

“The Life-Changing Power Of God’s Word”

1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

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Teaching Aim: To examine the life-changing power of God’s Word as it affected the Christians in Thessalonica and relates to us today. To realize Christians who live out their faith will be persecuted. To understand by hindering us, unbelievers are actually fighting the Lord and are storing up wrath for the day of wrath when God’s hammer of judgement will fall. To recognize Satan will do everything in his power to discourage believers from making spiritual progress.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Receiving the Word of God and living life in a way that pleases Him! (1 Thess. 2:13-14)

1. What thrilled the Apostle Paul in **verse 13**? How can a believer “*pray without ceasing*” today? Charles Spurgeon said, “*We are to be in an atmosphere of prayer.*” What did he mean? What is God’s will for the Christian according to **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**?

2. The Word of God is not the word of man, it is the Word of God. Sir Walter Scott said, “*His Word – the Bible – is inspired, or God-breathed, in all its books and parts as originally written. It is our only authority in all things, for all circumstances, and all times. There is needed a generation who shall tremble at the Word of God. It is life’s chart; our guidance, our light, our moral safeguard. Thank God for the Sacred volume.*” Why do you think more people don’t have reverence towards God’s Word today? What important truths do we learn from **2 Tim. 3:16-17**? How have you seen these truths play out in your own life?

3. How does the Word of God relate to your life today? Warren Wiersbe said, “*Meditation is to the spiritual life what digestion is to the physical life. If you did not digest your food, you would die.*” On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your daily quiet time with the Lord? Do you ever spend time meditating on God’s Word?

4. How had the church in Thessalonica come to imitate the Christian churches in Judea (**vs. 14**)? Churches in many parts of the world are still suffering persecution today for their faith in Jesus Christ. Church father Tertullian said, “*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.*” Why do you think the church in America is so apathetic today? How might persecution divide the wheat and the tares and change the way we do church today?

5. What situation forced the Apostle Paul to leave Thessalonica? (See **Acts 17:5-9**) Did Paul leave out of fear or to protect the believers there? Jesus didn't promise us health and wealth but he did promise we will suffer if we follow Him. (See **Matt. 10:22; John 15:18-15**) According to **1 Pet. 4:15**, what should we not suffer for? What happens when a person suffers for doing what is right and being a Christian? (See **1 Pet. 4:16**) Paul suffered greatly for his faith, what practical advice did he give to young Timothy? (See **2 Tim. 3:12-14**)

6. How did Paul feel towards the unbelieving Jews, even in spite of all the persecution he suffered because of them? (See **Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1**)

Part II: The sin of the unbelieving Jews against Paul and the Thessalonian believers (1 Thess. 2:15-16)

1. Paul wasn't about to let the unbelieving Jews get by scot-free. What did Paul reveal about these individuals in **verse 15**? What did Jesus say about the Jewish religious leaders? (See **Matt. 23:29-32**) Should we trust people because there are religious, or should we check what they are saying against Scripture?

2. What did the Apostle Peter say about the unbelieving Jews in **Acts 2:22-23**? So often people do wrong when they think they are doing right. Was the Pharisee Saul [*Paul's former name*] equally guilty before coming to faith in Christ? (See **Acts 26:9-11**) Why do you think Saul's name was changed to "*Paul*" (Paul means "*small*")?

3. According to **verse 16**, what did the unbelieving Jews forbid Paul and his companions from doing? What was their purpose behind this? Was God keeping tabs on their actions? What will the end result of their unbelief and disobedience be? (See **Matt. 23:31-32; Rom. 2:5-6**)

4. It is important to note that God will allow sin for only so long before His hammer of judgment comes crashing down. What do you see as some of our greatest sins in the United States of America today? How should we as Christians respond to these sins in society?

Part III: Paul's desire to see the Thessalonian believers again (1 Thess. 2:17-20)

1. Paul knew the Thessalonian believers were going through hard times! The Greek word interpreted "*taken away*" literally means, "*to be orphaned.*" In what way were the Thessalonian Christians orphaned? How did it make Paul feel as their spiritual father (**vs. 17**)? What did Paul want to do (**vs. 18**)? What prevented him from fulfilling this wish?
2. The word Satan means "*adversary*". Whenever we begin to grow spiritually, Satan tries his best to hinder that growth. Have you ever let Satan stop you from moving forward in ministry? What are some ways that Satan has hindered you in the past when you were growing spiritually?
3. Who is the person that led you to the Lord and you consider your spiritual father or mother? Are you still in touch with that person? What can we infer from **verse 19** if that person has already passed away? Have you ever experienced the joy of leading another person to Christ?
4. What is the meaning of the Greek word "*Parousia*"? (Hint: Google it!) What can we expect to occur at the Parousia of Jesus Christ? (See **1 Thess. 4:16-18**) Is this something that excites you? Should the Parousia of Christ excite unbelievers or bring terror to them?
5. Why would the Thessalonian believers be Paul's glory and joy at the coming of Jesus Christ? Does this verse indicate we will recognize other believers in heaven? Next to being in the presence of God, who would you like to see and be able to talk to in heaven?
6. There is only one way to go to heaven, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. **Romans 3:23** says, "*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" Have you repented from your sins and turned to Christ for salvation? If not, why not repent and go to the Lord right now in prayer and do so?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The Bible is not the word of fallible men; it is the inerrant and infallible Word of God!
- Once we come to faith in Christ, the Bible comes alive; *"The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."* (See **Heb. 4:12**)
- Churches in many parts of the world are suffering today because of their faith in Christ!
- The unbelieving Jews persecuted the prophets; they were responsible for having the Lord Jesus Christ crucified on the cross; and in Paul's day they hindered him and his companions from sharing the Gospel message with the Gentiles!
- Whenever we are growing spiritually, Satan will do his best to stop us!
- If we can't be with our spiritual parents now, we will be with them again when Christ returns!