

# The Power of the Gospel

## 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

Romans 1:8-17

Acts 17:24-31



6 September 2020

### Watching the Moon

#### • Why watch the moon?

- ① God has given us the moon as a sign that points us to something greater. (Genesis 1:14; Colossians 2:16-17)
- ② If the moon could speak, as a faithful witness (Psalm 89:37) it would say, "Set your mind on things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things about, not on things of the earth. . . Fix your mind on YAH and He will keep you in perfect peace." (Colossians 3:1-2; Isaiah 26:3-4)

#### • What we will be reminded of each time we see God's moon:

- ① It will cause us to ask, "Have I truly been born again?" (John 3:1-8)
- ② It will remind us that we have been called out darkness into marvelous light, because **GOD shined HIS light on us!** (1 Cor 4:4-6; 1 Peter 2:9)
- ③ It will remind us that GOD has a plan and soon that plan will end. The moon is God's time keeper. Am I prepared to meet God? (Amos 4:12)
- ④ It will remind us that we must be *busy* in the harvest. (*doing*) (Luke 12:37-43)
  - Being used by GOD to share the Good News to others.
  - Bearing *much fruit* for the glory of God! (John 15:8)
- ⑤ It will remind us that we are **commanded** to be **seriously watching!**
  - Watching for our Lord's soon return for His own. (Philippians 3:20-21; Hebrews 9:28)
  - Watching and being sober about our lives. (Titus 2:11-14)
- ⑥ It will teach us that we are **signs** for others to see. (Matthew 5:16)
- ⑦ It will remind us that there is no light in ourselves. We are to reflect the light of **"the Sun of Righteousness."** (Malachi 4:2)
- ⑧ It will remind us that we fall short of GOD's glory (Romans 3:23). The moon only reflects about 7% of the light shone on it.
- ⑨ Our focus must be on the OBJECT and not the SHADOW. (Col 2:16-17)
- ⑩ As the moon is a **faithful** witness (Psalm 89:37), we are reminded that when we stand before Christ we want to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . Enter into the joy of your Lord." (Matt 25:21, 23)

### A CHURCH to LEARN FROM (1 Thessalonians 1:1-10)

- CALLED OUT of darkness into light. (Romans 8:28-30; 1 Peter 2:9; Colo 1:13)
- (v. 4) LOVED by God with a PERFECT (unchanging) love.
  - ★ Remember those 8 distinct characteristics of God's love for His elect.
- (v. 4) CHOSEN by God. (2 Thess. 2:13; Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:4)
- (v. 3) SERVING (working). (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:14-26)
- (v. 10) LONGING for the return of Christ. (Philippians 3:20-21)

### Christianity Shows Itself (1 Thessalonians 1:3)

- "works of faith" - genuine/real/saving faith WORKS. (James 2:14-26)
- "labor of love" - God's grace changes us into selfless lovers of our brethren and even our enemies.
  - ♥ See sermon from 30 August 2020 - this love is a super-natural love. It is a love that give ALL to others.
- "endurance of hope" - genuine/real/saving faith perseveres in hope to the end! (Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Romans 8:25; Luke 8:15; Hebrews 3:6, 14, 6:10-11; Colossians 1:23)

### The Gospel Comes with Power & Words (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

- **NOT** in words only . . . (1 Corinthians 4:20)
  - This is not just another philosophy. This is REAL!
- **BUT** with power . . . (Romans 1:16)
  - There is a CHANGING POWER in the Gospel!!
    - ★ (Eph 1:18-20) "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. . ."
    - The plural form of this Greek word is used for miracles. Miracles are, by definition, supernatural works of God.
- *And in the Holy Spirit . . .*
  - The Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and WORKS!
  - We are not changed by the "words" of the Gospel **but** by the Holy Spirit **applying** the words and changing us. For the Gospel to be effectively applied it **always** takes the WORD and the SPIRIT. (2 Corinthians 3:6; Titus 3:5-6; **John 3:8**.)
    - The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of TRUTH and was sent by God to lead us into all truth. (John 16:13-16).
- *with much assurance . . .*
  - **THIS IS NOT** the Thessalonians' assurance – it was Paul, Silas and Timothy's assurance because they SAW changed lives! They witnessed the WORK/POWER of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Thessalonians!

