

1Thessalonians 1:8–10

“Being an Example to Others of a True Work of the Spirit”

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***What are some ways that we may be an example to others of a true work of the Spirit?*** Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. 1Thessalonians 1:8–10 prepares us for the second serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these three verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that those whom the Holy Spirit is displaying as an example to others will live lives that reverberate with the Word, will be unashamed and glad slaves of the true God, and will be characterized by eagerness for the return of Christ.

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### Thursday, March 3, 2022 ▫ Read 1Thessalonians 1:8–10

Questions from the Scripture text: What has come from the Thessalonians (v8)? In which two places? And where else? What has gone out? What don't the apostle and friends need to say? What does everyone declare about them (v9)? What had the Thessalonians turned from? To do what? And to wait for Whom (v10)? What had God done to Him? What is His Name? What does He do?

How had the Thessalonians become “examples” to all in Macedonia and Achaia? Inquiring Christians want to know, because we'd like for them to become examples to us as well.

First, **the Word of the Lord sounded forth from them**, v8. Not only did they receive and respond to the Word well (cf. v5–6, 2:13), they did so in such a way that literally *reverberated* or *trumpeted* forth—not just in a couple of places where there were new churches (Macedonia and Achaia) but every single place that they went.

The second half of the verse restates “the word of the Lord has sounded forth” with the clause “your faith toward God has gone out.” This is important, because we sometimes hear the mistaken idea that faith is just raw belief despite any reason or evidence for it. But here the Thessalonians' faith was that the Word that they had believed, and which they now spoke, so controlled how they lived that wherever they went, the difference the gospel makes sounded off of them like bells in a permanent state of having been struck. O that this indeed would be an example of what our lives come to be by the work of the Holy Spirit!

Second, **they became willing slaves**, v9. When someone met one of these Thessalonian Christians they would find that the once-idol-worshippers had become slaves (literally) of the living and true God. A little bit of inquiry, and they would learn that this happened because a Jew named Paul had come and told them about a resurrected Savior named Jesus. There would be no question as to whether this message or this Jesus was real—the about face (he uses the ‘repentance’ word for physical turning, rather than the wone for mind changing) of the Thessalonians was literally living proof of it.

Third, **their desire is forward-focused to the return of Christ**, v10. They weren't inactive. v9 just said they were slaving! But this vigorous activity aimed at something in the future, something that the activity could not itself bring about: His son from heaven and deliverance from the wrath to come. Jesus had risen from the dead, and they were eager for Him to raise them from the dead.

The intensity of their desire led to some errors that the apostle would have to correct (1Th 4:13–5:11; 2Th 2:1–12). But the intensity itself was exemplary. The v9 way of describing their new life was “slaving unto the living and true God.” The v10 way of describing their life was “waiting for [Jesus] from heaven.” If we are going to follow their examples as those who have received the true gospel in God's own power, then we must be those who have an eagerness for and focus upon the return of Christ.

It's actually quite liberating to labor hard out of gratitude and love when the thing you most desire is a thing that you absolutely cannot make happen. It reminds you that duty is yours, but the outcome is God's—and that's the safest place for it to be.

**What evidence is there that the gospel that you heard is true? In what way are you an example?**

*Sample prayer: Lord, we bless Your Name for the transformation of life that You produced in the Thessalonian believers. Forgive us for either shrinking from being Your slaves or even altogether failing to serve You as our Master. And forgive us for being short-sighted so that we are little mindful of Christ's return and the Last Day. Continue Your Spirit's work upon us and in us we ask, through Jesus Christ, AMEN!!*

**Suggested songs: ARP98 “O Sing a New Song” or TPH389 “Great God, What Do I See and Hear!”**

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

First Thessalonians chapter 1 verses 8 through 10. These are God's words for from you. The word of the Lord has sounded forth. Not only in Macedonia and okaya, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone out so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us.

What manner of entry we had to you and how you 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. Even Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

So far the reading of God's inspired in anerent word. Remember last week in the first seven verses we focused especially on the evidence that the Holy Spirit had really been working in the evidence of their election from God that the faith hope and love that were demonstrated in their actions in the vigor of their effort and in the perseverance and endurance under affliction and even joy in the midst of affliction, all demonstrated that what was happening in them was something that only God could do.

And if God was the one who's doing it, It was because God had planned to do it from before the world began. And if God had planned it from before the world began and was doing it, then of course he would keep doing it and he would finish the work and that's what makes it so, encouraging to pray for believers or to participate in their growth like Paul Silas.

And Timothy were, as they wrote this letter and it continues in our verse today, for from you, the word of the Lord has sounded forth. So he has said, at the end of last week's portion, you became examples to all in Macedonia and okay, I believe who believe. So there's at least three ways in which they became examples.

