

Today, ~ begin 1st of the 4 major sections of 1 T, ~~ 1:2-10.

Here we have a prayer-report.

➤ Paul begins most of his letters ~ by telling how he expresses thanks to God ~ for what he (God) is doing in the lives of the readers.

➤ This prayer-report makes clear ~ Paul's own love and concern for his friends

▷ And the prayer-report also serves ~ to encourage them in their Christian lives.

To help us keep our focus on the big picture, ~~ run through an overview of this section.

The statement of thanksgiving (1:2a).

➤ We give thanks to God always for all of you.

When they give thanks. (1:2b).

➤ Whenever they prayed for the believers.

▷ Constantly mentioning you in our prayers.

Basically, ~ in vv 3-10, ~ Paul & his team note ~ the reasons why ~ they gave God thanks.

➤ Boiled down, ~ 4 reasons, ~ accompanied by an expansion on the last 3, ~ and ~ a parenthetical comment after the expansion of the 2nd reason. 1/12

Break it down for you.

➤ 1st reason, ~ vs 3, ~ Their ~ work of faith ~ and labor of love ~ and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

➤ 2nd reason, ~ vv 4.

▷ God loved them and had chosen them ~ to be his own people.

➤ Vs 5a, ~ an expansion on the 2nd reason.

⇒ How Paul knew they were chosen.

⇒ because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

➤ Vs 5b (NIV) ~ a parenthetical note regarding the missionary team's conduct among the Thessalonian believers.

⇒ (NIV) You know how we lived among you for your sake.

➤ 3rd reason, ~ vs 6, ~ became imitators.

▷ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord.

➤ Vv 6b-7 ~ 3-point expansion of this 3rd reason in 6a.

▷ 1st, v 6b, notes the cause of their imitation.

⇒ For you received the word. 2/12

▷2nd, v 6c, ~ Paul explained that their acceptance of the gospel produced ~ a 2-fold, seemingly paradoxical effect ~ for the Thessalonian believers.

⇒ They accepted the gospel in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

▷ And 3rd point of expansion, v 7 (CSB).

⇒ As a result, you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia 2/12

▶ 4th reason, ~ vs 8. ⇒ The evangelistic activity of the Thessalonians.

▷^{8a} For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, ^{8b} but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere [i.e., ~ reports of their faith in God have spread everywhere], ^{8c} so that we need not say anything.

▶ Vv 9-10, ~ an expansion of the 4th reason. ⇒ Details of the report being circulated.

▷ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Ok, ~ let's dig in. ⇒ Vv 2-3 today.

Paul begins with the team's statement of thanksgiving for the Thessalonian converts.

V2a, ~ We give thanks to God always for all of you.

▶ Paul, Silas, & Timothy ~ were continuously telling the Lord ~ how thankful they were ~ for these new converts. 3/12

Notice, ~ this thanksgiving ~ was constant. ⇒ Not a one-time or sporadic thing.

➤ Not 24/7.

▷ Regular thanksgiving.

⇒ IOW, ~ it was a routine part of the missionary team's lives ~ to give God thanks for these believers.

➤ Paul, Silas, & Timothy ~ set the example for us.

▷ Being thankful for ~ and expressing our thanks to God for ~ our fellow believers ~ should become a routine part of our lives.

▷ The more time spent thanking God for our brothers & sisters ~ is less time spent criticizing them.

And notice also, ~~ all the Thessalonian believers ~ were included in his thanksgiving.

➤ No one ~ was left out. ~~ A further lesson for us.

Paul rates thanksgiving very highly.

➤ Later ~ he will instruct us to give thanks ~ in everything.

▷ 5:18, ~ Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

▷ And Eph. 5:20 (NLT), ~~ And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 4/12

In vs 2b, ~ notes when they gave thanks, ~~ constantly mentioning you in our prayers.

I.e., ~ Whenever they prayed for the believers, they gave thanks to God for them.

➤ Since the gratitude for these believers was constant, ~ and the team expressed their thanks when praying, ~ the conclusion is ~ they constantly prayed for the believers.

▷ Not 24/7.

➤ Paul and his team ~ routinely prayed for these believers.

➤ And this of course means ~ Paul, Silas, & Timothy had ~ an everyday prayer life.

▷ No sporadic praying here.

➤ Over and over in the NT, ~ believers are called to have ~ an everyday prayer life.

