

## I Thessalonians 2:13-20

### Chapter 2 – Hope That Motivates

#### Verse 13

Previously Paul mentioned his constant thanksgiving for their fruitful lives in 1:2-3. Now he mentions his constant thanksgiving for their response to the gospel.

*The word of God's message* – Literally, *the word of hearing from us of God*. Although reinforced by the written Word of the Old Testament, the gospel message first preached in the New Testament was a spoken word.

*You received from us* – This word means to accept from another or to hear what is being said.

*You accepted it* – This word means to welcome or to embrace what is being heard. Not only did they hear the Word, they accepted into their hearts and made it a part of their lives.

*Not as the word of men but as it truly is, the word of God* – It is the Word of God that has the power to transform lives! God's Word:

-*Light* – Psalm 119:105, 130.

Jesus is the Light – John 1:4, 9, 9:5, 12:46

-*Truth* – Psalm 119:160, John 17:17, Col. 1:5, 2 Tim. 2:15, James 1:18.

Jesus is the Truth – John 14:6

-*Water* – Ephesians 5:26, Jesus is the water of life, John 4:10, 14

-*Bread* – Matthew 4:4, Jesus is the Bread of Heaven – John 6:33, 35, 48.

*Which performs its work in you who believe* – When God's word is received by faith it always accomplishes its purpose (Isaiah 55:11, Psalm 119:11, 50, 89, Hebrews 4:12).

#### Verse 14

*For you brethren* – Paul had related to them as a nursing mother and an encouraging father and now as a brother.

*Became imitators of the churches* – They imitated the churches in Judea in that they *endured the same sufferings*.

*At the hands of your own countrymen* – Gentiles that persecuted them for their faith.

*Even as they did from the Jews* – Often those who have a form of truth or false truth are the worse persecutors.

#### Verse 15

*Who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out* – Israel's history of rebellion against God and His word is well documented.

*They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men* – Even though they thought they were defending God they were really fighting against Him. In Romans 10:2-4 Paul speaks of their zeal for God but laments that it is based on false knowledge.

#### Verse 16

*Hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles* – Paul remembers how the Jews in Thessalonica set the city in an uproar to drive Paul and Silas out of town.

*That they might be saved* – Notice that Paul equated their potential salvation with hearing the spoken Word (Romans 10:17). A person is justified when they hear the good news of Jesus Christ and believe in Him for eternal life.

*With the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins* – Jesus used this expression in Matthew 23:32 in his sermon against the Pharisees.

God patiently waits as sinners rebel against Him, and He watches as their measure of sin and judgment fills up. When the time is up, God's patience will end and judgment will fall.<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe

*But wrath has come upon them to the utmost* - Why does Paul speak in the past tense? In a sense, because of their history of killing the prophets and their rejection of Christ they are already experiencing God's wrath. In another sense the coming tribulation will be the divine climax and outpouring of God's wrath on Israel. The good news is that as a result of that wrath all Israel will eventually be saved (Romans 11:25-28).

### **Verse 17**

In this verse Paul shares his tender affection for the Thessalonians and how he misses their fellowship together.

*Having been bereft of you* – Literally, *having been orphaned from you* as children taken from their parents.

*In person, not in spirit* – They were constantly in Paul's heart and prayers but he longed to see their face.

### **Verse 18**

*For we wanted to come to you – I, Paul, more than once – and yet Satan thwarted us* – Satan's name means adversary or one who opposes in purpose or act.

*Thwarted* – This word is only used five times in the New Testament, three times by Paul (Rom. 15:22, Gal. 5:7, and here). It is also used in Acts 24:2 and 1 Peter 3:7. The word means to *cut into* and was originally used of cutting or breaking up a road to make it impassable.

### **Verse 19**

*For who is our hope* – Their spiritual development was Paul's hope.

*Or joy* – Their glorification was in what he rejoiced.

*Crown of exultation* – Their ultimate victory would be a crown for Paul.

*Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?* Paul's picture was that the saints themselves at the judgment seat of Christ would be his crown of exultation! True ministry is always about seeing others achieve their greatest potential for Christ.

*"I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth."*

2 John 4

### **Verse 20**

*You are our glory and joy.*

"The glory of any teacher lies in his scholars and students; and should the day come when they have left him far behind the glory is still greater. *A man's greatest glory lies in those whom he has set or helped on the path to Christ.*"

William Barclay

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 169). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The second coming of Christ truly is a hope that motivates us! The glory and joy we will experience at the judgment seat of Christ as we see others receive their rewards will be amazing.

**Make sure you are investing into the lives of others!**