

1 Thessalonians 2:13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

INTRO: Q. 5. How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God?

A. The Bible evidences itself to be God's Word by the heavenliness of its doctrine, the unity of its parts, its power to convert sinners and to edify saints; but the Spirit of God only, bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in our hearts, is able fully to persuade us that the Bible is the Word of God.

This is the reason for Paul's thanksgiving without ceasing!

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: **Acts 17:1-5** [1] Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. [2] And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, [3] explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." [4] And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. [5] But the Jews were jealous...

CONTEXT: Paul has labored to proclaim the gospel and exhort a proper response from the Thessalonians.

CONTENT:

1. What Paul is doing: He thanks God without ceasing.

2. The reason that Paul is giving thanks: The way the Thessalonians received God's Word.

3. Where the Thessalonians received God's Word: From Paul and his fellow laborers. Paul is an Apostle of Christ Jesus. When he speaks in this office, he speaks the Word of God. When he writes to them (as he is doing here), he writes the very Word of God.

4. In what manner the Thessalonians received God's Word:

1. **Negatively:** Not as the word of men

2. **Positively:** as what it really is, the Word of God

5. The reason Paul thanks God instead of them: because their response evidences God's working within them, through His Word.

DOCTRINE: that the Scriptures evidence themselves to be the Authoritative Word of God by their work in every believer.

Now let us examine these in the order they appear in our passage...

I. THE SCRIPTURES EVIDENCE THEMSELVES TO BE THE WORD OF GOD

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God,

EXPLAIN: Paul is thanking God that these believers have rightly received God's Word.

REPEAT: THE SCRIPTURES EVIDENCE THEMSELVES TO BE THE WORD OF GOD...

Now let me show you three things here that you must understand about this...

I) THE SCRIPTURES EVIDENCE THEMSELVES BY GOD'S POWER

And we also thank God constantly for this,

EXPLAIN: God is the object of our thanksgiving. Q. Why?

Because... "Salvation belongs to the LORD" (**Psalm 3:8**)

Romans 8:33 It is God who **justifies**.

Leviticus 20:8 I am the LORD who **sanctifies** you.

REPEAT: THE SCRIPTURES EVIDENCE THEMSELVES BY GOD'S POWER

II) THOUGH THE SCRIPTURES EVIDENCE THEMSELVES, YOU MUST STILL LABOR TO PROCLAIM THEM CLEARLY

LOOK! Q. Why does Paul thank God *constantly* for this? A. Because Paul labored *constantly* for this. And his joy abounds in thankfulness when God granted fruit from his labors.

Here is the immediately preceding context... [2:9] For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. [10] You are

witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. [11] For you know how, like a father with his children, [12] we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (**1 Thessalonians 2:9-12**)

Thanksgiving will be fleeting where your labors and toils are few. (**EXAMINE YOURSELF**)

Fathers, labor for the salvation of your households.

Husbands, toil night and day for the sanctification of your wife.

Pastors, exhort, encourage, and charge Christ's sheep to walk in manner worthy of God

Masters, work to show yourselves holy, righteous, and blameless in your conduct before those whom God has placed under your charge.

REPEAT: THOUGH THE SCRIPTURES EVIDENCE THEMSELVES, YOU MUST STILL LABOR TO PROCLAIM THEM CLEARLY

III) WHEN THE SCRIPTURES EVIDENCE THEMSELVES, THANKSGIVING IS DUE TO GOD

we also *thank* God *constantly* for this

- **Men, these are your marching orders...** "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." (**Colossians 4:2**)
- **O fathers**, do you not know what this constant thanksgiving looks like?
- Paul regards himself toward these believers, like a father with his children, and it sweetens His praise.
- O but what about **Christ Jesus**. Believer, has He not taken for Himself the title, "Everlasting Father" (**Isaiah 9:6**)?
- Q. Do you think He withholds thanksgiving toward His Father when He sees His Father's Word at work in your life?
- O men, set kindling to fire of your High Priests thank offerings! Receive the Word of God willingly! And let it do its work in your entire being.
 - Q. Does God's Word offer **instruction**? Then receive it into your mind!
 - Q. Does God's Word exhort you to **examine** yourself? Then examine the depths of your heart!
 - Q. Does God's Word offer you choice **comforts**? Then anchor your emotions therein!
 - Q. Does God's Word **warn** the hypocrite? Then tremble in your soul lest you drift away!
 - Q. Does God's Word lay down **directions** for believers? Then bring your will into conformity!
- Men, receive the Scriptures in a manner worthy of God, and let the thanksgiving of Christ Jesus spur you to this end!

