

## 1Thessalonians, Chapter Two, Lesson Four

BOUNTY IN CHRIST 1Thessalonians 2:13-20

### STIMULATE

\*\* Let's go back to our passage from last week, please open your Bibles to 1Thessalonians 2:10. If we are going to be "**Burdened in Christ**" for other saints, as was Paul for the Thessalonian believers, what kind of behavior or character should be driving our life and ministry according to verse ten?

We should live devoutly, uprightly and blamelessly toward the lost world around us (to convict them of the truth we proclaim) and around other Christians (to encourage them to do the same).

\*\* Which three activities should naturally flow from that kind of lifestyle according to verse eleven?

Exhorting, encouraging and imploring our brothers and sisters in the Lord unto godliness.

Hopefully we are seeing the Lord change our hearts as He develops this God honoring life and ministry in each one of us.

### MOTIVATE

\*\* What will we experience if we are faithful to build up others in the word of God? Today we have the joy of watching Paul look forward to his "**Bounty in Christ**", which he would receive directly due to the time he spent pouring God's word into the lives of others. If we wish to produce that same "Bounty", we must learn from Paul how to maintain our focus on God's precious word. Please look with me now at verses 13-20, here in 1Thessalonians, chapter two.

Read passage (V.13-16) (V.17-20)

Opening Prayer

### *Bounty in Christ*

### INVESTIGATE

**V.13** \*\* Paul begins our study for today by encouraging his beloved Thessalonian brothers and sisters in the Lord. Exactly how does he do that?

By telling them that he is "constantly" thanking God for each of them.

\*\* For what is he specifically thankful regarding them?

"...when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God..."

They had received God's message of salvation for what it is, the very word of God.

\*\* Can you see the two different terms used by Paul here in verse 13, which show us both the external and the internal forms of the reception which God's word had in their lives?

**"received"** from us - the external, "hearing"

**"accepted"** it - the internal welcoming in the heart

**\*\* However, Paul first notes for us how they did not receive it - how was that?**

"...not as the word of men..." That is an example of God's amazing grace in their lives.  
cf. Colossians 2:8 and Ephesians 5:6

**\*\* So the Thessalonians received God's word for what it truly is, but what about us? What does Scripture say about itself that would make this issue of primary importance to our own hearts?**

Jeremiah 15:16 - Thy words were found and I ate them

Job 23:12 - I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food

Psalms 33:4 - For the word of the Lord is upright

1Peter 2:2 - long for the pure milk of the word

Jeremiah 31:33 - on their heart I will write it

Psalms 119:11 - Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee

We are not talking about the valueless opinion of men, but rather the actual and superior word of the living God.

**\*\* According to our text, what does the word of God do for the believer?**

It "performs its work in" us who believe in Christ.  
cf. Romans 10:16-17, Philippians 1:6, and 2:12-13

**V.14 \*\* What impact did the word of God have upon the lives of the Thessalonians?**

They became imitators! We can know that they were genuine, because God's word had the same impact upon them as it does on all believers. cf. 1Thessalonians 1:5-8

**\*\* Were these genuine believers who had been transformed by the word of God, imitating the "health, wealth, prosperity" gospel that we hear so much of today?**

No - they imitated those who had counted the cost and were willing to suffer for the sake of Christ. cf. 1Peter 2:20-21

**\*\* Who was it that had inflicted this suffering on them?**

"...at the hands of your own countrymen..." If they were genuine and observable, the people around them hated them and the Christ for which they stood. cf. 2Timothy 3:12

**V.15 \*\* How severe can this suffering get according to verse fifteen?**

Murder! Expulsion from society! And yet they were willing to suffer in response to hearing and accepting the word of God, obviously they knew it was not just the word of men.

\*\* A very timely question for our day, and for this verse is..."How does God view those who cause the persecution of Christians?"

He is not pleased! That is a major understatement.  
cf. 2Thessalonians 1:6-9 and Hebrews 10:30-31

\*\* Again - keeping in mind the world in which we live today, besides not pleasing God, how else does Paul describe these persecutors?

They are "...hostile to all men...", even beyond Christians, these Satanically inspired individuals who have been given over to the doctrines of demons are enemies of all who would disagree with them!

