

9/26/99

**Mission Accomplished**

**1Thess. 2:13-14**

Paul has been the attorney for the defense regarding his ministry at Thessalonica from. vs. 1-12

He has called and cross examined his three witnesses, the Thessalonians, the missionary apostles and God.

The physical evidence which he has pointed out has been based on character, care and conduct for the Thessalonians.

The false allegations by the Jews regarding Paul and the others were exposed for what they were, lies that attempted to keep the Thessalonians from following Jesus as their Messiah.

Paul now moved on to become also the presiding judge who proclaims the verdict.

Paul's verdict about the ministry at Thessalonica was that it was a mission accomplished. 2:1, 13-14

**1.** The word of God accomplished what it purposed.

**2.** The verdict comes in a form of thanksgiving to God for He alone had done the work.

Paul's verdict consists of three proclamations:

- I.** The word of God was sown. vs. 13a-e
- II.** The word of God took root. vs. 13f
- III.** The word of God brought fruit. vs. 14

**I. The word of God was sown vs. 13a-e**

**A.** Paul thanked God because the Thessalonians were open to the word preached. vs. 13a-b

- 1.** The apostles were thanking God without ceasing for the response of the Thessalonians. vs. 13a
  - a.** The reason is stated in what follow, not in what precedes as some believe.
  - b.** The thanks and gratitude is to God, who has provided the plan of salvation, through the gospel.
  - c.** The action of thanks is without ceasing, meaning when ever they thought about it, not that they were doing it twenty-four hours a day. 2:1, 2:13, 5:18
- 2.** The Thessalonians had received the word of God.
  - a.** The word received "paralambano" used as a technical term for receiving something formal or outward tradition, objectively.

- b. The word is used by Paul of the gospel message. 1Cor 15:1, 3, Gal. 1:12
  - c. The word is used of Joseph to take Mary as his wife. Matt 1:20
3. They received the word of God which they heard from the missionaries.
- a. The word of salvation, the message of God was proclaimed to them through the agency of Paul and the others. 1:5
  - b. The Thessalonians heard the good news.
    - 1) The word heard “akoes” from “akouo”, refers to the active hearing of the message of grace in the past.
    - 2) Being open to receive God’s word outwardly as they heard it was good and an important step but basically consisted only in mental acceptance!
    - 3) Being around the gospel and hearing it does not save a person, in fact it only makes him or her more accountable.
  - c. The plan of God is that God has chosen the foolishness of preaching to save man. 1Cor. 1:21
    - 1) The fact that he would use human vessels to proclaim the good news of salvation.

- 2) The fact that it would be the Holy Spirit of God to bring about conviction and salvation.
- B. Paul thanked God because the Thessalonians opened their hearts to the word preached. vs. 13c-e
- 1. They welcomed the word of God.
    - a. The word welcomed “dechomai” means to receive as a guest, willingly, personally and inwardly subjectively, beyond just an outward formality.
    - b. The word is used of receiving a prophet. Matt. 10:41
    - c. The word is used of receiving the Kingdom. Mk. 10:15
      - \* They welcomed God’s word in their hearts not merely in their heads!
    - d. The needed element that makes the hearing affective is faith, belief in the revelation being heard, as it is activated by the Holy Spirit.
      - \* Faith come by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17
  - 2. They welcomed the word as divine revelation and not human speculation.
    - a. Not as the word of men.
      - 1) To the Corinthians Paul made this perfectly clear. 1Cor. 1:20-23, 2:1-2, 6-8

- 2) To the Colossians Paul defines human systems. Col. 2:8
- b. But as it is in truth, the word of God.
- 1) The word truth “aleethos” means indeed, surely implying certainty, affirming what it declares to be so.
  - 2) The word is used of the disciples towards Jesus when He caught Peter as he sunk in the water, “truly you are the Son of God.” Matt 14:33
  - 3) All Scriptures is inspired “theopnustos” of God and is profitable....2Tim 3:16-17
  - 4) No prophecy of the Scriptures is of any human origin, for prophecy never came of the will of men but holy men of God spoke as the Holy Spirit carried them along. 2Pet. 1:20-21
  - 5) We were born again by the incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever. 1Pet. 1:23
  - 6) We are sanctified by the word of truth. Jn. 17:17

### Illustration

Parable of the Savior depicts the word of God being sown but the various soils or conditions of men’s hearts, responding differently to the seed,

the way side, stony ground, thorny ground and good ground.

