



8/28/26

Have you ever been in a situation where you realized you were in the middle of your story and you wanted it to end... but you were also afraid for how it would end? On this week's episode of Chosen and Cherished, we talked about the middle of the story, and the hope that we have in Christ. He always promises that the end of the story will work together for our good. If you'd like to hear the podcast, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 Thessalonians 1:6-10

At the end of last week's message, in vs. 5, Paul said, "You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake." What kind of men did they prove to be? Sinners saved by grace, ambassadors for Christ, seeking God's honor and glory and not their own. They lived as examples SO THAT we could follow their example and become examples for others! This is the main way God grows the church, the Kingdom Outpost, by raising up examples who follow Jesus' example according to His word and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul was not singled out to be God's special disciple so that we could think that a passionate relationship with the Lord was reserved only for some, but that ALL believers in Christ Jesus could have a passionate relationship with Him that spills out to others and grows a thriving church of believers.

What can our Kingdom Outpost church learn from Paul's example along with other genuine believers' examples so that we can become genuine, passionate living examples to others, for their sake... that they might become genuine, passionate examples?

Vs. 6-7 ~ "And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia."

The believers saw the genuineness of Paul's devotion to the Lord and that he looked a lot like Jesus! They wanted to follow his example as they followed the Lord's example!!! It's really

important for a Kingdom Outpost to understand who they're seeking to imitate. They did not put Paul above Jesus. They followed his example because he followed Christ's example (1 Corinthians 11:1).

They wanted to follow the Lord even though they received His word "in much affliction." How? How can someone want the truth of the gospel when it's surrounded by affliction, distress, persecution? They do it according to the joy of the Holy Spirit.

Okay... we can have joy WHILE we're being afflicted??? So much joy that we choose to align with those who refuse to allow any persecution to stop them from preaching the gospel? Yes... the joy of the Holy Spirit is not limited to easy or comfortable circumstances. The joy of the Lord can thrive even when we grieve. That is a divine, supernatural joy that makes no sense to someone who doesn't know Jesus. It's one of the reasons people are drawn to the gospel. They see an example of a believer thriving in the midst of terrible circumstances, while still being honest about their grief, and they say, "I want that."

These believers who followed Paul's example and imitated the Lord were so vocal about the hope of God's word that in a time when there was no phone or internet or telegram, news of their faith in Christ spread to Macedonia and Achaia, hundreds of miles away.

I have to ask the Lord... What kind of example do You see in me? Will You make me a faithful example so that, even in affliction, I have the genuine joy of the Holy Spirit exuding from me? Even when I'm grieving? The Lord has shown me that I have a lot of degrees of glory to go until I am a perfect example of Jesus. He's exposed in my heart that I really want comfort and ease. But life is not comfortable or easy. And sometimes following Jesus means even less comfort and ease. That's why it's so important that I don't base my walk with God on my feelings, but on the facts of His word... on His promises... on His warnings of what I may face... trusting Him that He promises He'll never leave me alone in it, and He'll use it for my good. O Lord, let the affliction come if it means having more of Your joy, and being closer to You. You promise that Your grace will satisfy me regardless of my circumstances.

Vs. 8-10 ~ "For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything." Everywhere Paul was going, he was hearing of the faith of the Thessalonian Kingdom Outpost. God's word spread everywhere through their testimony! Their faith in Christ was so evident that the gospel was spreading.

Their faith... their confidence in the truth of the gospel and in the hope to come... spending eternity with Jesus. Forgiveness of sin. Justification. Sanctification. Genuine faith in Jesus will always spring into action. Genuine faith in Him cannot be hidden or kept silent, even when there's a cost. O Lord, please grow my faith so that I can say as Paul did, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ!"

"For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you..." Proverbs

27:2 says, "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips." It's one thing to hear someone share their testimony. It's another thing to hear others be so rocked by that testimony that they pass it along. People from everywhere were saying to Paul when he got to their town, "Oh yes, we know about you! Those Thessalonian believers can't stop talking about you!" "But you're hundreds of miles from them!" "Yep! Good news is worth spreading."

Well, what was the report? They "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." That's what true faith does.

True faith turns away from everything that would be placed as a higher priority than the Lord, and makes the Lord its highest priority. True faith, according to Hebrews 11 puts all confidence in the Lord, seeks Him, and draws near to Him. True faith according to 1 Peter 1 puts all hope in the life to come and not in the here and now. True faith celebrates that Jesus has delivered us from the wrath to come by taking the wrath we deserve on Himself. This is the example Jesus wants me to follow. This is the example Jesus wants me to be for others.

Do I have true faith? Do I have evident faith? Do I have surrendered faith? Do I have hopeful faith? O Lord, please make it so!!! Please do this, not just in me, but in our church. Help us to be a Kingdom Outpost, like a lighthouse in the darkness, and let the testimony of our faith spread far and wide... not to make a name for ourselves, but to lift high the name of Jesus.