

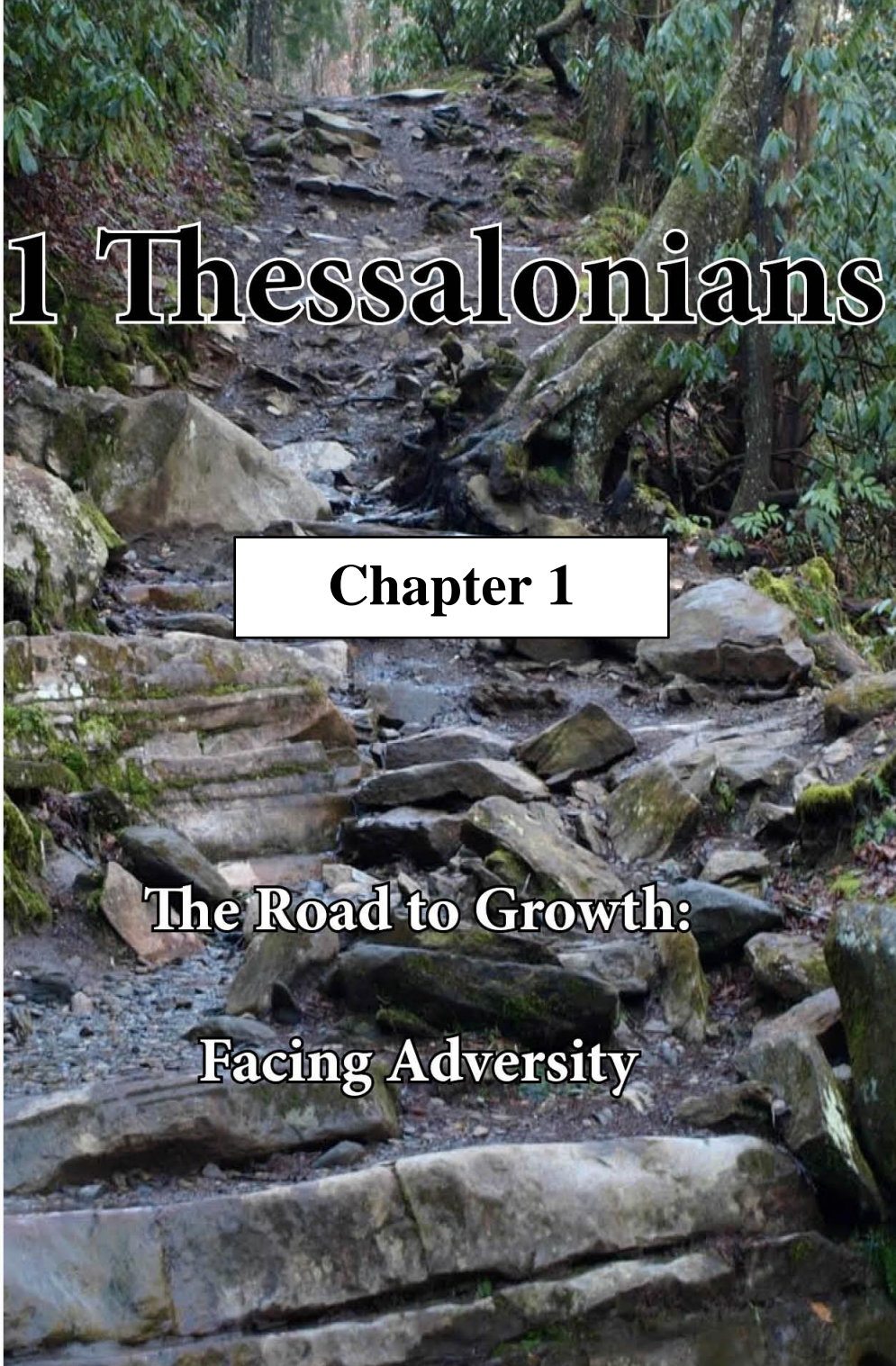
Journeys With God

1 Thessalonians

Chapter 1

The Road to Growth:

Facing Adversity



1Thessalonians

Chapter 1 Summary

1 Thessalonians 1:1 - Grace and Peace

Paul and Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

Truth to Learn

All Christians can know peace in the midst of attack.