\* Agrippa said to Paul, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian.” Acts 26:28

### Application

1. John tells us that we are to not believe every spirit but to test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1Jn. 4:1-3
  - a. The Spirit of God confesses that Jesus has come in the flesh is of God. vs. 2
  - b. The spirit that does not confess that Jesus has come in the flesh is not of God but the spirit of Antichrist, who is coming and is already in the world. vs. 3
2. Jesus desires all of us to be Bereans. Acts 17:11
  - a. To receive the word with all readiness of mind.
  - b. Then to search the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things are so.
3. Jesus gave two warnings regarding our hearing as the word is sown.
  - a. We are to take heed what we hear in the parable of the Sower, discerns truth from error. Mk. 4:24
  - b. We are to take heed how we hear also on the parable of the sower, decides how you live out what you hear. Lk. 8:18
  - c. We must never confuse being open to the word of God from opening our hearts to it.

- 1) Just being open to the word of God alone, can bring deception thinking one is saved or safe when in fact we have a greater judgment.
- 2) While opening one's heart will result in transformation. Rom 12:1-2

*The word of God was sown among the Thessalonians!*

## **II. The word of God took root. vs. 13f**

- A.** The word was working in power.  
\* "Which also effectively works".
1. The phrase effectively works "energeo" means to be actively and efficient.
    - a. The word is almost always used in the New Testament of some form of supernatural activity.
    - b. We get our word energy from it.
    - c. The phrase is in the present tense, a continuous process.
      - 1) The word of God had sprouted in their hearts, resulting in salvation in the past when they came to them.
      - 2) The word of God had continued to work to the very day, bringing forth God's work in their hearts.
 

\* For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure, the flip side is that man is

- to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. Phil. 2:12-13
2. The apostle has pointed out many ways the word had already worked and was working in them.
    - a. It worked to convert them. 1:5
    - b. It worked against their afflictions. 1:6
    - c. It worked to make them a witness to all in Macedonia. 1:7-8
    - d. It worked for their transformation. 1:9
    - e. It was still working in them because their hearts were open to the word.
- B** The word was working in people.  
"In you".
1. The word of God is not for behavioral modification.
  2. The word of God is not to make man religious.
  3. The word of God is not to condemn others and exalt ourselves.
  4. The word of God is designed to work on the inner man. Eph. 3:16
  5. The word of God is designed to counteract the evil heart of man and his sin nature. Jer. 17:9
  6. The word does this by driving man to the cross of Christ. Rom. 6:6, 11
    - a. At the cross every person is confronted with their sins.

- b. At the cross everything will die, so others can live, including the sinner.

**C. The word was working by faith.**

\* “Who believe”.

1. The word believe “pistuo” has the idea of committing and trusting.
  - a. Faith is absolutely necessary for the word to take root and see God in our daily lives, or without it we can not please God. Heb 11:6a
  - b. Faith come by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17
2. Faith is to be a commitment and trust in the promises of God’s word. Heb. 11:17-19
  - a. A righteous standing before God by the substitutionary death of Jesus. 2Cor. 5:21
  - b. A new life through a new birth. 2Cor. 5:17
  - c. A life that never ends. Jn. 3:36
3. Faith is never passive but always active whether in trust or work, for faith without works is dead. Ja. 2:26
  - a. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb. 11:1
  - b. Those that come to God, must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder

of those who diligently seek Him.  
Heb. 11:6b-c

**Illustration**

Parable of the Sower presents three soils or hearts that refused the seed to take root but one mixed with faith took root, the way side, stony ground, thorny ground.

\* The Philippian jailor said, “ What must I do to be saved”. Acts 17:30

**Application**

1. Our faith, trust and commitment should always be on God’s word and it’s efficiency. 2Pet. 1:3-4
  - a. God’s divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. vs. 3a
  - b. God has done this through Jesus who called us by glory and virtue. vs. 3b
  - c. God has given us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you and I may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. vs. 4
2. Our faith is to be the work of the Holy Spirit, not our own power. Zach 4:6, Eph 6:10
  - a. Too many today are trusting in their own church, teachers and counselors, though there is nothing wrong with these in themselves.

