One can't inhale its fragrance and be content to leave everything the way it is.”** Jean Sullivan

VI. Slide#13 **THE 4-WHEEL DRIVE GOSPEL, LIVED OUT (6-10)**

- A. **Slide#14** You became **Followers**(6)...you became **Examples**(7)...you became **Missionaries**(8)
...you became/were **Changed**(9).

- B. (8) Their faith was *sounding out* like a Trumpet.
1. **Sounded forth** - Can also mean, **crashing out like a roll of thunder**.
 2. At a time where it was safer to be **quiet to avoid danger & persecution**, the Christians **blazoned forth their faith**.
 3. **Macedonia & Achaia** = the *whole of Greece* at that time.
 4. **What instrument depicts your faith?** A Trumpet? A kazoo? A clanging cymbal?
- C. **So, how did they do this?**
1. Not w/great crusades, campaigns, nor city wide meetings. **Nope**, they shared w/their neighbors & friends what God had done in their life.
 - a) Oh, share what God has done in **your** life.
 - b) That's how the good news spread.
 - c) **Today** so many **churches start w/a** whole recruited ministry team. Multicolored flyers; paid advertisement; a professional ball player to give a testimony; & a famous Recording artist on that 1st Sunday. [in & out]
- D. **Remember how the city fathers described Paul & his buddies effect on their city?**
Slide#15 These who have turned the world upside down. Acts 17:6
1. **Turned the world upside down** – (adapted from Herschel Ford; Acts)
 2. In a sense the charge was **true**. **Christianity is revolutionary!**
 - a) The world today needs turning **upside down**, **or right side up**.
 - b) **This revolution** must take place in the hearts of **individuals**.
 - (1) [from *revolve*=a complete circular turn]
 3. **The way to change the world is to change the individuals in it.**
 - a) You can't have a **better world** w/o **better people**.
 4. **Slide#16** When **Christ** comes into a life He turns it **upside down**. **How?**
 - a) **Jesus turns our beliefs upside down** – The things we once thought were **false**, now we believe to be **true**.
 - b) **Jesus turns our pleasures upside down** – What we used to find pleasurable, vs. now.
 - c) **Jesus turns our home life upside down** – Different level of home commitment.
 - d) **Jesus turns our hopes upside down** – From a **hopeless life** He gives us a **hope of heaven & eternal life**.
 5. **So, First**, the world is **wrong side up**; **Second**, the world must be **turned** upside down; **Third**, we are the men & women to **set it right**.
 - a) **Let's flip our Valley...1 heart** at a time.
 - b) **Let's start w/our own hearts** being touched.
 - c) **Let's learn** how to **care &** not only **believe**.
 - (1) You may **believe** there are kids starving, **but do you care?** (see diff)

(2) What we need to **change** about us is what we **care** about, **not** what we **believe**.

- E. (9) **They turned to God from Idols** - They didn't leave Idols to find God; they found God, then forsook their idols.
1. Turn from any cheap thing you've been trying to satisfy yourselves with.
- F. **Slide#17** (10) Every chapter in 1 Thes. ends with a reference to *the return of Christ*. [2:19; 3:13; 4:17; 5:23]
1. It is interesting in the early church we don't notice them **looking back** to the **birth of Christ** (Christmas/though it is spoken of) **but** their **focus** is always **to the 2nd advent**.
 - a) They held to the declaration in Acts 1:11 **This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.**
 - b) Christ will soon be **crashing back** into our time domain.
 - c) Christians do not be *discouraged, defeated, or despairing*. If you fall to any of these moods *is it possible you have forgotten this great truth* **"I will come again & receive you to Myself."**
- G. **Slide#18**blank