

August 18, 2024 PM – Pastor Kevin Olivier
1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 – “Turn to the Living and True God”

- A. What does a vibrant church look like?
B. In **vv1-4** Paul, Timothy, and Silas gave thanks for these believers.

You are to turn to the living and true God for salvation.	I. HOW THE GOSPEL COMES TO SAVE II. BELIEVERS AS EXAMPLES AND WITNESSES
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I. **HOW THE GOSPEL COMES TO SAVE** →**v5**

- A. In accordance with Paul’s custom when entering a city to do Christian ministry, he went to preach the gospel in synagogues first. He explained this in in **Rom 1:16** when he wrote, **“I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”**
- Acts 17:2-3** says that for **“three Sabbaths [Paul] reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.’”**
 - The reason that many believed the preaching was not only because Paul was persuasive in **“explaining and giving evidence”** concerning the person and work of Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.
 - It was because his preaching was blessed by the power of the holy spirit to bring full conviction to those who were being saved.
 - Acts 17:4** indicates that the bulk of those who believed were **“a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.”**
 - To a large degree the Jews rejected Paul’s preaching.
 - They were jealous and angry that Paul was taking away their Greek proselytes. They hired **“wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar” (v5).**
- B. There was something about Paul and Silas [Silvanus] that was instrumental in their receiving the message of the gospel. In **1 Thess 1:5** Paul reminded them by writing, **“...just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.”**
- It was not the wise or godly thing for Paul and Silas to try to stand up against this angry mob.
 - Paul and Silas had much ministry yet before them.
 - The two men were following the words of Jesus when He said in **Mat 10:23**, **“But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next.”**
 - The brethren in Thessalonica secretly **“sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea” (Acts 17:10).**
 - We don’t know exactly what it was in the lives of these two men that proved **“what kind of men”** they were to new believers in this fledgling church.
 - We can guess it was the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
 - The Holy Spirit gave them boldness to preach with conviction and authority in a similar way that Jesus preached.
- C. The gospel came to save many in this church by they way the new believers became imitators of these two men and of Jesus. →**v6**

II. BELIEVERS AS EXAMPLES AND WITNESSES

- A. According to v7, others took notice of the life-transforming conversion of the Thessalonians **“so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.”**
1. The Thessalonians did not merely make a profession of faith. In many ways, their lives were a demonstration of a transformation.
 2. Even though they had to face a dangerous mob of wicked men because of their faith, they still feared God and not men so they did not keep silent about their faith in Christ. In v8, Paul wrote, **“For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth.”**
 - a. Christians ought to be both examples and witnesses telling others about the gospel
 - b. Some of this witness could have been by both preachers and church members.
- B. Paul, Silas, and Timothy received a second-hand praise report of the Thessalonians from the saints in Macedonia and Achaia. In v9, they wrote, **“For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God.”**
1. You should have a profession of faith in Christ, yet also a sanctified life to serve as a proper example of the Christian faith.
 2. For you to be a greater example as a Christian, is there something in your life you should turn away from?
 - a. Parents, you ought to be examples to your children.
 - b. Paul taught Titus how both older men and women are to be examples to help train the upcoming, younger generations. → Titus 2:1-5
- C. Another way this church proved to be a faithful example was in the way that they eagerly waited for Christ with a sincere faith. According to v10, with faith, they were eager to **“wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.”**
1. The Psalms are rich with calls to “wait upon the Lord”¹
 - a. In Ps 39:7-8 David wrote, **“And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions.”**
 - b. These Christians knew that Christ’s perfect work delivered them from all their transgressions – all of their sins.
 - 1) They knew that Jesus by His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension **“rescues us from the wrath to come.”**
 - 2) We know we are already saved, yet we have not come to our end goal of heaven and then the new heavens and new earth.
 2. Each of us is called to wait for Jesus the Son of God to return from heaven. There are calls for us to have a daily waiting upon the Lord.

Review, further application, and conclusion:

¹ Regarding our waiting on the Lord, see Ps 27:14, Ps 130:5, Ps 37:7, and v34.