## God's Work Is Visible in His Children (1 Thessalonians 1:6-10)

- ❶ (v. 6) They **received** the message. (Acts 17:1-4)
  - "received" - "to receive favourably, give ear to, embrace, make one's own, approve, not to reject" ★ See Hebrews 11:13-16
  - Paul REASONED with them for three Sabbaths from the Scriptures.
  - Remember that they did not have the NEW TESTAMENT – only the OLD.
  - From the OLD Paul convinced them that Jesus was the promised Messiah.
  - The Bereans (Acts 17:11-12) tested Paul by the same Scriptures.
- ❷ (v. 6) Imitators of the leaders and the Lord.
  - (1 Corinthians 11:1) "Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ."
  - We have a responsibility to set a good example – an example worthy of being imitated! (1 Timothy 4:12)
  - See 1 Corinthians 4:16, Hebrews 13:7, Philippians 3:17.
- ❸ (vv. 3, 6) Suffering persecution with joy.
  - Faith will always be **tested**. (Matthew 13:21; 2 Timothy 3:12)
  - They suffered **much** with JOY!! They understood they were participating in the sufferings of Christ – of whom they were an intimate part. (Philip. 3:10; Romans 5:3-5; 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17; John 15:18-20)
  - We are warned that becoming a true Christian will involve **MUCH** suffering. (Philip 1:29; Acts 14:22; James 1:2; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Peter 4:13)
  - **IF** we **ARE** the Body of Christ then we **WILL** suffer for His Name. (See Colossians 1:24; Galatians 6:17; 2 Cor. 1:5; 11:23-28; 2 Tim. 2:10)
- ❹ (v. 7) Examples for others to follow.
  - "example" - "exact reproduction"
  - We are commanded to **provoke** others unto good works. (Heb. 10:24)
  - Their faith was **visible** for others to see.
- ❺ (v. 8) Sharing the Word of the LORD.
  - "sounded forth" - "to blast forth"; "to sound forth very intensely". In classical Greek it had the meanings "Sounding the trumpet" or "rolling thunder."
    - ★ Their faith toward God went forth!! It went everywhere!!!!
  - A loved, chosen, saved people must share the **Good News**. See 2 Kings 7:9.
  - Illustration of Corinth. (See Acts 18:1-11)
  - Saved men and women are God's ordained way of communicating the Gospel to a lost world.
- ❻ (v. 9) True Repentance.
  - GOD has **commanded all** men **everywhere** to **continually repent**. (Acts 17:30) If there not continuous repentance there is not salvation.
  - They **TURNE**D from idols to God.
  - They **REPENTED!** They heard and DID what Jesus **commanded**, "Repent and believe . . ." (Mark 1:14-15)

- **BIBLICAL REPENTANCE:** Turning from what you believe to be right to living your life strictly according to the **written** Word of God. Anything less is not repentance.
  - They **confessed with their mouths and their lives that Christ was LORD**. (Romans 10:9-10; Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-29; 12:50; James 1:22)
  - They **TURNE**D from what was FALSE and DEAD to the TRUE and LIVING God.
  - They **TURNE**D from what was USELESS and WORTHLESS to what was PROFITABLE for their lives. (Acts 14:15; 1 Samuel 12:21; **Jeremiah 2:11-13**; 10:1-10)
  - The **TURNE**D to **SERVE** – they willfully and joyfully became BOND-SLAVES. What they were turning to was SO GOOD that they were willing to give up everything for it. (Luke 14:26-33; Matthew 20:28; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5)
  - *True Christians understand that they were saved primarily to serve.* (Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 20:28)
  - **IDOLATRY** is the natural consequence for **TURNING AWAY** from the true God! (Romans 1:21-22)
- ❷ (v. 10) Longing for the Return of Their Lord.
    - PRESENT TENSE "to wait" indicates that this was their "lifestyle" - something they *always* were doing.
    - "to wait" means to be busy and waiting with great anticipation. (Luke 12:35-43)
    - They KNEW that something BETTER was awaiting them!
    - They were only pilgrims, aliens, strangers here!! (Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13-16)

Is our faith visible and known to others?