

This a.m. finish our study of the 1<sup>st</sup> major section of 1 Thess, ~ 1:2-10.

As know, prayer rpt. ☞ Vs 2, statement of thanks & when they gave thanks.

& as know, ~ in vv 3-10, ~ Paul & his team note ~ 4 reasons why ~ they gave God thanks.

➤ 1<sup>st</sup> reason, ~ vs 3.

▷ Gave thanks because the Thess showed their faith to be genuine, their love for others prompted them to action on their behalf, & tenaciously endured opposition & hostility.

➤ 2<sup>nd</sup> reason, ~ vv 4.

▷ Because they responded positively to the gospel, ~ Paul, Silas, & Timothy knew these new believers were genuinely part of the people/family of God.

➤ 3<sup>rd</sup> reason, ~ vs 6, ~ these new believers became imitators.

Ok, ~ let's dig in, ~ vv 8-10 today.

➤ The 4<sup>th</sup> reason in v 8, ~ and the expansion of that reason in vv 9-10.

4<sup>th</sup> reason, ~ evangelistic activity of the Thessalonians (1:8)

<sup>8a</sup> For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, <sup>8b</sup> but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, <sup>8c</sup> so that we need not say anything.

The grammatical structure of the Grk sentence in v 8a & b is awkward. 1/13

➤ Simply put, ~ it's likely that Paul combined into 1 sentence ~ gratitude for ~ 2 related yet distinct ~ evangelistic activities.

▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ a direct witness.

➤ 8a, ~ The word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia.

▷ & 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ an indirect witness.

➤ 8b, ~ your faith in God has gone forth everywhere.

→ A little clearer translation of 8b.

↳ In every place reports of your faith in God have spread.

Then in v 8c, ~ Paul adds that news of their faith went out to such an extent ~ that Paul & his colleagues didn't need to tell anyone.    ↪ Unpack.

Ok, ~ Paul & team gave thanks to God for these new believers because of their direct and indirect evangelistic activities.

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ direct witness.

➤ 8a, ~ The word of the Lord [i.e., ~ the gospel message] ~ sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia.

➤ Even though they were brand-new believers, ~ they were already sharing the good news about salvation.

➤ This outstanding church boldly took the gospel everywhere in the Greek peninsula, both to Macedonia and Achaia.    2/13

➤ This does not mean, ~ however, ~ these new believers were engaged in the same sort of public preaching as was Paul & his colleagues.

▷ Sharing the gospel might take other forms, ~ such as simply telling their story.

▷ Same for us.

➤ It doesn't need to be a formal presentation of the gospel.

➤ Simply tell your story.

➤ That's what Jesus told the man from whom he cast out a legion of demons.

→ Mk. 5:19b-20, ~ "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ indirect witness of their faith in God.

➤ 8b (NET), ~ In every place reports of your faith in God have spread.

➤ Word about their extraordinary trust in the Lord was carried by word of mouth even farther than their verbal witness had gone.

➤ Hyperbole?

▷ Emphasizing the far-reaching impact of the Thessalonians' faith in God.

➤ Model. 3/13

In v 8c Paul adds that ~ news of their faith went out to such an extent ~ that Paul & his colleagues didn't need to tell anyone.

➤ Paul said they didn't need to. ☞ But in actuality did.

▷ See in 2 Thess.

▷ & Paul boasted to the Corinthian church re: generosity (1 Cor. 8:1-3).

### Expansion of vs 8, ~ vv 9-10.

Details of the report being circulated re: Thessalonian believers' faith in God.

➤ Basically, ~ the report is the story of their conversion.

➤ 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.

### 3 pnts in this rppt re: the Thess' conversion.

➤ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ turned to God from idols. ☞ I.e., ~ a complete break w/ the past.

➤ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ Turned to the living and true God to serve him. ☞ Complete acceptance of new.

