**1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 THE WORKING OF THE WORD**

Paul was thankful and is excited for the Thessalonians. What was he thankful for? That the Thessalonians had the right spiritual attitudes toward the Word of God.

Paul is so thankful for the Thessalonian’s reception of the Word which always works. Colossians 1, "You heard the Word of truth,", the gospel, then verse 6, Colossians 1, "which has come to you just as in all the world also, is constantly bearing fruit and increasing” “even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard and understood the grace of God in truth."  Since the moment you heard and understood, the Word began to work and it will always work in the believer.

They had very limited opportunity to hear the truth and they believed. It occurred in a few weeks.  Three Sabbaths Paul came, in Acts 17, to Thessalonica and reasoned out of the Scripture and then stayed on preaching perhaps for a few more weeks at best.

Obviously at this point in the letter we're aware that Paul was thrilled with the whole history of the Thessalonian church.  If you've been with us you know how he feels.  In fact, to be real honest with you, he doesn't even get into the main subject until the word "finally" in chapter 4.  He spends the first three chapters extolling the ministry among the Thessalonians.  He is thrilled with what God has done.  And I think it has so captured his fascination because it is so evidently the work of God. I know what kind of church you are, in chapter 1, you're in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, you are brethren beloved of God, you are the elect, you have a faith that works, you have a love that labors, you have a hope that endures.  You've become imitators of us and of the Lord.  You're examples of how to live the Christian life.  The Word is sounding out from you.  Your life is transformed so that you serve the living and true God and you're waiting for the return of Jesus Christ.  They were a noble church.  They had all the evidences of genuineness and he was moved to thank God for them.

This Bible study tonight is to encourage us we ponder on the Word and the supernatural work it has done in us and is doing, and will continue to do. That is why we constantly remind each other to continue in the Word for it is what we need most.

**1. RECEIVED THE WORD**

We also constantly thank God, he says.  Similar to what he said in chapter 1 verse 2, "We give thanks to God always for all of you."  He had a thankful heart.  And he recognized always that the source of all spiritual progress was God.  When he wrote to the Roman church in chapter 1 verse 8, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all."  He always acknowledged that it was God who was the power, that it was God who was the resource.  It was God who was doing the work.  His own experience with them receiving the gospel, being genuinely converted, his own experience of nurturing that for a brief time, and then their marvelous spiritual growth and development and witness that was reaching the world, made him very clear on the fact that God was at work in a unique way in Thessalonica.  They were a church to rejoice over.  They were a church to be thankful for.

Here is the reason why I'm so thankful for you, here's what makes you a church to be glad for," and then he launches off into a three-fold reason, a three-fold reason, three parts to his reason.

This is the starting point of his gladness.  And, they were a church that had a right response, they were a people who had a right response to the Word of God. They received it. They were prepared hearts and they received the Word mixed with faith.

ACTS 17:1-4

 *RECEIVED*  (PARALAMBANO)—OUTWARD,EXTERNAL HEARING, TO ACCEPT FROM ANOTHER

When he came into the synagogue on those three Sabbaths and then elsewhere in the city, and preached the gospel, there was an objective reception.  They listened to him.  They heard what he had to say.  And what they heard, he says, was the Word of God's message

 HEARING OF THE EAR MATTHEW 13:9, MARK 4:24, LUKE 8:18, 2 TIM 4:3, HEB 5:11

 1 COR 15:1-3

 GOD’S MOUTHPIECE TO SPEAK HIS WORD 2:2,8,9 4:15 A Word heard from us out from God."  You heard from us the Word of God.  That's the idea.  It was ours as to speaking; it was God's as to source.  It was God's Word that we spoke.

 GOD’S WORD, NOT PAUL’S And so Paul says when we spoke to you we spoke God's Word inspired.  Paul was God's tool to speak God's Word, to write God's Word down

 ACTS 8:14, Those preachers who went out to Samaria, including Philip, to preach didn't preach their own message; they preached the Word of God, the Word coming from God. 13:44

 INSPIRED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD 2 TIM 3:16 When the apostles spoke it wasn't human opinion.  The Thessalonians were used to that.  They were a crossroads of the world, and they heard of all the different philosophies.