▷ Rom. 12:12, ~~ Be constant in prayer. ~~ Eph. 6:18 (CSB), ~~ Pray at all times. ~~ Col. 4:2 (NIV), ~~ Devote yourselves to prayer.

⇒ & later, ~ 1 Thess. 5:17, ~ Pray without ceasing.

→ Repetition ~ screams importance.

➤ Ok, ~ the occasions when these thanksgivings were offered ~ were the periods of corporate prayer ~ that Paul and his associates enjoyed.

▷ James called us to corporate confession & prayer.

▷ Coupled w/ teams' example, ~~ corporate prayer important. 5/12

Let's move on now.

As noted, ~ basically, ~ in vv 3-10, ~ Paul & his team note ~ the reasons why ~ they gave God thanks.

➤ Boiled down, ~ 4 reasons, ~ accompanied by an expansion on the last 3, ~ and ~ a parenthetical comment after the expansion of the 2nd reason.

▷ Remainder of our time today, ~ the 1st reason, ~ vs 3.

Ok, ~ the 1st reason for thanksgiving (1:3)

Remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Triad here.

➤ Work of faith, ~~ labor of love, ~~ steadfastness of hope.

➤ Grk grammar shows that ~ the 1st members of the triad, ~~ work, labor, steadfastness ~~ are the result of ~ the 2nd members of the triad, ~~ faith, love, hope.

➤ (NIV) We remember before our God and Father ~~ your work produced by faith, ~~ your labor prompted by love, ~~ and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

3 aspects ~ to this 1st reason for gratitude.

1st aspect, ~ (NIV) Your work produced by faith.

➤ Although faith has more than 1 mng in the NT, ~~ here it refers to ~ trust and commitment to Christ. 6/12

▷ It is ~ the positive response of the individual ~ to the gift of salvation ~ that God offers in the gospel.

⇒ In brief, ~ genuine saving faith.

➤ Paul & the others ~ remembered & thanked God ~ for the Thessalonians' work ~ produced by faith.

➤ Elsewhere, ~ Paul states categorically ~ that salvation ~ is by faith and not by human works.

▷ Eph. 2:8-9 (CSB), ~ For you are saved ~ by grace through faith, ~ and this ~ is not from yourselves; ~ it is God's gift, ~ not from works, ~ so that no one can boast.

➤ But ~ Paul also interjects ~ that faith has its fruit ~ in good works.

▷ Eph. 2:10 (CSB), ~ For we are his workmanship, ~ created in Christ Jesus ~ for good works, ~ which God prepared ahead of time ~ for us to do.

▷ Paul speaks in one place of ~ every deed ~ prompted by faith (2 Thess. 1:11).

➤ Paul affirms James' premise ~ regarding faith & wks. ⇔ This will refresh our memories.

▷ A claim of faith, ~ James asserts, ~ without the tangible evidence of its reality ~ cannot save.

▷ Recall what James said ~ about a mere profession of faith in Jesus ~ without ~ the tangible evidence of its reality.

⇒ It's as useless ~ as uttering kind words ~ to a needy fellow Christian ~ while doing nothing to help. 7/12

➤ Genuine Christian faith ~ always displays ~ the tangible evidence ~ of its reality.

▷ It may start out small, ~ when a person is first saved.

⇒ But ~ as a genuine Christian matures spiritually, ~ tangible evidence piles up.

➤ To sum up, ~ we can note the overall question James was asking in his discussion of faith & works.

▷ What proves or justifies ~ the genuineness ~ of a person's claim to saving faith?

⇒ The answer to that question is ~ tangible evidence ~ of its reality.

➤ The faith of the Thessalonians, ~ just like Abraham & Rahab, ~ expressed itself in works.

▷ & thereby, ~ they showed their faith ~ to be genuine.

⇒ & Paul & his team rejoiced, ~ because they could see ~ that the gospel had taken root in their hearts.

2nd aspect of this 1st reason for gratitude.

➤ (NIV) Your labor prompted by love.

➤ In the context of both Thessalonian letters, ~ the love in view ~ is love for fellow believers.

➤ The love of the Thessalonian believers for one another ~ expressed itself ~ in hard, strenuous, and exhausting labor.

▷ That ~ is what the Grk wd for labor is talking about. 8/12

➤ It's likely ~ in using this wd, ~ Paul is implying ~ sacrificial service ~ on behalf of other believers.