Behind the Words

“Church” is translated from the Greek word *ekklēsia*, which is made up of *ek*, meaning “out” and a form of the verb *kaleō*, meaning “to call.” It literally refers to “the called out ones.” Originally, this word referred to an assembly of citizens who were called out by civil authorities. It is used throughout the New Testament, however, to refer to the church, either a local assembly or the world-wide church.

The word “Thessalonians” is transliterated (not translated, but moved directly from Greek into English) from the Greek word *Thessalonikeus*. The city of Thessalonica, located on the coast of Macedonia (northern Greece), was built beside a large natural harbor on the Aegean Sea. At the time of this letter it was the capital of Macedonia with a population of about 200,000 people. It was located on the Via Egnatia (the main east-west highway of the Roman Empire),.

Meaning Explained

Paul starts off this letter with a very short introduction, shorter than most of his letters. He indicates that it comes not just from him, but from Silvanus and Timothy as well.

Silvanus, also called Silas, was Paul’s chosen companion for his second missionary journey (**Acts 15:40**). Also, in the fifteenth chapter of Acts we find that Silas is referred to as a prophet (**Acts 15:32**). It is believed by some that he is also the Silvanus mentioned as the scribe of Peter’s first general epistle (**1Peter 5:12**), but this has not been historically verified. We first encounter Silvanus (Silas) in **Acts 15:22** where he was chosen by the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem to accompany Paul and Barnabas in carrying an important letter to the church at Antioch. This same Silvanus was the one imprisoned with Paul in Philippi where they prayed and sang hymns together, resulting in the conversion of their jailer (**Acts 16:15-34**).

Timothy was also a constant companion to the Apostle Paul. His name is mentioned in all of Paul’s letters with the exception of those to the Galatians and the Ephesians. Although a younger man, the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother, he had a good reputation among those who knew him (**Acts 16:1, 2**). After their short stay in Thessalonica, while Paul was ministering in Corinth, Timothy was the one whom he chose to return to Thessalonica to establish and comfort the church members there.

Paul’s opening message to the Thessalonian church is one of grace and peace. These two represent the source and the result of our salvation. For by grace we are saved (**Ephesians 2:5**), and this salvation results in a peace that is beyond our understanding (**Philippians 4:7**). His desire of peace for them is especially important given the persecution and confusion that existed in the church at that time.

Application

This letter was intended to provide peace and comfort to Christians who are under attack from within and without. Let's study it carefully to know this peace that Paul proclaims.

1 Thessalonians 1:2 - Prayer Warriors

We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers,

Truth to Learn

Our ministry should be focused on what God will do for others.

Behind the Words

The words “We give thanks” are translated from the Greek verb *eucharisteō*, which is made up of *eu*, meaning “good” or “well” and a form of *charidzomai*, meaning “to grant” or “to give.” The basic meanings of this word include “to show oneself to be pleased or grateful” or “to give thanks.”

“Always” is from *pantote*, which is a compound word composed of *pan*, meaning “all” or “every” and *tote*, which literally means “the when,” but by usage it means “then.” So a completely literal translation of this word would be “every when,” that is, “at all times.”

“Making mention” is translated from *poioumenoi mneian*. *Poioumenoi* is the present participle of the verb *poieō* (to make), so it literally means “making.” *Mneian* is based on the verb *mnaomai*, meaning “to remember.” Thus *mneian* refers to “a remembrance.” So, Paul is literally saying “making a remembrance of you ...”

The word translated “prayers” is *proseuchē*, which is made up of *pros*, meaning “to” or “toward” and a form of *euchomai*, meaning “to wish” or “to pray.” *Proseuchē* refers specifically to a prayer (or wish) expressed to God.

Meaning Explained

We see something here that is very characteristic of the Apostle Paul. He is a person of prayer as much as (perhaps even more than) he is a preacher. His letters often talk about how he remembers in his prayers, and is thankful for, those to whom he is writing (**Romans 1:9; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:4; Colossians 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:3; Philemon 1:4**). We also see here an example of how often Paul is engaged in prayer (*pantote* = “every when”), that is, all the time. Based on what he has written to this church and others, Paul was constantly in prayer. Perhaps, he was not audibly praying at all times, but he seems to have been in constant communication with our Heavenly Father. He obviously practiced what he preached, for later in this very letter he admonishes his readers to “pray without ceasing” (**1Thessalonians 5:17**).

