

The Priorities of the Kingdom

1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

Introduction

I The Thessalonians Responded to the Word

- A. They **heard** the Word of God - Heb 1:1-2; Rom 10:17
- B. They received the Word of God - 1 Cor 15:1-4
- C. They **accepted** the Word of God: - John 17:8
 - 1. Not as the word of men - Gal 1:11-12
 - 2. But as the Word of God - 2 Tim 3:16-17

II The Thessalonians Imitated Others

- A. They became **imitators** of God's churches in Judea
 - 1. They suffered from their own countrymen - 1Thess 1:6-7
 - 2. They suffered the same things from the Jews
 - a. From those who **killed** the Lord Jesus - Acts 3:15
 - b. From those who killed the prophets - Acts 7:52
 - c. From those who **drove out** Paul - Acts 17:5-10
- B. They suffered at the hands of those who:
 - 1. **Displease** God - Mt 23:16-17; Jn 16:2; Rom 10:2-3
 - 2. Are **hostile** to all men in their effort:
 - a. To keep us from speaking to the Gentiles - Eph 3:8
 - b. To keep Gentiles from being **saved** - Mt 23:13
 - 3. Always **heap up** their sins to the limit - Mt 23:32
 - 4. Are at last experiencing the wrath of God - Nahum 1:3

III The Thessalonians Were Loved by Paul

- A. Paul was **torn away** from them for a short time - Col 2:5
- B. Paul had an intense **longing** for them - Lk 22:15; Phl 1:23-24
- C. Paul made every effort to see them
 - 1. He wanted to come to them - Rom 1:13
 - 2. But Satan stopped them - Job; Elijah; Daniel
- D. Paul expressed his love for the Thessalonians:
 - 1. They were his **hope** - 1 Cor 3:8-15
 - 2. They were his joy - 1 Thess 3:7-9; 3 Jn 4
 - 3. They were his crown of **glory** - Phl 4:1; 1Pt 5:4; 2Tim 4:8

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time this week to consider the following:

1. What are the three top priorities of your life and why?
2. What place does the Word of God currently have in your life?
How often do you read it? Do you obey its commands? Does it impact the way you lead your family, do your work, interact with people, set priorities, and spend your time? Is it your final authority? Why or why not?
3. Like most New Testament believers, the Thessalonians suffered for their faith in Christ. How would it have helped the Thessalonians to know that suffering for Christ was common to the Christian life? What has it cost you to follow Christ? What benefits are there in suffering for one's faith in Christ?
4. Read 1Thessalonians 1:1-2:20 again. List every expression of value or affection he places on his relationship with the Thessalonian believers. Now, take a few minutes to evaluate your own life: 1) Do you share this same heart for the people God has placed in your life? Your spouse? Your children? Your family and friends? Your coworkers? Your neighbors?
5. Paul finishes out this chapter by connecting his hope, joy and future glory with the believers in Thessalonica. What is he saying and how can you apply it to your life today?
6. Take some time to prayerfully evaluate your priorities:
 - a. Your response to the Word of God
 - b. Your attitude toward suffering as a Christian
 - c. Your heart toward those in your life/ministry
 - d. Your priorities and goals over against your future reward

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

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