➤ And 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ they began to wait for God's Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

But before getting into the 3 points Paul summarizes the rppt re: these new believers' conversion. 4/13

<sup>9a</sup> For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you

➤ Phrase ~ **the kind of reception** ~ gives us a clue to what Paul is saying.

➤ The kind of reception the missionaries had with the Thessalonians was a successful reception.

▷ IOW, ~ the summary is that ~ the preaching of the gospel bore fruit among the people in Thessalonica.

➤ Note, ~ it is the gospel that bears fruit, ~ not the messengers.

▷ Col., ~ the gospel bearing fruit and increasing.

▷ As noted recently, ~ the gospel produces salvation in all who call upon Jesus for salvation.

*Moving, vv 9b-10 give the details of the report being circulated about the Thessalonian believers' faith in God.*

Basically, ~ the report is the story of their conversion.

➤ Let's look @ details.   👉 **Again, ~ 3 pnts in this rppt re: Thess' conversion.**

*1<sup>st</sup> pnt, ~ Turned to God from idols.*

Complete break w/ the past.   👉 **No insignificant thing.**

▷ In Graeco-Roman society, polytheism ~ the belief in or worship of more than one god ~ was the norm.   **5/13**

▷ The social, political, and religious life of the Thessalonians was intertwined with idolatrous beliefs and practices.

▷ Forsaking the worship of any of these gods could hurt your business, your social standing, and even your family relations.

▷ Turning away was not a decision one would have taken lightly.

▷ So turning from idols means that this was a complete & public rejection of ungodly & anti-God societal norms, ~ along with all other sinful behavior on one's part.

➤ These new believers made a public & complete break with their unsaved past.

#### ▷ Acts 19:17-20

▷ Becoming a Christian involves a very definite break ~ with non-Christian habits & the non-Christian world.

▷ Whatever the believers' previous background, ~ there must always ~ be a turning from idols of some sort.

▷ The act of conversion ~ involves a change of direction of the will.

▷ This is a decisive happening, ~ a reorientation ~ of the whole of life.

➤ The Thessalonian believers stand as a model for us.

➤ That's because the NT exhorts us to this end.

▷ E.g., ~ 1 Pet. 4:3a (NLT), ~ You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy. 6/13

>Peter clearly states that ~ the things we were involved in before we came to Christ, ~ belong in the past, ~ i.e., ~ when unsaved.

>Those things ~ have no place ~ in our new life in Christ.

>Peter declares, ~ "You have had enough in your past life of the evil things that non-Christians desire."

▷Using very strong wording, Paul drives the same point home. ☞ Col. 3:3-5

>There is to be a clean break with the past, ~ Paul says.

>We are to take ~ decisive action ~ against the sins of the past.

>The phrase ~ "Put to death" ~ shows there is to be no compromise on our part.

▷Both apostles tell us the past is the past.

>It is over and done with.

>There must be no going back to the sinful life we had before we came to Christ.

>There must be a permanent break with every part of our sinful unsaved lifestyle.

Furthermore, ~ there's something else about these new believers turning their backs on idols.

➤There was no attempt to find a place for Christ in the polytheistic environment.

▷Such an idea was preposterous. 7/13

▷ No matter how greatly their habitual practices had to be changed, ~ the Christians of the first century saw ~ that there could be no place for an idol alongside Christ.

➤ Remember James' warning to all believers ~ who seek to embrace ~ both God & the world?

▷ By seeking friendship with the world we are, ~ in effect, ~ committing spiritual adultery.

▷ Remember the reason it's spiritual adultery?

➤ James said ~ being friends with the world ~ is the same ~ as hating God.

➤ Jesus expressed this principle in his warning about money.

▷ Matt. 6:24 (NIV), ~ No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

➤ Faith in Jesus Christ ~ is not an optional practice to be added on ~ to previous values and commitments.

▷ One cannot serve God alongside idols of any sort. ☞ Many forms

▷ They must be put away.