However, Paul was not a lonely prayer warrior. He states very clearly here that “We give thanks ...” It appears that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy spent time together praying about their ministry and praying for those to whom they ministered. These servants of God did not just preach the gospel to one group of people and then move on to preach to others, forgetting those to whom they ministered as soon as they were out of sight. No, they made constant remembrances of every church they had ministered to and probably remembered most of the people by name.

These faithful ministers were not focused on what God would do for them; they were focused on what God would do for others through them.

Application

Do you have a specific ministry within the church? If so, are you ministering to others for what you can get out of it, or are you ministering to others for what they can get from God? And, do you pray regularly for those to whom you minister?

1 Thessalonians 1:3 - Hang In There!

Constantly remembering your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

Truth to Learn

The Christian life requires hard work and patience.

Behind the Words

“Constantly” is translated from *adialeiptōs*, made up of *a*, meaning “without,” *dia*, meaning “through” or “between,” and a form of the verb *leipō*, meaning “to leave.” Thus, *adialeiptōs* literally means “without leaving space between.” In other words, it means doing something without pausing or stopping, that is, constantly.

Ergon is the Greek word translated “work.” It refers to “toil, labor, or work.” It doesn’t necessarily refer to “hard work,” but any kind of work, any act, or any deed performed.

The word “labor” is from the Greek word *kopos*, which is derived from the verb *koptō*, meaning “to cut” or “to beat on one’s chest in grief.” *Kopos* refers to the pain of toil or hard work. By analogy it refers to wearisome labor.

“Patience” is from the word *hupomonē*, which is made up of *hupo*, meaning “under” or “beneath” and a form of the verb *menō*, meaning “to remain” or “to stay in place.” It is a picture of a beast of burden remaining under a heavy load instead of shaking it off. Therefore, it carries the meaning of being steadfast or patient.

“Hope” is from *elpidos*, which means more than just a wish. It implies a desire for some good thing with the full expectation that it will come to pass.

Meaning Explained

Yesterday we learned that Paul and his partners were persistent in praying for the people to whom they had been ministering. They cared so much for the Thessalonians that they prayed for them regularly. Here we learn that the prayers weren’t for God to help the Thessalonians; Paul and his companions gave praise to God for the way they lived-out their faith.

In their prayers they remembered and praised the work of faith that the Christians in Thessalonica were engaged in. Being a committed Christian is not easy. It involves persistence because our work of spreading the gospel and building up our fellow Christians is constantly under attack from those who oppose us. The members of the church in Thessalonica apparently were undaunted in their efforts. Paul referred to it as both a work of faith and labor of love. Note the distinction between work of faith (our works will follow us into heaven where we will get rewards for them) and the labor of love (in heaven we will have rest from our hard labor).

Paul also praised the Thessalonians for their patience. The Greek word *hupomonē* is a very descriptive word. Remaining steadfast in our faith is difficult at times because we can’t see God, we can’t feel His hand of comfort, and we can’t hear His words of encouragement except by faith. But in spite of that, we have a hope (a firm expectation) that we will be eternally in His presence one day, and that helps us remain under the load.

Application

Be steadfast and patient in your good deeds and hard labor for God. He sees all that you do, and He will reward you for everything you do to bring Him glory. Hang in there! You will receive the rewards of your labor one day.

1 Thessalonians 1:4 - Chosen and Loved

knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

Truth to Learn

All Christians are chosen by and loved by God.

Behind the Words

The word “knowing” is from the Greek verb *oida*, which means “to see with perception,” that is, “to be aware of.” It is expressed here as a casual participle, so it could be translated as “since we know.”

“Beloved” is a form of the verb *agape*, a self-sacrificing love which is spoken almost exclusively of God. Therefore, we could refer to them as “brothers who are loved by God.”

“Election” is translated from the noun form of the verb *eklegō*. This verb is composed of *ek*, meaning “out” or “out of” and the verb *legō*, meaning “to choose” or “to select.” As used here it means “someone who has been selected, or chosen, by God.”

Meaning Explained

We have been talking about the fact that Paul and his two companions, Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy, regularly and unceasingly pray for and praise the Christians in the church at Thessalonica. Paul adds here that the Thessalonica Christians have been chosen by God and therefore, are among those who are loved by God with an everlasting, self-sacrificing love.

