

The Healthy Church – 1Th 2:13-14 3/21/21 We saw in ch 1 Paul's assurance that these were true believers. He had no doubt of their salvation, knowing their election. He gave at least 10 evidences of salvation in that chapter, but now he revisits a few topics as if to say that he not only knows they are born again, but that they are a healthy church. A person can have life but be sickly, right? Likewise, a church can have a redeemed congregation and yet be spiritually unhealthy. Paul doesn't think that of this church, and in 2:13-14, he lists a few reasons for his assessment which are connected with what he's already said in 1:5-6. They're hearers, doers, endurers. v. 13 – First phrase connects this thought with the previous verse (v. 12). When Paul was among them, he wanted to see them walking in a manner worthy of God, and now he tells us why he believes they are. They are fulfilling this calling in 3 ways: 1) They had a high view of faithful preaching (saw as word of God)! They were HEARERS. When a church begins to downplay preaching, warning bells go off. That's spiritual food! (1Pe 2:2) When a person stops eating, don't we get concerned? What's so important about this preaching? It's God's word! Paul's teaching by example in v. 1-11 worked and his desire for them in v. 12 came to fruition! The reason their relationship with the apostle lasted and didn't derail, was right here. You might have liked Paul as a person, but unless loved the word of God and believed he was preaching it, as soon as he stepped on your toes, you wouldn't like him much anymore. But if God's word and not Paul's opinion, then have unity! How do we know someone is preaching God's word? The Spirit of God, who teaches you all things, confirms the agreement with the preaching and the written word. Though Thessalonian Jews weren't like Bereans (Act 17:10-11), the Gentiles were! When we hear a different view than ours, would be wise to not immediately reject it, but instead consider it in light of God's word. We should be able to support our views with scripture. If we can't but an opposing view can, then it's time to grow and change our way of thinking! v. 14a – The "For" here connects this verse with the last phrase of v. 13, specifically with the words "effectually worketh". Strong's concordance says these words simple mean "to be active". It's the words "wrought effectually" and "mighty" in Gal 2:8. In this text, God was working in Peter and Paul. How do we know that? Well, because of the way Peter and Paul were working! In other words, we know God was active in them because they were active in God. It's the idea presented in Php 2:12-13—we are called to work out what God has worked in. V. 13 tells us that He "worketh" in us in order that we might "do" (Both are the same Greek word in 1Th 2:13) The word the Thessalonians embraced was active and alive in them. How do we know? Well, in v. 14, they were "acting" like believers. 2) They were following the examples of other godly men and women. They were DOERS. We already considered the first part of this verse as saw in 1:6 them following the pattern of other churches. Makes sense because we're all following Christ. That's what His sheep do! We should behave differently than our lost neighbors. Our pattern should be in contrast to the world around us. See Rom 12:2 (hoping to elaborate on more tonight) How clear of an indicator is this activity? Well, God will judge the whole world by it! 2Co 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Rev 20:12-13 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. See Rom 2:5-11 v. 14b – Finally, we come to our last point. Having embraced the word of God and walked in obedience to it, this church experienced what will inevitably will happen to all who walk by faith. We said in our last point that you won't look like the world around you. Guess what? They won't like that! You are light. They are

darkness. The darkness despises the light and wants to put it out. So, if you're a hearer and doer like Jam 1:22 calls us to be, trials are coming. No wonder James begins the chapter telling us to "count it all joy" in these experiences because "the trying of [our] faith" is working patience (endurance) in us. It's this endurance that Paul now brings up and is his final evidence of their spiritual health. 3) Their response to persecution evidenced true belief. They were ENDURERS. Christ told a parable which highlighted how effectively Satan uses this particular temptation to draw men away. There were two things which caused those who received the word to eventually fall away, and it's important to note that both groups first received the word! I.e. they were HEARERS and DOERS for a time. One group receives the seed of the word of God in stony places and the other among thorns. Christ explains the meaning in Mat 13:20-22. We're going to focus on the first group because that's what our main text focuses on, but I want us all to be aware of the enemy's tactics revealed in both. If persecution can't make you give up, Satan has option 2: the distractions and pleasures of this world. Both schemes are very effective because 2/3 of those who receive the word in this text fall away! He'll use things sweet and things unsavory--whatever it takes. Don't be ignorant of his devices! Paul will deal with the distractions of this world later in this letter. But in this portion of the letter, his focus is on enduring persecution! The assurance that this was a healthy church is that they were despised and afflicted by fellow Gentiles just as the Jewish Christians had been by the Jews, and yet they pressed on. See 3:1-7. What does Jesus tell his disciples in Mat 10:22 when he speaks of the coming persecution in which "ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake"? "He that endureth to the end shall be saved!" This was a church of ENDURERS. There are a couple of reasons in scripture we are encouraged to endure. 1) Christ endured suffering for us! What a privilege it is to now endure for His sake. (went away rejoicing, also Heb 12:1-3) 2) God promises a glorious result! (1Pe 1:6-9, 5:10, Jam 1:4 patience/endurance needs to have its perfect work, 2Co 4:7-10, 16-18