▷ These new believers ~ willingly ~ expended themselves for one another.

▷ These believers serve as an example for all believers.

➤ The Thessalonian believers' love for others ~ prompted them ~ to action ~ on their behalf.

▷ This ~ is what genuine love does.

⇒ Genuine love for others ~ will always ~ prompt us ~ to action on other believers' behalf.

▷ And isn't that ~ what God's love for humanity did?

⇒ Prompted him to action ~ on our behalf?

→ 1 Jn. 4:10 (NLT), ~ This is real love ~ not that we loved God, ~ but ~ that he loved us ~ and sent his Son as a sacrifice ~ to take away our sins.

➤ Now, ~ it's important for us to understand the following.

▷ Far from being simply an emotion, ~ the love Paul's talking about, ~ ἀγάπη, ~ seeks the best for others ~ and labors for others' benefit.

▷ Grk ~ ἀγάπη ~ is used specifically in Christian vocabulary ~ for God's love for humankind.

⇒ Which was displayed supremely ~ in Jesus' death and exaltation. 9/12

▷ We, ~ believers, ~ experienced this love @ conversion.

⇒ And since then, ~ we experience it every day.

► And this love, ~ God's love, ~ is the kind of love ~ we are to have for each other.

▷ Eph. 5:12, ~ And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

▷ My fellow believers, ~ we are to live a life that is ~ filled with and governed by ~ Christ-like love for our fellow believers.

⇒ Our thinking, ~ attitudes, ~ and behavior are to be characterized by God's love.

→ And Christ-like love ~ is to become ~ the deciding factor in our choices ~ and ~ the motivating power in our actions.

Now the 3rd aspect of this 1st reason for gratitude.

► (NIV) Your endurance ~ inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

► Wd for endurance means ~ the ability to remain steadfast and persevere ~ in the face of suffering or temptation.

► Paul had become greatly concerned about the stability ~ of the Christian community in Thessalonica.

▷ 2 Things ~ prompted this concern. ⇒ 1st, ~ the persecutions they endured.

⇒ And 2nd, ~ the temptations of Satan ~ to renounce the faith. 10/12

➤ But these new believers ~ had shown ~ tenacious endurance ~ in the face of extreme opposition, hostility and temptation.

➤ The source ~ of this tenacious endurance ~ was not some ~ inner resolve ~ or personal strength.

➤ No, ~ the source ~ of this tenacious endurance ~ was hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

➤ Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ ~ most likely refers ~ to Jesus' 2nd coming.

▷ The same thing Paul talked about ~ in [Titus 2:13](#).

⇒ I.e., ~ our blessed hope, ~ [then what ~ blessed hope means] ~ the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

➤ In the midst of opposition & hostility, ~ these believers ~ fixed their eyes ~ on our blessed hope.

▷ I.e., ~ the appearing of the glory ~ of our great God and Savior ~ Jesus Christ.

▷ Instead of focusing on present troubles, ~ they focused ~ on that wonderful day ~ when the glory ~ of our great God and Savior, ~ Jesus, ~ will be revealed.

▷ This is a promise from God.

⇒ And it is ~ 100% guaranteed ~ to be fulfilled.

➤ This promise of a glorious eternal future ~ makes it possible for believers ~ to endure all manner of difficulty & hardship, ~ even persecution because of our faith.

▷ And this ~ is because we know ~ that God ~ sees all ~ and one day will make everything right. ⇒ [2 Thess. 1:6-10](#) [11/12](#)

➤ Again, ~ this promise of a glorious eternal future ~ makes it possible for believers ~ to endure all manner of difficulty & hardship, ~ even persecution because of our faith.

➤ At the end of things, ~ there is for us ~ a magnificent eternal future.

▷ At the end of things, ~ there is for us ~ everlasting life and joy with our Savior.

➤ For Christians, ~ persecution, trouble, and affliction ~ are not the end.

▷ Beyond these, ~ there lies ~ eternal glory.

⇒ And in the sure, ~ certain, ~ and real hope of that glory, ~ Christians can endure anything ~ that this world throws at us.

➤ It seems to be one of the basic facts of life ~ that a person can endure anything ~ so long as they have something to look forward to.

▷ And Christians ~ have more to look forward to ~ than anybody. 12/12