

From Grace to Gratitude | 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved – so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!

Grace & Gratitude

1. The grace of God for and through people

- a. "...because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction." (1 Thessalonians 1:5)
- b. "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you..." (Colossians 1:3)

2. Gratitude is grace understood and experienced

- a. "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:3-4)

Gratitude For God's Word

1. Receiving the Word of God

- a. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)
- b. "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual." (1 Corinthians 2:12-13)

2. Accepting the Word of God

- a. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)
- b. "...because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction." (1 Thessalonians 1:5)
- c. "...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints..." (Ephesians 1:18)

Gratitude For God's Work

1. Example

- a. "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

2. Endurance

- a. "The spirit of thanksgiving leads to make us stronger and stronger for labor in days to come...let us hold the fort, and look for better times." (Charles Spurgeon)
- b. "But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings...For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised...But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls."
(Hebrews 10:32, 36, 39)
- c. "And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit..." (1 Thessalonians 1:6)