- b. The Thessalonians were not of this type, they were moving on in faith though Paul had left, they were not going back into the world!
- 3. Our trust to save men and women is the power of God alone.
  - a. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith. Rom. 1:16-17
  - b. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1Cor. 1:18

*The word of God took root in the Thessalonians!*

### III. The word brought fruit. vs. 14

- A. The Thessalonians became imitators of the churches of God in Judah in Christ Jesus.
  1. They were imitators because they were brethren.
    - a. The word “brethren” refers to being born of the same womb.
    - b. They were of the same family, therefore their resemblance would be evident.

- c. They were imitators or “mimics” in the sense of disciples of Jesus. 1:6
- d. They were imitators in the sense that they were waiting for Jesus to return. 1:10
- e. They were imitators in the sense that they walked worthy of the Kingdom. 2:12
- 2. They were imitators of the churches of God which were in Judea.
  - a. The churches of God, identifying their spiritual birth from heaven, in contrast to other assemblies of man, even the synagogue. 1:1
    - 1) The word churches “ekklesia”, means those called out.
    - 2) The word appears 115 times in the New Testament and the book that uses it more than any other is the book of Revelation, twenty times, all in chapter 1-3, once in 22:16.
      - \* The word identifies the riotous mob at Ephesus. Acts 19:32, 41
    - 3) The church is comprised of those called out of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Col. 1:13
    - 4) The member of the body of Christ on earth to give a sneak preview of heaven.

- b. The churches of God in Judea, refers first to the original one in Jerusalem and then those that sprung forth through the persecution.
    - 1) Birthed at Pentecost.
    - 2) Empowered by the Holy Spirit.
    - 3) Added to by God.
    - 4) Growing through God's word.
  - 3. They were imitators due to the fact that they were in Christ Jesus.
    - a. The ability was due to their acceptance of Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
    - b. The identity of being brethren and a church of God was due to their identity of being "in Christ".
    - c. Their identity is distinct from any other assembly called out, they were the church of God in Christ!
- B.** The Thessalonians endured persecution as the churches in Judea. vs. 14c-d
1. They manifested the very same endurance and perseverance as all others who had preceded them.
    - a. They were the target of the unbelieving world.
    - b. They were the opposed for the rejection of sin and darkness.

- c. They were like those Paul used to persecute. Acts 8:1, 9:1-2, Gal. 1:22-23
- 2. They suffered from their own countrymen as those in Judah at conversion.
  - a. The persecution against Paul was of Jewish origin. Acts 17:5-9
  - b. The persecution of the Thessalonians was of their own countrymen, literally "tribes people", the Gentile.
- 3. They suffered in like manner as the churches in Judea from the Jews.
  - a. The persecution was not due to cultural difference.
  - b. The persecution was spiritual, due to having received the word of God, believing that Jesus was the Messiah and Savior of the world.
  - c. They suffered after Paul left. 2:7, 3:3-4

### **Illustration**

Parable of Sower seed fell among thorns and the word was choked but not the good ground or heart, it was fruitful, 30,60,100 fold.

\* Paul the apostle said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Acts 9:6d-e

### **Application**

1. We are called to bear fruit, according to the nature of the church in the Scriptures.

- a. We are called to bear much fruit. Jn. 15:16-17
- b. We are to have our fruit unto holiness. Rom 6:22
- c. We are to yield to the fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22-23

2. Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church, He would build it.  
Matt. 16:16

- a. Persecution has never hurt the church, it has only purified it.
  - \* It has been said that the blood of the saints is the seed of the church!
- b. Persecution will bring out two things.
  - 1) Our need of Christ's strength. Phil. 4:13
  - 2) Our genuineness in faith. 1Pet. 4:19

*The word brought fruit in and through the Thessalonians!*

### **Conclusion**

Paul's verdict for the defense is three-fold.

- I. The word of God was sown!
- II. The word of God took root!
- III. The word of God brought fruit!
  - \* Can you say, "Mission accomplished", for your own life, regarding the gospel?