**V.16** \*\* How does this Satanically driven hostility manifest itself in the next verse?

By trying to stop the gospel, so that men would not be saved. We know that Satan is violently opposed to the work of salvation, which Jesus came to accomplish on the cross of calvary.  
cf. Acts 9:23, 13:45, 14:2, 14:19 Then all see - Acts 4:16-20, 5:27-29 and 40-42

\*\* Back in 1Thessalonians 2:16, why are the persecutors of Christ and Christians allowed by God to continue?

That they might "fill up the measure of their sins" so God will be just in punishing them.

\*\* What have they received for their sinful hatred of God's truth?

"But wrath has come upon them to the utmost".

\*\* If they are still persecuting the truth, how has God's wrath come upon them (past tense)?

His wrath is contained in His judgment to seal them out of His kingdom. They cannot believe!  
cf. Romans 10:19-21 and 11:7-10

\*\* In the case of Israel's hard heart of unbelief, are they all doomed to the wrath of God?

No - God will always have His remnant. Romans 11:25-29

**V.17** \*\* Paul now shifts his thinking back to the joy of his heart, the Thessalonians. How does he describe their present relationship?

They were "bereft"...in person, but not in spirit. The term used by Paul means "to be orphaned" or "taken away". It is very fitting when viewed in the light of verses 7 and 11 from our last two weeks of study.

Verse 7 - "as a nursing mother tenderly cares"

Verse 11 - "as a father would his own children"

\*\* This was an emotional and painful separation, but where was the heart of the apostle?

He was with them in spirit, "**Burdened in Christ**" for their well being.

\*\* How do we know that Paul's heart was truly with them, what does he say in this verse about his desire?

He had a "great" desire to see them face to face!

**V.18** \*\* Do you suppose this was just a passing whim of Paul's to be able to see them again?

"For we wanted to come to you...more than once"

\*\* With such a strong, repeating desire, why didn't Paul go to see his beloved Thessalonians?

Because "Satan thwarted us". This is a fascinating statement. We do not know specifically what Paul was thinking at the time of writing this statement, but we do know the schemes of the devil and how he influences sinful men in an effort to stop God's plans.

He does so by:

Hating - Acts 17:5-9

Tempting - Matthew 4:10, 16:22-23

Testing - Job 1:6-12

Satan can win the daily temporary battles, but the ultimate victory has been won by Christ at Calvary and we have no need to be distracted from that which God has called us to do.  
cf. 2Corinthians 2:10-11

**V.19** \*\* Even though Paul could not presently get back to see his beloved Thessalonians, he did realize the abundant "**Bounty in Christ**" he had gained through knowing and loving them. How valuable were these Christians to Paul's heart?

They were his "hope, joy and crown of exultation"!

\*\* When will this marvelous bounty be realized?

"in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming"

Paul is saying that his joy or victory wreath, will be to see the Thessalonians coming with Christ. cf.  
1Thessalonians 3:13 and Revelation 19:7-8, 11-14

**V.20** \*\* As Paul closes out this very emotional portion of his letter, how does he describe his "**Bounty in Christ**" which has been gained through the Thessalonians?

They are his "glory and joy"! Two terms, one speaking of an external radiance and the other referring to an internal, abundant, satisfaction.

The Thessalonians had a very large and observable impact upon the heart and life of Paul.

## **EXTRICATE**

\*\* What was the Thessalonians' view of Paul's gospel?

They heard it and received it as the word of God, and not as the mere opinions of men.

\*\* According to verse 14 in our passage today, how did they respond to the authority of God's word?

They lived obediently to it, even willing to suffer persecution from those who lived around them.

## **DELINEATE**

\*\* What were the three methods, used by Satan, to try and thwart the victorious lives of Christians?

Hating - Acts 17:5-9

Tempting - Matthew 4:10, 16:22-23

Testing - Job 1:6-12

## **EVALUATE**

\*\* We know that God's word has prepared us for victory, so what must we do if we wish to experience the same "**Bounty in Christ**" as did Paul?

We must:

1. Proclaim God's word for what it is!
2. Thank God for those who receive it as His word.
3. Treasure the work of God in the hearts of others, with whom we were privileged to share.

## **ACTIVATE**

\*\* What is going to have to happen to our own thinking before we can experience this type of "bounty" in our lives?

We must consider it to be our greatest prize, our hope, joy and crown of exultation! (V.19)

Closing prayer