▷ The claims of Christian faith are all-encompassing.

(vv 9-10) Now the 2<sup>nd</sup> pnt in this rppt re: Thess' conversion.

➤ They turned to serve the living and true God. ☞ Complete acceptance of the new. 8/13



## Ongoing servanthood.

- Not sporadic.
- Or when I feel like it.

## Serving God encompasses 2 things.

- 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ ongoing worship of God.
- And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ continually serving God in every aspect of life.
  - ▷ I.e., ~ an ongoing unconditional obedience and loyalty toward God in thought, wd, & action.

To serve ~ expresses the result of genuine conversion, ~ a life of service to the living and true God.

- This is not to say we won't falter in our service @ times.

▷ 1 Jn. 2:1.

- It is to say that for a genuine believer his/her life will be characterized by ongoing unconditional obedience and loyalty toward God in thought, wd, & action.

Now notice, ~ the Thess. had turned from their idolatrous past to serve the living and true God.

- Puts the stress on the nature of God.

▷ Lit, to serve God living and true. ☞ Stressing diff. between God & idols. 9/13

➤ Living means not only alive but active.

▷ As we see from [Acts 14:15](#)

➤ Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

▷ It contrasts sharply with idols.

▷ Little "g" gods can do nothing.

➤ [Ps. 115:4-7](#)

➤ The wd for true means ~ genuine, real.

▷ Its opposite is not so much "false" as "unreal."

▷ It is real as opposed to false in the sense of counterfeit.

▷ Paul is affirming that the converts had begun to worship a real God in contrast to the unreal objects that had previously claimed their allegiance.

▷ Elijah, [1 Ki 18](#).

Being unreal, false gods cannot save a person from the wrath of God.

▷ [Zeph. 1:18a \(NIV\)](#), ~ Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath. 10/13

(vv 9-10) Now the 3<sup>rd</sup> pnt in this rpt re: Thess' conversion.

Turned to God from idols to wait for his Son from heaven.

➤ The vb ~ to wait for ~ means ~ to await, expect, wait up for.

▷ & it pictures them as people who were eagerly and expectantly looking forward to the coming of one whose arrival was anticipated at any time.

➤ This picture of anticipation carries a further suggestion.

▷ Namely, being ready to receive the One whose coming was awaited.

➤ Tense of vb for ~ to wait for ~ expresses the thought of being always on the lookout for Christ's return.

➤ The Thess needed no urging in this.

▷ How about us?    ☞ Looking?    ☞ Expect @ any time?    ☞ Are we ready to receive him?

▷ 1 Jn. 2:28 (CSB), ~ So now, little children, remain in him [i.e., ~ remain in fellowship with Jesus] so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

In reading, ~ prominence.

➤ Well, this prominence given to Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> coming in both Thessalonian letters tells us something very important.

▷ I.e., ~ we should give it prominence in our lives. 11/13

Furthermore, ~ the combination of the ideas here of serving and waiting complement one another.

► There is no other proper way in which to wait for Jesus than to serve him here and now.

▷ Acts 1:6-8.

@ end of v 10, 2-fold note of assurance.

► 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ notes that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead.

▷ Therefore, ~ believers can be assured that we too will be raised.

>1 Cor. 15:20, But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

► 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ Jesus delivers believers from the wrath to come.

▷ Refers to the divine judgment on the wicked at the end of the age.

▷ @ that time God will destroy all evil.

▷ This coming wrath has been a difficult concept for many to accept.

▷ Yet it is a reality that God will indeed bring wrath upon a sinful world.

▷ God's wrath is a certainty, ~ for he will not let sin continue unabated forever.

▷ Believers, however, can trust in their Savior, who rescues them. 12/13

›Rom. 5:9, Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

›Rom. 8:1 (NLT), So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

▷Believers will never be condemned to hell.

›Don't get uppity.

▷Closing note.

›No one has to be condemned. 13/13