

I Thessalonians 1 – THE GOSPEL AT WORK

I'm not sure how many of you have opportunity to visit other churches....

- maybe while you were away this summer....
- what was your impression of that church?
- maybe it was a friendly church.....maybe the pastor preached well.... Singing was great
- either bad or good.....it left an impression

Every church will have a reputation....in its community & in the larger X church...

Today we are looking at the book of Thessalonians....church that had a very good reputation....

- they were known to be church where God was at work....
- where God was changing lives through the power of the gospel....
- they were examples (it says) to Macedonia and the whole extended region.....

The apostle Paul had visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey....

- Acts 17 (after Philippian jailor)
- travelled to a couple of other cities.....then....
- for 3 weekends.....synagogues.....
- debating – showing them that Christ's death was necessary.....that he WAS the Christ.
(several of the leading members became believers)
- If you remember the story...Paul had to leave (Jason)

But God had blessed the fledgling church.....the church had grown in Maturity...

- Today we are going to look at vs 2 as our theme --the example of the Thessalonian church in → faith - love and hope.....
- how it was demonstrated so clearly in their lives – and how it is an example for ourselves today...

1) Work of Faith.

Paul begins his letter.....READ vs 1,2 and 3a.

We know that faith is something that is not something that begins with us – Ephesians says that it *is by grace (not of yourselves) and a gift of God*

Vs 5 it explains how they came to faith:

- it came in word.... (Paul was sent by God to preach.....they heard it, understood, believed it)
- not in word only but it came in power.....the transforming power of the gospel was felt....
 - they came to understand their need of Christ.....to turn from their sins, turn to Christ
- in the Holy Spirit
 - we believe in a Triune God.....
 - God the father calls us, God the son saves us, God the HS.....works in our hearts to show us the truths of the gospel
- in much conviction.
 - John 16: 8 says, "When the HS has come he will convict the world of sin."
 - this is what he does...gives you a hatred for sin (not normal)
 - gives you a love for what is right.

Look with me at vs 9 – READ - to see how this played out....they turned from idols to serve the true and living God....

- the Thessalonians lived in a time of great superstition....
- didn't know....lived in fear.....

So this work of faith was very evident in the lives of these believers....

- this just wasn't a "try Jesus" thing
- we are talking about a life transforming event.....
- God miraculously and powerfully worked in their lives....
- everyone could see it.

These were men and women of FAITH – who were convinced of what they believed....

- this "work of faith" was the gospel being lived out in their lives....

2) The SECOND thing that Paul gives thanks for is their labour of love.

The Thessalonian church was not an inactive church.....very clear in our passage.

- vs 6 says....they became followers.....
- they needed to have someone to follow.....(like all new Xs)
- especially in times of difficulty (which we know will come)

They themselves became examples.....

- it is funny how that happens.....
- one day you look around and say – hey God is using me to be an example to others....
- others were observing the way they were living.

But it wasn't just the way they lived..... it was also what they said.....SOUNDED FORTH.

- their love for the truth prompted them....compelled them → to SPEAK
- they wanted to share the good news of the gospel.....
- (this really is a sign that someone is growing in their faith – they WANT to share the good news)

Their labour of love was also evident in the way that they showed hospitality: READ →VS 9

- they were willing to open their homes.....
- to give of themselves.....
- READ 4:9,10
- this wasn't a burden – something forced on them.....loved to do it....

With joy in the HS.... it says.....

- joyful people are great to be around aren't they....
- I don't know if you have had a Christian friendwho is always joyful
- it's great isn't it? It is a joy to be around a Joyful person!!!! 😊 😊
- (it is certainly better than being around the pessimist....)

That kind of spirit is contagious isn't it? When people see that kind of joy....enthusiasm....love for the gospel.....people are going to want to know move.....

- as we are busy in the church labouring in love....
- God is going to use us for his honour and glory.....

3) The THIRD thing that verse 3 mentions is their patience in hope. READ 3c & Vs 4.

It wasn't easy being a Christian in NT times....(vs 6 in MUCH affliction)

--many times it meant leaving all of your family.....

--financial consequences for being the different one....not wanting to frequent your business.

Some of these things today we feel.....for those of you whose families are not Christians....

--they might now understand your new way of living....

--they might not agree with your priorities....

--the way that you raise your children.....

As Christians, we are called to humbly accept that.....

--with patience.....with hope.....

--being willing to leave everything.....

Matt 19:29 -*houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake....*

But the mention of election is important....

--when we understand that it is God the Father that has called us to be a part of the family.....

--the trials and struggles are all worth it....

--Matt 19 say → *we will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.*

This is the calling of the church of JC....to wait with **patience and with HOPE.....**

READ vs 10 Who are waiting for?

--For Jesus our savior.....

--who has saved us from the WRATH to COME.

Let's not be confused.....this is not everything that there is....here and now.....

--the money we can make.....the houses we can build

--all of the good things we can enjoy....

There is an eternity that awaits.....

--for those who do not know and love Christ – who have not been delivered by him....

--Judgement.....

--those who have been saved.....eternity in heaven.....

That is our hope.....that is what gives us patience....that is what we are waiting for....