



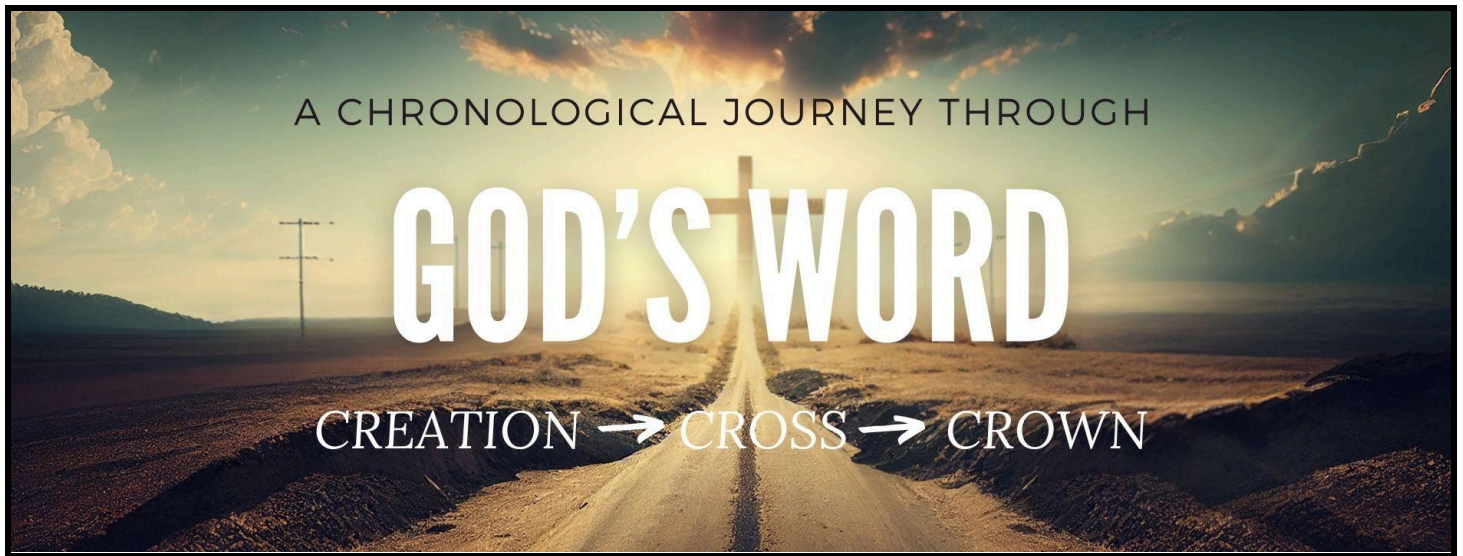
DEVOTIONAL FOR GALATIANS 4-6; ACTS 17; 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

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On September 11, 2001, it seemed like the world held its breath while watching the aftermath from acts of evil on our Nation. However, there were many good things that came out of it. One of my favorite stories of faith, hope, and love during 9/11 is the following.

The main designated airport for planes to land in a national state of emergency for Europe/USA travel is in Gander, Newfoundland. In this town of 10,000 people, they had 38 planes grounded with roughly 6700 passengers due to the state of emergency of 9/11. Needless to say, this was a huge undertaking to manage. The diversity of all the passengers with over 90 countries represented, health challenges, and fear of the unknown were all at play here. Everyone was a suspect and faced intense scrutiny going through customs, but everyone was also a guest. Many of the passengers had been on the planes for up to 31 hours by the time they were able to get unloaded and processed. Instantly, the town of Gander went into action, volunteers readied shelters, every school, gym, community center, church, camp, and townspeople's homes opened their doors. The hotel took in the flight crews, and the pilots. Over the next 6 days, this quiet humble town served with arms wide open. For security reasons, no one could retrieve their checked bags, so donations came in for toiletries, clothes, blankets, pillows, and bedding. Pharmacies took hundreds of orders for prescriptions to be filled at no charge. The townspeople of Gander began cooking a lot, Walmart and grocery stores became bare, and the local hockey rink became the world's largest refrigerator. Many families took in passengers as guests and treated them as family. They took them hunting, to concerts, site seeing, and loved them so well that when it was time to get on a flight and return home, many didn't want to leave. Due to the amazing acts of kindness, many of the passengers came together as they were preparing to fly home and decided to start a scholarship fund for the students at the schools in Gander. These students went above and beyond serving these families sacrificially, and became private tour guides for the guests. This small town of Gander, Newfoundland made a huge impression on the entire world, to over 90 countries. The way they opened their hearts, homes, and their town to people they did not know. One comment that was made about the town is this- "In a world today seemingly filled with division, terrorism, and hate, they would do it all over again. Kindness is woven into the very fabric of their nature- they don't know any other way to live."

This story of the love in action represented on 9/11 reminds me so much of the undeniable work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the church of Thessalonica in 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10. As you read these 8 verses it is very evident that people saw a difference in the way this church lived out their faith in Jesus. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy in verse 2-3



write, "We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." It was evident that the fruit of the Spirit was being lived out in their life, and was being talked about a lot. Verses 4-5 we see the contributing factor of how and why this church became the way they were. The bible says that they received the gospel message with full conviction by the power of the Holy Spirit. Not only guided by the Holy Spirit, this church was also able to learn from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy due to their modeling of a true follower of Christ, and a faithful teacher of the word of God. Even though this church was facing affliction and hardships, they received the word of God with the joy of the Holy Spirit. In doing this they in turn became a model and an example not only in Macedonia, but in Achaia and everywhere. God's word was being proclaimed and going forth everywhere from people talking about this church in how they turned away 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.

Questions:

1. At your funeral how would people remember you? What would they say was important to you?
2. Can you say to others follow me as I follow Christ?
3. What are some idols in your life that you need to turn from? If you're not sure, ask your spouse, kids, biblical community.