

1889- 1 Thes 1:5 POWER in the WORD

INTRODUCTION

How was Paul so **sure** that they were *chosen by God* (elected)? Three things! (1) The **dramatic change** in their lives – they **voluntarily turned to God from idols** [9]! (2) At a **cost** – persecuted! (3) They had **joy of the Holy Spirit** in their souls [6] (4) They had **practical Xnity!** [v3] *By their fruits you shall know them* [Mat 7:20].

Jim Petersen of Navigators tells of a fellow who just loved the gospel when he heard it first. He came to him and begged for more and more information. He read, and read, and asked and asked questions – real deep questions! He was understanding every word! He got to grips with the most **penetrating** and **theological** issues. ‘Who did Christ die for? Just the Xns or others?’ He saw the **arguments & distinctions!** But after several months he **lost interest** and **stopped** coming and **apostatized!** What happened? He just loved **mental stimulation!** *I used to wonder how there could be an unconverted minister! But I do understand now – the Bible is a **fascinating** book. *People who have a **natural disposition** for mental ‘stimulation’ **will** be attracted to **theology!** But what is **vital**, is to be attracted to X because of **who He is** and what He **has done!**

Conversion to X is a **radical** and **fundamental change** in our whole being. Nothing less that the **power of God Almighty** can bring about that change! The Thess **experienced** that radical change - they could not possibly have turned to God from idols unless there was! They had experienced **God’s Word with power!** **Have YOU?**

THERE is a POWER in the GOSPEL

Paul said *our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power* [5] Paul reminded Tim *God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control* [2Tim1:7] Paul **assumed** the Ephs **had** this power for **be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might** [Eph 6:10] *I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes* [Rom 1:16] + *The Word of the Cross is folly to those who are perishing but to us who are being*

saved **it is the power** of God (not it should or can) [1C1:18] Jesus:
*You are mistaken not knowing the Scriptures nor the **power** of God !*

It is a **Divine** power *His **divine** power has **given** to us all things that pertain to life and godliness [2P1:3] It is a power **from God** But we have this **treasure** in jars of clay to show that the surpassing **power** belongs to God and not to us [2C4:7] Peter tells Xns that by **God's power** they are **guarded** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time [1Pet 1:5]*

You cannot be a **true** Xian without having a degree of this power. There **is** a degree of God's power in **every true** convert. Paul told of those who had a **form** of godliness but denying its **power** [2T3:5]

****Now power for what?** Some say we **ought** to have power to **heal, miracles,etc!** The apostles were given such power *He...gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases [L9:1]!*

Bottom line is: power to '**turn** from idols' [9] First to make the **initial break** with **idolatry!** To reverse our stance! God/Jesus must be your only idol – worship Him only! **APP** If you have **no power** over **some sins** in your life, then you are probably not a Xian at all! *For sin shall not have **dominion** over you [Rom 6:14] + those that are X's **have crucified** the flesh with the affections and lusts[Gal5:24]*

THREE REGULATORS of THIS POWER?

The **presence/strength/vigour** of this power depends on **3** things:

(1) The **Initial Measure** of **Saving Grace** given at regeneration/ conversion! We are given a certain **doseage** of '**saving grace**' at the outset of our faith! *For by the grace **given** to me...each **according** to the **measure** of faith that **God has assigned** [Rom12:3] + But grace was given to each one of us **according** to the **measure** of Christ's **gift** [Eph 4:7] No doubt some get **more grace** than others! Just as in the **natural realm** some get more **common** grace and gifts than others! That's obvious to all - therefore we get the **un**regenerate man who works beside you, 'outshining' the Xian in **moral** matters!*

(2) Depends on where God has **placed you** in **Providence**. If a Xian is living in a Xian home, with godly parents, in a good church with

Biblical teaching and godly examples, then he will be in better 'shape' than the Xian living in an ungodly home, without a strong church ministry. The **environment** of his weekly life **does** make a difference! (That's why Moses asked Hobab to *come **with us** we will do you good* !) Moses knew the best chance Hobab had of becoming a believer was to be among Israelites! A Xn upbringing will undoubtedly make a huge difference to the type/kind of Xn you will be. If you are not fed spiritual vitamins, you will lack life/growth!

A plant growing among thorns, thistles, stones, will not be strong - but a plant growing in good ground with rain and sun, manured regularly, will thrive and develop.

(3) Depends on how much we **personally practice godliness!** Faith is actually a **means** to an end – the end being **godly living!** To walk with God! We will be **judged** according to our **works**, not faith! We must never rest satisfied with knowledge – we **must be doers of the Word and not hearers only** ! Just as an athlete, rugby player, **improves by training/practicing** and is **more** fit/able/alert/skillful *in the day of battle*, so a Xn must **prepare** for fighting his spiritual battles! It is **not** enough to **know** what is right – we must **practise** it!

The Bible puts a lot of emphasis on **training/discipline** for the Xian walk! In Scripture **discipline** in **military/sporting** careers are emphasised as examples! *Archippus (and Epaphroditus is) a fellow soldier* [Phm 1:2, Phil 2:25] *Vigilance! + Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him* [2T2:3]

***Chastening** is not pleasant. Discipline is unpleasant *but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it* [Heb 12:11] + *solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice* (Gr=gumnazo) [H5:14] **APP** Practising good works is important! Unless you/I are **daily** training to be skillful in spiritual warfare, in combating sin, we will not be powerful enough! We need regular training in kindness/love/honesty! Just as in the **natural** realm! Peter speaks of those who are 'trained'

ASSURANCE, JOY and EVANGELISM!

Thess Church had **joy** - therefore they were good at evangelism!

Look: *you received the word...with the **JOY of the Holy Spirit**, so that you became an **example** to all the believers in **Macedonia** and in **Achaia** [6,7] **How** were they an example? *the word of the Lord has **sounded forth** from you in **Macedonia** and **Achaia** [5].* The news was so good, they could not keep it to themselves! Pink(?) said: ‘evangelise or fossilize’! They had **assurance**, the word came *in **full conviction*** [5] And that **enabled** them to evangelise! They had a concern/interest in spreading the word. The more assurance you have, the better evangelist you are. This is because when you are assured, there is a **natural** ‘witness’ about you! Its **obvious** to **others** you are different! You’re **happy**; and **content**! Xian assurance is **distinct** from **confident presumption**!*

When we really believe in Jesus, we **exude** Christ! David Hume re Whitefield ‘I don’t believe the gospel – but I know **he** believes it’! *I believed **therefore** I have **spoken**”* It is presumptuous Xians that have a **form of godliness but deny its power** - the power **to say a word** for the ‘Best Man in the world’! The Wom of Sam’s 1st statement after meeting Jesus was “*Come see...*”

Being assured and having the joy of the Lord, produces a **natural evangelical spirit**! Subconsciously an evangelical **zeal** shines forth, without that person realising! People should say ‘I knew you were a Xian’! Some **need** to **tell** people they are Xians – whereas it ought to be **obvious** - people should **see** it for themselves! Notice verse [8] *so that we **need not need** say anything* [8]

APP If someone was to spend a night with you, would the one thing they say about you be ‘My, she’s a strong believer in Jesus Christ?’ Would your work-mates be **surprised** to be told that **you** believed in **resurrection** of Jesus, and that it **gave** you a great power? Paul said *that I may **know** Him and the **power** of His **resurrection*** [Phl3:10] There is a **power** in the gospel – a ‘power’ to conquer at least **some** sins in our lives – and to say at least **something** for Jesus. If you **ask** God, He **will give you** the very same power that He gave the Thess!