

## **Buzzer, Doorbell or Chime? Jay Orvis**

We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. 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. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 (NIV)

Believers in the prosperous Macedonian crossroads and seaport of Thessalonica (modern day Saloniki), where idols and gods and goddesses of love were worshipped (including through male and female temple prostitution), underwent radical personal changes to follow Jesus, the Creator God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Why does God say nothing need be said about their behavior? (v 8)

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What transformation is required in modern idolatry, where every abuse, from Alcohol to Zodiac, is known, nuzzled and nurtured? A world where Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:32 niv) How ought HIS church be different? How different IS His church? How different is your church? How different are you? Is your work for HIM? Is it produced by faith (v 3)? In what? In WHOM? Is your labor (of all your works) prompted by love (v 3)? Of WHAT and WHOSE love?

How persistent is your endurance (v 3)? 10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. 11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. (Revelation 3:10-11 NIV) Are you holding on? Clinging? To WHAT? Beloved, reputation, puff, passion and possessions all pass away. Brother Bob Harrington once said: If you are going to Heaven it will blow off, and if you are going to hell it will burn off. To what do you cling? Augustus Montague Toplady, Anglican priest and 1776 composer of the hymn Rock of Ages began the third verse with: Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling To what, indeed, do you cling today? Are you a cringer? Do you cringe when the Lords message is needed? Perhaps a Hand-wringer, helplessly or hopelessly wringing your hands in such idolatrous times? Are you a Winger, winging a walk with God? Maybe a right- or left-winger? May we all be a Dead Ringer! An imitator (v 6) of the Apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus, Who was crucified, you know Some Live Singers do their best, while singing for their supper. Are you dead to self, but alive to Christ?

Hopefully you are not a Zinger, who zings the lost! Our society thirsts for both love and Zing, but does love zing in this way? Is zing-love the Lords message (Amazing love, how can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?) which rang out, all over Macedonia and Achaia? What of the clever Humdinger, who avoids the gospel imperative, and the LORDs message? What message rings out from your life? Do you point the finger? you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, (Isaiah 58:9 niv) Beloved, lose the finger be a clinger. To the cross! Finally, beware the Mud Slinger. Does Jesus love cover a multitude of your sins? What does your love cover? Let us imitate HIM, and not emulate those who are not Him! Let HIS message RING OUT, clearly (if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? 1 Corinthians 14:8 niv), in our increasingly deaf world.

As a doorbell rings (or chimes) when its button is pushed, what sound rings out from you when your buttons are pushed at home? In the office? Traffic? Are you a buzzer or a chime? Prove the gospel influences you, not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (v 5), as it did in that fledgling Thessalonian church. And remember, the Bereans (Acts 17) were more noble than the Thessalonians, because they checked the Scriptures to see if what was said was so Ah, Missouri! The SHOW ME state! May this reminder leave you chiming in, and not buzzing. Now, let me ring off.