One is the word of the Lord had sounded forth from them. Not only did they receive and respond to the word. Well, and we saw that up in verse 5 and 6 with the gospel, didn't or sorry. In verse 5, the gospel didn't come to them in word only.

But also in power in the Holy Spirit etc. And in verse 6, they received the word in much affliction with joy. But also next chapter in verse 13, we're going to hear that. They received it. Not as the word of men, but as it really is, the word of God.

But not only are they received and responded to the word. Well, but they did. So, in a way that reverberated in their lives, wherever they went, this sounding fourth refers to the, the way, a trumpet, makes it sound, and none of your trumpeters. So I'll spare the in the illustration but we might say that though, we might well translate it the word of the Lord, reverberated forth from them.

You know, they weren't just people who heard something and agreed with it and said, all right, that's what we'll sign on to. That's our official confession of faith, the word reverberated in their lives. The way they thought and acted was so different from the culture and so different from what they themselves would have been otherwise that it was like there were eating with the word like in a cartoon where someone smashes their head on a bell and So so they were words saturated or which is a phrase that we have used in the past or to come closer to the actual language of the passage before us right now Word.

Reverberated It's similar. It's an illustration of our way of talking about what we've been hearing a lot about recently. Last night in Proverbs 1, last week in Deuteronomy 6.

Earlier this week in can't remember what the passive was? Psalm 78, that it's not just in these set times that we are to be discussing and reading and hearing and teaching as an act of worship God's Word. But his word in his worship, is to permeate to infiltrate to soak through infect shape, completely become a part of every particle of the rest of our lives.

Well, that that had happened to the mass to the Thessalonians. So that everywhere they went in every place. So some Thessalonians show up in Philippi in Macedonia and those Thessalonians are just like word, saturated people, some Thessalonians show up in Corinth and other cities in Acaia and those Thessalonians are award-saturated people and everywhere they go not own verse 8, not only in Macedonia indica but also in every place your faith toward God has gone out.

So that we need not say anything that we would love for this to be an example to us, so that we then might become such an example to others. If Thessalonians had been examples to all those in Macedonia and Decaya and in every place where people believe and by the letter to the Thessalonians, they become examples to us too.

Haven't they even though we're many thousands of miles and a couple thousands of years, separated, we would like for the Lord to make his word reverberate in our lives. Now I hate the even the phrase, preach

the gospel at all times. And if necessary use words, because I think it's the same as saying feed the poor at all times.

And if necessary is food, the gospel is words. But it is like those who were starving appearing to be quite content, and having just been fed and the Lord using that to point others to where they can get bread to our lives, should show those who have been brought to faith in Jesus Christ and devotion unto God, and all that, we are.

So that those who are emaciated might know that this is one who probably knows where to get forgiveness and reconciliation and then we can give them the gospel, but our lives should be evidence of the gospel so that we don't have to tell people. Yeah, this is what which is, what Paul is saying, at the end of verse 8, and beginning, in verse 9, he says, so we do not need to say anything.

For they themselves declare concerning us. What monitor? What? What? Manner of entry. We had to you So Paul didn't have to go around saying the stuff. We told the Thessalonians. Really is true because people were already saying, whenever they saw the Thessalonians man, the stuff, the ball told the Thessalonians.

Really is true. So their lives were not the gospel. The Gospel is words about who Jesus is and what Jesus has done, but it's pointed to the gospel. And we should desire that our lives would be as well. And the second place not only to the word of the Lord reverberate from them, but they became willing slaves.

How you turned to God from idols to sir the living and true? God. So these dead idols that cannot do anything for you. And we talked a bit about those yesterday. In first Kings 8 when we were talking about who is like God there or there is no God, like Yahweh who keeps covenant and steadfast love and how the things that you, that anything else that we depend on are devoted to delight in must fail us.

And the vast majority of them cannot love us but even the best people must fail us and none of them are Almighty and all wise and so forth. So they turned two God from idols. And then you just kind of wish that English translations would be a little bit more literal.

Because this is not the word from which we get deacon, or the word, from which we get worship, which are words that would be more appropriately. Translated serve. This is the word from which we get slave to slave unto the living and true. God, Christians are slaves and Christians don't mind being slaves.

We love being slaves, We have been redeemed for God, and he is all of our pleasure and to the extent that he isn't. We are looking to him to be all of our strength to make himself full of our pleasure. And so, we want to be holy dominated by his purposes.

Holy dominated by his commandments, Holy dominated by his principles, his wisdom, His praise as, as the point of all our lives. And so the fact that that's, that Thessalonians had become these willing slaves, no longer live for themselves and no longer live for money. They no longer lived for any figment of the imagination from the Roman pantheon or the Greek pantheon before it, They no longer lived for fleshly pleasure, they lived for the Lord Jesus and they were they were his bond slaves and they loved it.