Election is one of those theological concepts that many Christians love to hate. Opponents of the concept say, “How can a loving God choose some and send others to Hell? That’s just not fair and God wouldn’t do that.” First of all, God does not choose anyone to go to Hell. It’s what we all deserve because we are all unrighteous sinners, and God’s holiness and righteousness demand that all sinners must be judged since we are all deserving of death:

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (**Romans 3:23**)

For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(**Romans 6:23**)

Jesus, Himself, told his disciples:

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, (**John 15:16a**).

And, Apostles Peter and Paul clearly teach that God chooses whom He decides (**Romans 9:11; Romans 11:5; Romans 11:7, 8; Ephesians 1:4; 2Peter 1:10**). And Paul argues very strongly that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, arguing that God is not unrighteous in doing so. After all, as Paul says, doesn’t the potter (God) have power over the clay (you and me), from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? This is stated very clearly in **Romans 9:10-21**.

In today’s verse Paul is telling his readers that he and those with him know (they have seen and perceived) the election of the Christians in Thessalonica. And from the previous verse we see that it is the deeds of faith and labor of love that demonstrate the election of these saints.

Application

None of us deserves God's grace. We didn't deserve to be chosen and we don't know why He chose us. What we do know is that all Christians have been given a gift of immeasurable worth that we didn't earn and we don't deserve. Let's show our gratitude by serving Him faithfully.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 - Holy Spirit Enlightenment

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

Truth to Learn

The Holy Spirit enables us to understand the gospel message.

Behind the Words

The word “gospel” is translated from *euangellion*, which is made up of *eu*, meaning “good” or “well” and *angellō*, meaning “a message.” Thus, quite literally, the word *euangellion* means “a good message” or “good news.”

“Power” is the translation of *dunamis*, from which we get our English word dynamite. It refers to “power” or “a great force.” This is probably a reference to the power of the gospel message rather than the power of any miracles that Paul may have performed because Paul never uses this particular word to refer to miracles. He used *dunamis* in a similar manner in reference to the kingdom of God in **1 Corinthians 4:20**.

The word “assurance” is translated from *plērophoria*, which is made up of *plērēs*, meaning “completely full” and a form of *phoreō*, which means “to repeatedly bring.” Initially this word meant “an act which is fully completed over and over again.” Later it came to mean “a proof or assurance that something would happen just as it has in the past.”

“Know” is from the Greek word *eidō*, meaning “to see with perception.” As in English, the idea of seeing carries the notion of understanding with the mind. This particular form of the verb means “to have seen and perceived,” thus it takes the meaning of “to know.”

Meaning Explained

Paul has told the members of the church in Thessalonica that he prays for them and praises God for them on a regular basis. His praise was for their deeds of faith, their labor of love, and their patience, based on their hope of spending eternity with God. His reason for praise is based on the fact that he has seen (evidenced by their works and patience) that they are certainly among God’s elect.

We talked in the previous verse about the fact of God’s choosing those who will be saved. The other side of that coin, however, is the responsibility of man. Only those who believe the gospel message, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, will be saved. How these two doctrines can both be true is nearly impossible for us to understand. However, both are clearly taught in the Bible, and it is the gospel message, through which salvation comes, that Paul talks about in today’s verse.

The gospel, or good news, that Jesus Christ died to pay for the sins of the whole world and rose from the grave to prove that He is the Son of God, is not just a bunch of words. There is power in the gospel, the power to save souls from Hell, the power to change a sinner into a saint, the power to reconcile filthy sinners with a holy God.

Paul also tells us that the gospel is somehow energized by the Holy Spirit. We know from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians that Satan blinds the minds of people so that they cannot believe the gospel (**2Corinthians 4:4**). We also know from the same letter that the veil of blindness is removed when one believes the gospel (**2Corinthians 3:14-16**). Paul implies here that it is the Holy Spirit who opens the minds of those who believe.

Application

If you are a born-again Christian, can you remember the day that you accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? If so, can you identify what it was that finally allowed you to understand the gospel and believe it in your heart? It was the Holy Spirit!

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - Affliction and Joy

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

Truth to Learn

Committed Christian living will result in affliction – and joy.

Behind the Words

“Imitators” is translated from *mimētēs*, from which we get our English word “mimic.” It means “someone who mimics, imitates, or follows the example of someone else.”