 WRITTEN BY MEN OF GOD 2 PETER 1:20-21

**2. ACCEPTED THE WORD**

*ACCEPTED*—(DECHOMAI)—INWARD WELCOME

 FROM THE MIND TO THE HEART HEARING OF THE HEART

 This indicates their initiative in eagerly embracing the message, a definite act of saving faith.  Back in Acts chapter 17, you remember, when Paul came to Thessalonica and explained about Christ and His death and His resurrection and so forth, it says, "Some of them were persuaded, joined Paul, joined Silas along with a great multitude of God-fearing Greeks and a number of leading women."  What happened was, people got converted.

 CONVERSION

 ROMANS 10:17

 ACCEPTED NOT AS THE WORD OF MEN

 Not just another human message.  Not another philosopher, another teacher, another religious leader, not another speaker, not another orator, not more rhetoric, not human wisdom, human opinion, carnal viewpoint, you heard it as it was, not the word of man, but the Word of God.

Paul made very clear that anyone who reads what he wrote and who hears the echo of what he preaches understands that his was the Word of God.

"But wait a minute, where did he receive it?  From whom?"  Galatians 1, "I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached to me is not according to man," verse 11.  So wherever he received it, it wasn't from man.  Verse 12, "I received it neither from man nor was I taught it, but received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."  He got it from God.

 WHAT IT TRULY IS (ALETHOS) –GENUINE, TRUTH

**3. APPLIED THE WORD**

GOD PERFORMS HIS WORD IN YOU The Word of God is not empty, it is not impotent, it is not inert like the word of men.  So the end of verse 13 says, "Which also performs its work in you who believe."  That's a great statement.

 (ENERGAI) WORK, ENERGY That verb almost always used in the New Testament refers to supernatural action and most often to God's supernatural action.

 MARK 3:1-5

 PHILIPPIANS 2:13, 1 COR 12:6

When you see a redeemed community of people, you can be thrilled that if they have received the Word of God as the Word of God and not the word of men, and if they have taken it into their hearts and believed it, then that Word by the power of God's Spirit is performing in them.  It's working in them.  That verb means to work effectively, efficiently, productively on a supernatural level as energized by God.  That's one of the great truths of the Christian life, beloved, that the Word of God works in us, it performs effectively, efficiently, productively, powerfully.

**WHAT THE WORD PERFORMS**

Here is what the Word does in you and in any believer.  In the believer it is performing glorious things.

SALVATION—1 PETER 1:23, JAMES 1:18

BLESSING—LUKE 11:28

TEACHES, REPROVES, CORRECTS, TRAINS—2 TIMOTHY 3:16

GUIDES—PSALM 119:105

COUNSELS—PSALM 119:24

REVIVES—PSALM 119:154

BEARS FRUIT—COL 1:5-6

GROWS US—1 PETER2:2

WARNS AND REWARDS—PSALM 19:11

JUDGES—HEBREWS 4:12

SANCTIFIES—JOHN 17:17

PURGES—JOHN15:3

FREES—JOHN 8:31-32

JOY—1 JOHN 1:4

STRENGTHENS—PSALM 119:28

WISDOM—PSALM 119:97-100

PROSPERITY—JOSHUA 1:8-9 HOPE –PSALM 119:147

Psalm 19 The psalmist may have well summarized it all in the magnificent words of Psalm 19 in which he says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.  The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.  The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.  The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.  The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.  The judgments of the Lord are true, they produce comprehensive righteousness."

It is a people to be glad for who receive the Word which performs in them all these things.  Listen to me, the words of human beings, no matter how astute they are, no matter how brilliant they are, no matter how educated they are, no matter how wise they are, no matter how eloquently they might be expressed, cannot produce these results.  Only God's Word can.  It performs in those who believe.  And that was the essential reality in the Thessalonians' life.  Their spiritual progress was a result of their reception of the Word of God.  Those who accept the Word as God's Word, those who believe what it says and appropriate it to their lives will experience its ongoing, transforming power.  Where there is no believing, there is no power.