

"The Power of the Word of God"

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Introduction

1. Paul had a divine message for the city of Thessalonica (vv. 1, 2). This Gospel of God went forth in much power and produced results (Acts 17:1-5).

2. The ministry of Paul in this city was unusual. It sets the pattern for all pastors and Christian workers (vv. 3-11). The great goal of Paul should never be forgotten (v. 12). It involved preparation for the present (being in the kingdom) and the future (participating in glory).

3. The tremendous truth of the effectiveness of Paul is given (v. 13). It was the Word of God. How important it is to learn this basic tenet of the ministry: results come through the Word and not by some high-powered method! Mark the power of the Word at Thessalonica:

1. The Word was RECEIVED

The aorist participle is employed here to show point of action in the lives of the saints at Thessalonica. The beginning of the work in their hearts was specific. There is no haziness whatsoever. This verb is a compound and means to receive to oneself so as to bring along side (cf. 4:1). It is a stronger word than is used in John where the same form is found (1:12), although it is the same as used of the failure of the Jews in that context (John 1:11). Certainly the Thessalonians had done something dramatic with the Word of God--they took it to themselves personally. Without this sort of reception, there is no value to it.

2. The Word was HEARD

Actually, the original Greek does not have a verb here, but a noun. The rendering should be: "word of hearing." It is the same in Hebrews 4:2. It is rendered "report" in Romans 10:16. The fact of the matter is that this "hearing" provided the basis for faith (Rom. 10:17). The verb form is used to show that this took place at Corinth (Acts 18:8). Hearing is essential to the believing, hence the Thessalonians heard the Word and then believed. Paul uses this basic truth to challenge the church at Rome with the necessity of getting the Word out (Rom. 10:14, 15). What a missionary motivation. God help us in our day to let them hear.

3. The Word was ACCEPTED

The key to this item is the second verb "received." It is not the same as the first one of the verse. It means to welcome or appropriate. Whereas the previous word for "receive" connotes the idea of self-prompted taking, this verb relates to a response which is offered. The Thessalonians responded in two ways: they did not accept the Word of God as belonging to men, but as belonging to God. There is no sense of humanism in this for them. The Word was for them what it claimed to be: the Word of God. Then, as now, the battle was over the veracity and validity of the Word. Today we have it inscripturated, but what Paul gave was also the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:13). It behooves us in this modern day to uphold what was originally taught, namely the inerrancy of the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. In view of the experience-oriented religious movements of the present, this need is all the more imperative. We must hold to the objective revelation of God in all its purity. This is absolutely necessary in the light of Scripture claims (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; John 10:35).

4. The Word was ACTIVATED

By this is meant that the Word of God was not just allowed to ferment in the life of the Thessalonians. There was some genuine activity of that Word. This comes from the verb "effectually worketh." It is a root from which the English term "energy" is gained. Being in the present tense, the idea is that the Word of God actually put forth power or was operative in the hearts of the believers at Thessalonica. This is a tremendous truth. This is the same verb used of Satan's work in the non-believer (Eph. 2:2) and of the work of God in the child of God (Phil. 2:13; Col. 1:29; Eph. 3:20). There is no doubt about it: the Word of God is alive (Heb. 4:12). Hence, it will not rot but work. Notice: the Word of God saves the soul (James 1:21), effects the new birth (1 Pet. 1:23; cf. John 3:3, 5), sanctifies the believer (John 17:17; 15:3), and edifies (Acts 20:32). It is the key issue for David for a cleansed life (Psa. 119:9-16).

Conclusion While Paul had a great message and was himself a tremendous man, it was the Word of God used by the Spirit which worked at Thessalonica (Eph. 6:17). That is the way it always will be. So be it.