The words “having received” are from *dechomai*, meaning “to receive.” It is very similar in meaning to the verb *lambanō* except that *lambanō* implies more of an active participation (to take to oneself) while *dechomai* implies more of a subjective or passive participation (to receive for oneself).

Thlipsis is the Greek word translated “affliction.” It is derived from the verb *thlibō*, meaning “to crush” or “to squeeze.” *Thlipsis* refers to “pressure, trouble, affliction, tribulation, or distress.”

“Joy” is translated from *chara*, which is derived from the verb *chairō*, meaning “to rejoice.” Therefore, *chara* refers to “joy, rejoicing, or gladness.”

Meaning Explained

As we mentioned yesterday, belief in the good news about Jesus Christ is the substance of our salvation. The whole discussion of election versus “free will” becomes a moot point at the moment of conversion. It doesn’t matter whether you believe that God chose or man chooses; what matters is that a lost sinner becomes a child of God and is credited with the righteousness of Christ at the moment of belief in the gospel message.

Then, at the end of yesterday’s verse Paul said, “as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.” Paul did not expect the people to whom he preached to pay him for what he did. Instead, he worked as a tent maker to pay for his own expenses. He, along with Silvanus and Timothy, lived exemplary lives in spite of the persecution they faced from the local Jews, who even traveled to Berea to harass Paul after he began preaching there. It is important to note that Paul’s ministry didn’t stop when people got saved. He simply switched from evangelist mode to teacher mode. He taught them the fundamental truths of how to live a life committed to God, and as an example to be followed he lived the kind of life that he taught about.

As a result, we learn in today’s verse that the Thessalonians became imitators of Paul and his companions. They didn’t just listen to their teaching, smile politely, say a few amens, and then continue living as they always had. They changed. They put into practice what they were taught, using as their living examples Paul and his companions. And what did they get for it? They received the same persecution that Paul continually endured. We are told here that it wasn’t just a little teasing that they received, they suffered “much affliction.”

Those who afflicted them did so intentionally to make them suffer, but they didn’t complain; instead, they endured it with joy in their hearts. That’s committed Christian living.

Application

Christ told His disciples, “**In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer ...**” (**John 16:33b**) Rather than causing us sadness, persecution and hardship should cause us to be as joyous as the Thessalonians, particularly if it has come upon us as a result of our living our Christian faith. Are you willing to suffer for Christ? Think about how much He gave for you!

1 Thessalonians 1:7 - Christian Models

so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

Truth to Learn

Every Christian should be an example of Christ Himself.

Behind the Words

“So that” is translated from the Greek word *hōste*, which is made up of *hōs*, meaning “as” and *te*, which is a particle of connection, usually meaning “in addition.” *Hōste*, therefore, could be translated as “so that, in addition” or “so as, also.” It serves as a strong connector between what was just said and what is about to be said.

“You became” is from the verb *ginomai*, meaning “to begin to be.” It is expressed as an infinitive here, so the first part of this verse could be translated as “so as, also, to become ...”

The word “examples” is translated from the Greek word *tupos*, from which we get our English word “type.” It is based on the verb *tuptō*, meaning “to strike so as to leave an impression.” *Tupos* refers to a die or a model (that is, any pattern) used to replicate a sign or symbol.

Meaning Explained

Based on what we learned about the meaning of the words in the opening part of this verse, if we combine this with the previous verse (taking out the parenthetical thought) we get: “And you became imitators of us and of the Lord ... so as, *you* also, to become models [of Christian living] to all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia.”

The word “Christian” literally means “little Christ”; therefore, a Christian is supposed to be someone who is a disciple of Christ, modeling his or her life after Jesus. That’s exactly what the Apostle Paul did after his conversion on the road to Damascus. Before that life changing event, Paul (then called Saul) was attacking Christians and having them arrested. After he became a Christian, he so completely committed himself to his new way of life that he, himself, became the target for persecution and attack. As a result, he became an example to the people he preached to.