That is what demonstrated that the word had come to them in power and with the Holy Spirit. And so he says verse 9, they themselves declare concerning us what matter of entry we had to you and how you turned to God from idols to slave unto the living and true God.

And people say oh you don't want to translate it that way slavery is offensive to people. Now, You don't think slavery. Was offensive to people. Then You think anybody was proud to be a slave in first century Rome? And the answer is yes, those who are slaves of Christ rejoiced to be his slaves and we will be as weird now as they were then and we shouldn't be ashamed.

We should we should be thankful that God has would give us as much of this humble submissive spirit to Jesus, as we may have in this life and seek that we would have at not be ashamed of it. So, two ways so far that the Thessalonians had become the examples from verse 7 first and verse 8, the word of the Lord reverberated from them.

Second in verse 9, they had become willing slaves. And finally their desires were all forward focused to the return of Christ. And here's where the post-millennial, reconstructionism dies. A thousand deaths. Verse 10 and to wait for his son from heaven. Whom he raised from the dead. Even Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Now, obviously, these were people who loved him now, who not? Just served him now but are just now in verse 9 who slaved unto him now whose lives were controlled by the service and praise and honor of Jesus Christ. And following everything that Jesus had said and yet, their ultimate hope was, so, forward focused that their whole lives could be described as awaiting for God's son, from heaven, that we should be people who love the return of Jesus Christ, and long for it and strain toward it.

And to love to see Jesus obeyed as king on earth because he's already our king in heaven. And he's already our king in our hearts and he's already king over the church. And even if the nations don't know it yet,

he's already king over the nations. And in all of their raging, all that they can do is accomplish the ushering in of the last day.

So we don't need to believe these or we don't need to pursue these very kind of worldly. The kingdom comes by changing the economics of the country. And the kingdom comes by changing the politics of the country. Ultimately we even know from the Bible. The only way that that happens, This means of grace in the public worship week by week in the assembly by which God converts and means of grace day by day in the home which together with that, which happens in the assembly, the Lord uses to sanctify and and build up his people and that's his people.

Multiply the economics and the politics and so forth. Might change and God and his glorious providence might shatter the, the democracy in which a thousand wicked men rule. In a way that is impenetrable to the godly and sit. One godly man on the throne, which would be better A benevolent.

Christian monarchy would be better than what we have now. Now, it's not that. That's a good form of government for sinners necessarily, but all that is to say that all of this focus on having heaven here and seeing the kingdom in a geopolitical or a national government or a national economy way here is not where the heart focuses.

When it's genuinely transformed by the Holy Spirit, The Hart Focuses. First and foremost on the word reverberating, so that so that we are selves are willing slaves. But the thing that we're longing toward is what the creation groans for in Romans 8. And those who have the first fruits of the Spirit grown for, in Romans 8, and the Spirit himself, intercedes for us.

With groans for in Romans 8, that the creation would enjoy the freedom, the liberty of the sons of God at the redemption of their bodies. When those whom God has justified, he will also have glorified. And the way that this verse puts, it is to wait for His Son from heaven.

A Christian is a waiter for Jesus, from heaven to put it very simply in bluntly verse 10. So, watch out for those who's theology puts down and minimizes waiting for Jesus, from heaven, the kind of people who mock that are mocking the fruit, the evidence of genuine, Holy Spirit transformation in the Thessalonians Rep.

Please. A Christian is a watch out for those who mock or minimize waiting for the Lord. Jesus to return from heaven. And that's, I don't see how you can possibly escape the force of verse 10. That way. And the reason we need it is because we get so bound up in our day-to-day that we forget that the glory of a day-to-day lived as a slave unto God in whose life God's Word is reverberating, The glory of that kind of life is that it belongs to a world that will come when Jesus returns not a world that the current circumstances are being slowly transformed into

Anyway, the Lord so bless the use of his word and the offering of our hearing of it in worship this morning that we would live today as those in whom in whose lives his word reverberates who are glad slaves. So, if you come to a point today where you have to do a choice, a few like a slave, I want you to rebuke your heart and say, yes, a slave of Jesus and let us live.

As those who are eager for him to return. Let's pray how we thank you. Our God for your good word, out of which we may learn how to think and feel and live today. And which your spirit uses as a means of your grace to work in us to conform us into Christ.

Grant, that your spirit would do that work for me and for my wife and for each of these dear children that you have put in this home of which you are, are very uncovenant God. Even as you have taken this family to be your very own covenant people and we all adore you and look to you for the grace by which to live as those who belong to you, In Jesus name.

Amen.