God's Word at Work: (Sermon Notes) 1 Thess. 2:13-20

Last week we looked at what a meaningful, credible, fruitful, and faithful ministry looks like

- Endurance, Exhortation, Evaluation, Endearment, Exertion, Excellence, and Empowerment. God's Word sounds forth, and goes out.
    - But what is the response? This makes all the difference: is it mixed with faith?

    - "But the word they heard did not profit them because it was not united by faith in those who heard." (Heb. 4:2)

"We give thanks to God": Why? A gift of God's grace to hear and believe the message of the Gospel. The Word was received and became fruitful in the lives of the Thessalonians.

"And these are the ones on whom the seed was sown on the good soil, and they hear the word of God and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty and a hundredfold." (Mark 4:20)

They were exhorting, encouraging . . . three weeks on the sabbath and beyond, a continual urgent appeal

You received it not as the word of men, but for what it really is: The Word of God - my exhortation for you today is this: receive this as the Word of God. It is detrimental to refuse. Hebrews appeal (Hebrews 4:11-12): you owe to the Word the same reverence you owe to God Himself.

"You didn't pass it off as just one more human opinion" (The Message)

This means the Word has God's Authority, Sufficiency, and Power

- Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life." (John 6:68)
- "Take care what you listen to" (Mark 4:24)

God's Word is His Divine Power Source: God works through His Word to send, save, sanctify, and secure

1. **God's Word sends us through our calling**.
    a. "You received from us" - they got the message across... (See 1 Cor. 15:1-5)
    b. "Exhorting, encouraging, appealing." They needed truth, light, grace. Good News.
    c. "Which you heard from us"
    d. Before it can have the possibility of response, it must be delivered
    e. Why did Paul and his team go and sow the seed of the Word, even amidst affliction?
        i. It is true. This is good news that first confronts us with bad news.
            1. "We cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20)
        ii. God sent them; They were called (Acts 16:10) - a burden . .

f. Matthew 28:19-20: Go therefore and make disciples . . .teaching them to observe all that I commanded you
g. Acts 1:8: You shall be my witnesses...
h. John 20:21: Peace be with you; As the Father has sent me, so send I you:
i. How will they believe unless they are sent? Romans 10: 8-10
    i. The Bad News: we cannot climb up to heaven and save ourselves
    ii. The Good News: God has come down to redeem us in Christ
    iii. "The most important thing in the world is to know that Jesus came to save sinners. The second most important thing is for you to know that you require it." (James M. Boice)
j. 2 Timothy 2:2: "entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"
k. 2 Timothy 3:14-17

2. **God's Word saves us through our faith.**
    a. They needed salvation: *man cannot live by bread alone*
    b. You received the Word- what a gift.
    c. Accepted it for what it really is: and the Word accomplished its work:
        i. Resulting fruit? . .work of faith, labor of love, and steadfastness of hope was the evidence . .(1:3) turned from idols to serve the living God (1:9)
    d. "That they might be saved" (2:16)
    e. In you who believe . . believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.
        i. Eph. 2:1-10: "And you were dead in your sins and transgressions . . For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."
    f. Source of Salvation - *Saved by the Word of God - born again. . .by the seed of the word*
        i. Saved from the penalty, power and ultimately the presence of sin
    g. They turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.
    h. "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"
    i. His Word implanted: "In humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21)
    j. His Word through us to others: "Sow your seed in the morning, and do not be idle in the evening . . ." (Ecc. 11:6)
    k. "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of perishable seed but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which was preached to you." (1 Peter 1:22-25)

3. **God's Word sanctifies us through our sufferings.** (2:14-16)
    a. They needed transformation and resources for the reality of suffering which marked their genuine conversion and salvation.
    b. Evidence: You became imitators... of Jesus, and the initial churches... this mark of suffering
        i. Churches of God in Christ Jesus
        ii. You endured the same sufferings as they did
        iii. They killed the Lord Jesus
        iv. Killed the prophets
        v. Drove us out . .
        vi. Not pleasing to God
        vii. Hostile to everybody
        viii. Hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles
        ix. They always fill it up
        x. But wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. "Anger has fallen- and they experience it even now"
        xi. Do not be afraid of them; do not be intimidated by them
    c. Peel away all these layers of sin and self - so that we will rely only on God (2 Cor. 1)
    d. This will stabilize, strengthen, and sustain them . . keep gas in the tank before it goes too low . . very sanctifying, cleansing me of self trust, toxic ego, etc.
        i. Tell us why we suffer; shows us how to suffer; how God uses the suffering for ultimate good (worst thing is the best) and then the end of suffering
        ii. John 16:33; Romans 8:32
    e. "You complain because the same trials are constantly returning. But look here, what have you to fear? Are you afraid of the divine craftsman who wants to perfect His masterpiece in this way? Would you like to come from the hands of such a magnificent Artist as a mere sketch and no more?"
    f. His Word in us: "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you . ." (Col. 3:12)

4. **God's Word secures us for our glory and joy.**
    a. The Gospel secures our lives with God and others for all eternity. God will keep His promises; He is faithful, trustworthy, and is watching over His word to perform it.
    b. Paul is certain that he will glory and rejoice over the Thessalonians when they are finally in glory with Jesus at His return.
    c. They needed future glory and joy
    d. We have security and peace - with God and others; a family and a future...
        i. Parousia . . with the Lord Jesus, glory in His return,
    e. But we . . in contrast to the haters of God and the Gospel . .

i. The topic and subject here is relationships; God's word binds us to Christ and to one another for all eternity, come what may... security even in absence.
ii. Bereft of you for a short while . .a brief moment in time (compared to eternity). We were homesick for a while
iii. Not in physical proximity, but still one and love in spirit; unified; connected
iv. They will send Timothy to strengthen and encourage them (3:1-2)

f. Were all the more eager to see your face . .
g. We wanted to come to you more than once. Well, what happened??
h. You are our Joy!
i. Hope, Joy, crown of exultation! Glory is "boasting"
j. It is YOU, in the presence of the LORD JESUS at His coming (Parousia)
    i. To see you, in the presence of Jesus, will be great joy to see you in your joy!!
    ii. How does Paul know this? The Word has promised it
    iii. So, God is faithful; and this is the source of our security. .
k. Not future shock . . but He is the shock absorber. (Life's shocks/surprises; Tripp)
l. John 14-16 -
    i. I am going away; but for your benefit and joy
    ii. You will be scattered and separated; but I will come again . .
m. Rather than dread, Joy awaits! (Luke) 12:32)
    i. Even though they are separate . . they are really together.
    ii. Never separated from Jesus or one another...
n. So the promises found in God's word became the source of joy, hope, glory, crown, love . . receiving and giving . .then, you can become a conduit of JOY

"God's Word does not merely impart information. It actually creates life. It's not only descriptive; it's effective. God speaking is God acting." (Michael Horton)

"In the command is the enabling"

- Living and active...
- Works . . is alive and gives life . . unlike any other book or message;

"A life still near to death, did me possess,
With a deep sense of time's great preciousness.

Still thinking I had little time to live,
My fervent heart to win men's souls did strive.

I preach'd, as never sure to preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men!" — Richard Baxter