Now we learn that the Christians in Thessalonica so completely committed themselves to our Lord and to the Apostle Paul’s teaching that they became examples to all those around them. From the northern most regions of Greece (Macedonia) to the southern most regions (Achaia), believers in Christ knew the reputation of the Thessalonians as committed Christians. They had a reputation of being Christians, not in name only, but in the way they lived their lives. They did this in a place, and at a time when it was not the popular thing to do. Within ten years of the writing of this letter, the persecution of Christians had so pervaded Roman culture that the persecutors even included the Emperor Nero. In A.D. 64 after the great fire that destroyed much of the city of Rome, many believe that Nero was directly responsible for starting the fire. In order to counter such beliefs, Nero put the blame directly on the Christians, persecuting and torturing them for their supposed act of arson.

Application

How about you? Do you have a reputation as a Christian among those with whom you work and with those who live in your neighborhood? If so, is your reputation that of being a “supposed

Christian” or a “committed Christian”? How about in your church? Do others look at your life and faith walk and want to be like you? Do people both inside and outside your church see Christ in you?

I ask you, therefore, “If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” That’s something to think about!

1 Thessalonians 1:8 - Demonstrating Our Faith

For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone out, so that we have no need to say anything.

Truth to Learn

Demonstrating our faith in everyday words and actions is the responsibility of every Christian.

Behind the Words

“Word” is from the Greek noun *logos*, which is based on the verb *legō*, meaning “to lay forth,” that is, “to express a thought in words.” Hence, *logos* refers to something said. However, it means more than just the word as spoken or written down; it includes the thought behind the word.

Kurios is the Greek word translated “Lord.” It is derived from *kuros*, meaning “might” or “power.” Thus, *kurios* refers to “someone who has legal power or supreme authority over you.” When accompanied by the definite article as it is here, it is a reference to “the Lord,” that is to God, who is our Lord and our Master.

The words “has sounded forth” are translated from the Greek verb *exēcheomai*. This word is made up of *ex*, meaning “out” or “out of” and *ēcheō* (from which we get our English word echo), which means “to make a loud noise.” Thus, *exēcheomai* means “to send out a loud sound.”

“We have no need” is the translation of the word *chreia*, which is derived from the verb *chraomai*, meaning “to furnish what is needed.” *Chreia* refers specifically to employment; however, it is often used as a metaphor for “that which is needed” or “that which is necessary.”

Meaning Explained

Back in verse three the Apostle Paul praised the members of the church in Thessalonica for their deeds of faith, their labor of love, and their patience. In verse six he said that they joyfully received the Word of God even in the midst of much affliction. He then said that they were examples to Christians all over the areas of Macedonia and Achaia. The reason they were such great examples to others included more than their labor of love and patience.

According to today’s verse, the Christians in Thessalonica proclaimed the word of the Lord far and wide. God has gifted each and every Christian with spiritual gifts, God given abilities, to be used within the church. He lists a number of these gifts in **Ephesians 4:11** and **1 Corinthians 12:8-10**. But Jesus gave us all a commission to preach the gospel, baptize believers, and teach those who have been saved (**Mark 28:19, 20**). Just because you don’t have the gift of evangelism doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t be proclaiming the gospel. And just because you don’t have the gift of helps doesn’t mean you shouldn’t be helping others within the church.

The members of the church in Thessalonica were so bold in proclaiming the gospel and they were so willing to put their faith into practice that they had a reputation throughout the Roman world of their day. In fact, their reputation was so great that Paul didn’t have to tell anyone, they already knew.

Application

As we asked yesterday, are you a “supposed Christian” or a “committed Christian?” Do your words and actions announce to everyone around you that you are a disciple of Christ? If not, why not?

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - Turn From Idols

For they themselves declare about us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

Truth to Learn

We need to turn from idols and give all our devotion to God.

Behind the Words

“Declare” is from the Greek verb *apangellō*, which is made up of *apo*, meaning “from” and *angellō*, meaning “to announce” or “to declare.” This word literally means “to bring a message from any person or place.”

The word “entry” is from the Greek noun *eisodon*, which is made up of *eis*, meaning “in” or “into” and *hodos*, meaning “a road” or “a way.” Thus, *eisodon* literally means “a way in.”

Epistrephō is the verb translated “turned.” It is composed of *epi*, meaning “above, over, on, or motion toward something” and *strephō*, meaning “to turn.” Thus, *epistrephō* means “to turn on something” or “to turn toward something.”

The word translated “idols” is *eidōlon*, which refers to “an image or representation of some other thing.”

