

1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 Paul's Past Conversation

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Introduction

Paul states that the Thessalonian church was a **example**. He says that they were examples not only to the unsaved, but also to believers.

1. They had ministers who preached the gospel in power (v. 5).
2. They received the Word (the gospel) despite opposition and persecution (v. 6).
3. They became examples to other believers (vv. 7–8).
4. They turned to God from idols (vv. 9–10).

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1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

⁶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. ⁸ For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. ⁹ 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, 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.*

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The Gospel was Preached in Power

1 Thessalonians 1:5

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Paul went to Thessalonica for the purpose of preaching the gospel and ministering to the needs of the people. There are three lessons we can learn from this verse.

1. Paul did not preach in word only. This means that he did not preach depending upon his own ability to influence people. He did not stand before people depending on his own ability.

When Paul stood before people and preached, he was not concerned with words and eloquence, nor with whether people thought he was a good preacher. He was concerned with only one thing: sharing the Word of God and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wanted to share God's Truth not his own.

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2. Paul preached in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.

Preaching in power means preaching in the power and energy of God Himself. The gospel is not mere words nor just sharing an idea.

Words and ideas are, of course, involved; but the gospel is more, much more. The gospel is the power of God at work in the human heart. The gospel is the power of God operating, working, stirring, convicting, and energizing a person to believe and accept the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Preaching in the Holy Spirit means that the Holy Spirit was also working in the hearts of people. The Spirit was doing what God had sent Him to earth to do: convict the hearts of the hearers and convince them of the truth of the gospel (John 16:8-11):

⇒ that Jesus Christ did die for their sins.

⇒ that men are sinners, but Jesus Christ provides His righteousness to those who place their faith in Him.

⇒ that Jesus Christ did bear the judgment and punishment of sin for men. There is a coming judgment for those who reject Christ.

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The word “assurance” can also mean “conviction”. The wording here is directed primarily towards Paul. It was his conviction, or his motivation to share the truth of God’s word. He also had the “assurance” that God would honor His word and work in the hearts of the hearers.

“Assurance” can also refer to those who were hearing the Gospel message. The Holy Spirit convicted their hearts of their need for salvation. Once received, the Gospel gives assurance of their relationship with Jesus!

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3. Paul lived what he preached. He lived and walked the life of a believer. Remember that the Judaizes had accused Paul of insurrection against Rome, forcing Paul and his coworkers to leave town. Like in all the cities, Paul’s character was attacked. These Jews had rejected the message and attempted to discredit it by attacking the messenger.

Paul reminds the readers of how he, Timothy, and Silas had lived among them. They had lived what they believed and faced hardship and rejection for the sake of the Thessalonian believers.

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They Received the Gospel

1 Thessalonians 1:6

And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.

The Thessalonians received the Word (the gospel) despite opposition and persecution. That persecution became so threatening that Paul had been forced to flee the city (see Acts 17:4–10). However, his absence did not stop the persecution. In fact, it seems that the attack upon the church and its young believers became even more fierce. The Jews had convinced some of the Gentile citizens to join them in trying to stop the gospel and destroy the church (see 1 Th. 2:14).

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But note what Paul says:

⇒ The gospel still bore fruit. Some persons still received the Word and accepted Christ despite the opposition and persecution.

⇒ The Holy Spirit rewarded the believers' commitment to Christ. He stirred joy in their hearts and lives, giving them full assurance of their eternal salvation and deliverance from death.

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One other fact is important: the believers became followers of Paul and Christ. The word “**follow**” means to imitate. Is it right for people to imitate and follow preachers and other outstanding Christian leaders?

1 Corinthians 11:1

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

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So What ...

We are God’s witnesses in this generation. We can have confidence in sharing the Gospel.

- God’s power is at work, not our own.
- The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness and a judgment to come.
- Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross was sufficient to pay our sin debt.
- That as God transforms our lives, we become examples for others to follow.

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