

Strong Conversion (1 Thess. 1:5-10) A Church Worthy of Imitation

"and may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)

Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

INTRODUCTION

- Acts 17:1-9 – New and very young church. Paul spent three weeks with them and was impressed with their **love, faith, work, and hope**.
- About 3-6 months in existence, the church had suffered a lot. Paul had been put out, Jason had put up a pledge to save Paul.
- Believed some Christians had been killed for the cause of Christ, others persecuted
- Their Holy Spirit selected them through Christ ("I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6) – The same way we are chosen today!
- This allowed them to remain a strong church amid intense persecution because of their **STRONG CONVERSION!**
- Strong conversion (1 Thessalonians 5-10)
 - What made their transformation "strong."
 - Why is it essential to have a "strong" conversion?
 - How do we get a "strong" conversion?

EXPLANATION

The manner of the Gospel that arrived to the Thessalonians was no ordinary message, nor did it come as a side-show manner or delivered by magicians by a group of charlatans.

“for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sakes.” 1 Thessalonians 1:5

- Gospel – the genuine message of salvation. This was not a message which promised much and delivered nothing. This was that message from the O.T prophets pointing to the salvation of the world (Is.61:1), spoken by the Lord Himself to bring release to the captives (Luke 4:17-20)
- Power of the Holy Spirit – Paul proved the validity of his message with miracles and wonders (Mark 16:17-18). Once we have the Bible in its complete form, we can do the same, confirm the Word with the Bible.
 - Rom 15:18–19, “For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and all around as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”
- Paul, Silas, and Timothy were fully convinced of their message. They lived what they preached. They believed in the resurrection; they looked forward to their resurrection. When they spoke of the Messiah, they spoke with confidence.
- Lived – Because of their conviction, they lived a transformed and dedicated life and set an excellent example to the Thessalonians.
- Result – The Thessalonians were able to see God in the lives of the preachers. This made an impact on them.

APPLICATION

Our election is in Christ as well. There is no other way to be saved, no other way to the Father but through Jesus. We have the Word that teaches us how to be saved. Our conviction and assurance need to rest upon the Word of God.

2

Immitators of the Godly (vss. 6-7)

EXPLANATION

“You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.” (1 Thessalonians 1:6-7)

- Imitators of the Lord, apostles, and other Christians
 - 1 Thess. 1:6
 - 2 Thess. 2:14, “For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,”
 - One must have a keen eye to know a faithful follower of Christ. Once found, imitate them, but above all, imitate Christ.
- We, too, should do as the Thessalonians
- Attitude is how Thessalonians received the Word
 - They were in much affliction (persecution)
 - With joy (remember Jason acts 17:1-9)
 - The joy of the Holy Spirit
 - “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” – Romans 8:28
 - “And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy

and with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 13:49-52

- Churches in Macedonia and Achaia heard about the Thessalonians and followed their example
 - Are we worthy of imitation?
 - Have we received the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit?
 - Do we serve the Lord despite tribulation?

3

True Conversion = Strong Christian (9-10)

EXPLANATION

“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, and 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 Thessalonians 1:9-10)

- Conversion means change; Thessalonians left a manner of life behind, a lifestyle, and even their religion
 - They turned away from idols to serve the One True God!
 - This was not an easy thing to do. Generations deep of religion.
 - While idolatry seems silly to most of us, it was entrenched in the lives of the idolatrous.
 - It would be tough for us to abandon a lucrative career for the Lord.
 - **“and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men, of the same nature as you, preaching the gospel to you, to turn from these useless things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything that is in them.” Acts 14:15**
 - **“For this you know with certainty, that no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, which amounts to an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” Eph. 5:5**
 - **“Therefore, treat the parts of your earthly body as dead to sexual immorality,**

impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.” Col. 3:5

- Their strong conversion allowed them to run the race with conviction that Jesus was coming back! “He who testifies to these things says, **“Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.” Rev. 22:20**

CONCLUSION

The Thessalonians was a strong church with a strong conversion. This allowed them to fulfill the Great Commission locally and elsewhere. What a wonderful church!

The Gospel Plan

The Power of the Gospel

The Result

The Second Coming!