“God” is translated from *theos*, which was originally used by the heathen to refer to their gods (idols). It is based on the noun *theteres*, meaning “placers.” The heathen Greeks thought their gods were the makers and disposers (placers) of all things. For instance, the god of money was referred to as mammon, which Jesus referred to in **Matthew 6:24** and **Luke 16:13**. In the New Testament, when you see word “god” it refers to a false god (see **1Corinthians 1:20**) but when spelled “God” it refers to the one true God.

Meaning Explained

In this letter to the church in Thessalonica, the Apostle Paul has been praising the members of the church there for the manner in which they have been living their lives and proclaiming the gospel message. In yesterday’s verse he told them that the witness of their faith living has gone out into the entire world; so much so, in fact, that Paul says he and his associated don’t have to tell anyone about it.

Now he adds to that praise by saying the reason the Apostles don’t have to tell anyone about the Christian character of the Thessalonians is because people everywhere are talking about it. He tells us that these people are talking about the way that Paul and his companions initially came to the people of Thessalonica. He also says that people are talking about how the Christians in Thessalonica turned from idol worship to become dedicated followers of Jesus Christ.

This makes this church somewhat unique among the churches that Paul planted. Most of them were primarily converts from Judaism, but it appears that the Thessalonian Christians were pagans before hearing and believing the gospel message.

Application

Do you have idols in your life that are more important than Jesus Christ? What's more important to you, money, clothes or other possessions, family, success at work, sports, your reputation ...? Whatever it is, if it demands more of your time and devotion than serving God, it's an idol and you need to turn from it to serve the living and true God.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 - He's Coming!

and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus the one delivering us from the coming wrath.

Truth to Learn

Jesus Christ is coming back very soon.

Behind the Words

“Wait” is translated from the Greek verb *anamenō*, which is made up of *ana*, used as an emphatic and *menō*, meaning “to remain.” Thus, *anamenō* means “to wait for expectantly with patience and confidence.” It is expressed as a present tense infinitive, indicating continuous action. We could translate this as “keep on waiting.”

The verb “raised” is *egeirō*, which means “to awaken from sleep” or “to raise up from a bed.” It is used metaphorically to mean “to raise up from the dead.”

The words “the dead” are translated from *ek nekrōn*. The word *ek* means “out” or “out of” and *nekrōn* means “of the dead ones” or “from the dead ones.” Hence, this says that Jesus was not simply brought back to life, but that He was raised up from among the dead ones.

“Delivering” is translated from *rhuomai* which literally means “to draw to one’s self;” that is, to rescue. The picture is that of drawing someone out of a rushing river. It is expressed as a participle so it could be translated as “rescuing us” or “delivering us.”

The second occurrence of the word “from” is translated from the Greek preposition *ek*, meaning “from” or “out of.” It is significant that he will deliver us “out of” the wrath, not simply protecting us in the midst of the wrath. This implies that we will not be present when the wrath occurs. This is evidence that the rapture will occur before God pours out His wrath.

The words “coming” are from *erchomai*, which means “to come” or “to go.” As used here it refers to “the wrath that is currently coming” or “the wrath that is on its way.”

Orgē is the Greek word translated “wrath.” It is a reference to the outpouring of action as a result of violent passion or of a vengeful mind.

Meaning Explained

In yesterday’s verse we learned that Paul refers to the Thessalonian Christians as having turned to God from idols. As we mentioned, the church there was probably made up principally of converted Greek pagans rather than converted Jews. Not only did they turn away from their idols, they turned toward God and actively served Him with devotion.

In today’s verse we learn something else about these converted pagans: they were awaiting the return of our Lord. The implication is that they were expecting Him to return at any moment. Obviously, Paul had preached to them that not only had Jesus Christ been resurrected from the dead, but he was going to return to our physical world in physical form. In fact, the return of the Lord is a major theme that runs throughout this entire letter.

Another thing we learn here is that the Thessalonian Christians had been taught that God is going to pour out His wrath on sinful mankind. They also knew that God’s wrath would not be poured out on them because of their faith in the Savior. Salvation through Jesus Christ means more than

simply a free ticket into heaven, it also means that we will avoid the vengeful judgment that God has reserved for those who reject Him.

Application

Are you living your life for God? Are you looking forward with eager expectation to the return of Jesus Christ? That eager expectation should be one of the things driving us to serve Him with complete devotion. Remember, He's coming soon. It could even be today!