REPEAT: THE SCRIPTURES EVIDENCE THEMSELVES TO BE THE WORD OF GOD

II. THE SCRIPTURES ARE TRULY THE AUTHORITATIVE WORD OF GOD

when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God,

Three things are taught to us here about the Scriptures...

I) THE SCRIPTURES ARE DELIVERED THROUGH MEN

which you heard from us,

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Q. How then will they hear? How will God deliver His Word (the Scriptures) to His people?

1. **The Scriptures were delivered through the Apostles to the saints...**

2 Peter 3:15-16 Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, [16] as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

2. **The Scriptures are delivered through pastors to local flocks...**

2 Timothy 4:2 preach the word;

3. **The Scriptures are delivered through fathers to their children...**

Deuteronomy 6:7 You shall teach them diligently to your children,

Men, tremble! For "we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." (**2 Corinthians 4:7**)

II) THE SCRIPTURES ARE NOT THE WORD OF MAN

you accepted it not as the word of men

REPEAT: THE SCRIPTURES ARE DELIVERED THROUGH MEN, BUT THEY ARE NOT THE WORD OF MAN

God says to His prophet Isaiah... "I have put my words in your mouth" (**Isaiah 51:16**) **And so it is with all His prophets and Apostles.**

EXHORTATION: Men, repent with me for every time you have regarded the commands of the LORD as suggestions.

WARNING: All who accept this Book as merely the word of men will be damned.

III) THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE WORD OF GOD

but as what it really is, the word of God,

Q. Do you know what God is?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. (**The Baptist Catechism - Q.8**)

1. God is a **Spirit**; He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His **being**. You cannot see Him nor touch Him. You cannot comprehend the weight of His perfections! And yet He has been pleased to reveal Himself **clearly** and comprehensively in His Word.
2. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His **wisdom**. And He has **sufficiently** revealed, in His Word, **everything** that you need know to be complete.
3. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His **power**. And therefore what He speaks in His Word, He speaks with perfect, undefiled **authority**.
4. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His **holiness** and **justice**. And therefore His Word is most **necessary**, for if you neglect this great salvation, you are without hope.
5. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His **goodness** and **truth**. God will not lie. God cannot lie. And therefore His Word is **without error**.

Question. Now why does it matter that the Scriptures are the Word of God and not of man?

Answer. Chiefly, because it is here alone that salvation is offered to you. The light of nature does not reveal Christ as Redeemer!

Beloved, the Scriptures are the Authoritative Word of God and...

III. THE SCRIPTURES ARE AT WORK IN EVERY BELIEVER

which is at work in you believers.

I) GOD WORKS JUSTIFICATION THROUGH HIS WORD

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

II) GOD WORKS SANCTIFICATION THROUGH HIS WORD

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

REPEAT: THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE WORD OF GOD AT WORK IN EVERY BELIEVER

Q. How then will the Word of God be made effectual for your justification and sanctification?

THOMAS WATSON gives this exhortation (in his Book the Ten Commandments) 1. By reading the Word, and 2. By hearing the Word preached.

How the Word of God may be read so as to be effectually working in us who believe:

- (1) That we may so read the Word that it may conduce effectually to our salvation, let us have a reverend esteem of every part of Scripture.
- (2) If we would have the written Word effectual to our souls, let us peruse it with "intenseness of mind."
- (3) If we would have the written Word effectual, we must bring faith to the reading of it; believe it to be the Word of the eternal Jehovah.
- (4) If we would have the written Word effectual to salvation, we must delight in it as our spiritual cordial.
- (5) If we would have the Scripture effectual and saving, we must be sure, when we have read the Word, to hide it in our hearts.
- (6) If we would have the written Word effectual, let us labor not only to have the light of it in our heads—but its power in our hearts!
- (7) When we read the holy Scriptures—let us look up to God for a blessing.

How the Word of God preached may be heard so as to be effectually working in us who believe:

- (1) If you would have the Word preached effectual, give great attention to the Word preached.
- (2) If you would have the Word preached effectual, come with a holy appetite to the Word.
- (3) If you would have the preaching of the Word effectual, come to it with tenderness upon your heart.
- (4) If you would have the Word effectual, receive it with meekness.
- (5) If you would have the Word effectual, mingle the Word preached with faith.
- (6) If you would have the preaching of the Word effectual, be not only attentive in hearing—but retentive after hearing.

(7) If you would have the preaching of the Word effectual, reduce your hearing to practice.

(8) If you would have the Word effectual, beg of God that he will accompany his Word with his presence and blessing.

(9) If you would have the Word work effectually to your salvation, make it familiar to you.