

2.16.20 ~ 1Thessalonians 1:1-10,
Part Two: Be Examples!

The Thessalonians had only been believers and followers of Christ for a short time, a few months. Paul had spent a brief time, evangelizing in the synagogue on three Sabbaths, and then a little longer time evangelizing Gentiles. He and Silas and Timothy were there only a matter of weeks and then they were forced to leave because of Jewish persecution. They went to Berea, then to Athens, and finally to Corinth, from where Paul is writing this letter to the Thessalonians.

Paul had sent Timothy back to find out how the church in Thessalonica is doing, and he reports that they are serving the Lord honorably; and so Paul rejoices as he writes this letter to encourage them in their faith, which is already being expressed so as to be witnessed by others.

In **1Thessalonians 1:3**, Paul acknowledges their “work of faith, and labor of love, and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In **1Thessalonians 1:4** Paul makes mention of their genuine salvation, “knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you.”

Today we’ll pick up where we left off last week:

1Thessalonians 1:5-10... Paul reminds them of how their original coming to faith in Christ is giving evidence through their lives.

See **1Thessalonians 1:5...** Paul is describing the experience of himself, Silas, and Timothy as they preached the gospel to them, and that it is clear to them that the Thessalonians’ salvation is real. Paul is basically saying, “we experienced God’s power moving through us when we preached to you, knowing that it would accomplish the salvation of your souls.”

Romans 10:8-10, “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” **13**, “for whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.” **17**, “So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

Clearly, it isn't through clever cognitive persuasion that someone is saved, for without the power of God in it, nothing will be accomplished concerning salvation..

2Corinthians 4:4-6, “the god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Light shall

shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

John 3:19, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

Ephesians 5:6-16, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'"

Paul, Silas and Timothy's preaching wasn't just with words (**1Thessalonians 1:5**), "for our gospel didn't come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction."

The Thessalonians had experienced God's transforming power (**1Thessalonians 2:13**), "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the Word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the Word of God which also performs its work in you who believe."

At the end of **1Thessalonians 1:5** Paul writes, "Just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake." Paul is he saying, the power in their preaching was from God and it is now expressed in the lives of the Thessalonians who believed in Christ.

Read **1Thessalonians 1:6-10**... Paul says the believers in Thessalonica became imitators [Greek, *mimics*] of Paul and his companions, and of the Lord." Being genuinely saved, they were following the example of Paul, who was trying to exemplify the Lord (see **1John 2:6; Hebrews 13:7; Philippians 4:8-9**).

The evidence of new birth, spiritual birth, is to imitate Christ, to be a Christian [an example of Christ] showing the newness of the Life that we have received from God (see **John 1:12-13; 3:6-8**).

The believers in Thessalonica (**1Thessalonians 1:7-8**) were examples to believers everywhere, and no matter how tough it got, they never lost their joy because their joy was from the Spirit of God not from emotional, situational, psychological, physiological, or any other internal or external stimuli or causation.

1Corinthians 6:19-20, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit [Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of Truth] who is in you, whom you

have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

2Corinthians 13:5, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”

The behavior of the believers in Thessalonica was so distinctly God-honoring and Christ-exalting, that they were models for others to emulate.

Paul writes (**1Thessalonians 1:8**) “For the Word of the Lord has sounded forth [strongly like a trumpet blast] from you,” i.e., the Message of the Gospel of Christ has and is continually going out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia but everywhere, everywhere.

See **1Thessalonians 1:9...** Everywhere Paul goes believers are talking about how something supernatural had happened in Thessalonica, because it was continually evidenced in the witness of those who had received Christ as Lord, for they continued to have a desire to talk about Christ, to share Christ, to proclaim Christ.

The believers in Thessalonica had turned from worshipping dead idols to serving the living God, it was clear that they belonged to God by the way they lived.

Romans 12:1, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

Let me just say this, if someone claims to be a Christian, having gone from death to life, from an eternal destiny in hell to an eternity in heaven., and they have no interest in talking about Christ, you have reason to question their salvation.

When you repent of sin and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, it is not just a change of mind or a different way of thinking - true salvation is found in Christ alone, and it causes a total change, concerning who you are, who you serve, who you obey, and how you honor and worship God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit..

See **1Thessalonians 1:10...** True Salvation is exemplified in the lives of believers (**1Thessalonians 1:3**) by their work of faith, their labor of love, and their steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

True Christians are expectantly waiting for Christ to come back and to take us to be with Him forever, for He has conquered sin, death, judgment, and He is the Creator, Sustainer, Lord, Savior, and Judge over all.

Titus 2:11-14, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly,

righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”

1Peter 2:9-10, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

2Peter 3:11-12, “what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...” **18**, “...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Pastor Mike
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