

"A COMMENDATION OF GREAT THANKS"

I THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

INTRO: "IS GOD THANKFUL FOR YOU TODAY?" Now you may respond to that question by asking "HOW DO I KNOW IF GOD IS THANKFUL FOR ME?" That is a fair question, but the answer IS NOT UNKNOWABLE. Today, right where we are, **WE CAN KNOW IF GOD IS THANKFUL FOR US BY THE WAY WE ARE RESPONDING TO HIS WORD AND HIS WILL...ANOTHER WAY** we can know **IF GOD IS THANKFUL FOR US TODAY** is by the way the Apostle Paul wrote to the CHRISTIANS AT THESSALONICA and by applying to OUR LIFE what he said TO THEM. In the passage before us, we can see clearly that PAUL GAVE A **COMMENDATION OF GREAT THANKS** to the Thessalonian Christians and when we OBSERVE why He gave the COMMENDATION, we can then determine: 1) IF PAUL WOULD BE THANKFUL FOR US, and more significantly 2) If **GOD** WOULD BE THANKFUL FOR US!

OBSERVATION: The Church at Thessalonica was a MODEL CHURCH, and no doubt was THE ONE CHURCH for which Paul and the other missionary/evangelists were the MOST THANKFUL of all they were involved with in their ministry:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:2 and 2:13
- 2 Thessalonians 1:3 and 2:13

I. THANKSGIVING FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE – VSS. 1-4

NOTE: Given by all three missionary/evangelists: Paul, Silas, Timothy

A. The Nature of the Thanksgiving – Vss. 1,2

1. The Commendation of Thanks was Spontaneous – **At the Thought of Them**
2. The Commendation of Thanks was All-Inclusive – **"For You All" – Vs. 2**
3. The Commendation of Thanks was Continuous – **"Without Ceasing" – Vs. 3**

B. The Notion of the Thanksgiving – Vss. 3,4

1. For the Thessalonians **"WORK OF FAITH"** – Vs. 3a

a. This is NOT indicating that they worked for their Salvation for Salvation is not based upon our works. Cp. Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5.

b. This IS indicating that as the **RESULT OF THEIR SALVATION**, they had certain works that authenticated their **GENUINE FAITH**. Cp. Ephesians 2:10

c. **THE POINT IS:** **GENUINE FAITH IN CHRIST ISSUES GENUINE WORKS OF FAITH FOR THE LORD AUTOMATICALLY.... SPIRITUAL FRUIT!** Cp. James 2:14-17.

GOD IS THANKFUL FOR BELIEVERS WHO HAVE A "WORK OF FAITH"

ILLUSTRATION:

2. For the Thessalonians **"LABOR OF LOVE"** – Vs. 3b

a. The word **"LABOR"** means **"STRENUOUS, SWEATING EFFORT."**

b. The word **"LOVE"** means **"SACRIFICIAL EFFORT."**

c. **THE POINT IS:** **THE THESSALONIANS LOVED THE LORD SO MUCH THAT THEY LABORED STRENUOUSLY FOR HIM CONTINUOUSLY** Cp. 1 Corinthians 15:58

GOD IS THANKFUL FOR BELIEVERS WHO HAVE A "LABOR OF LOVE"

ILLUSTRATION:

3. For the Thessalonians **"PATIENCE OF HOPE."** - Vs. 3b

a. The word **"PATIENCE"** means **"A CONSTANT ENDURANCE WHILE FACING TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES. (The Thessalonians were Persecuted Christians)**

b. The word **"HOPE"** means **"A FAVORABLE AND CONFIDENT EXPECTATION OF THE UNSEEN FUTURE...THE RAPTURE. (Every chapter of 1 Thessalonians ends with teaching about the RAPTURE).**

c. **THE POINT IS:** **THE THESSALONIANS DID NOT GIVE UP IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION ANTICIPATING THE IMMINENT RETURN OF CHRIST.** Cp. James 5:7,8

GOD IS THANKFUL FOR BELIEVERS WHO HAVE "PATIENCE OF HOPE."

ILLUSTRATION:

4. For the Thessalonians **"ELECTION OF GOD."** – Vs. 4

a. **"ELECTION"** need NOT to be difficult to understand. It is simply the fact that **GOD CHOOSES TO SAVE ALL WHO CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD THROUGH FAITH.... BASED UPON HIS FOREKNOWLEDGE.** Cp. 1 Peter 1:2

b. The **WORK OF FAITH, LABOR OF LOVE, AND PATIENCE OF HOPE** the Thessalonians had PROVED their TRUE SALVATION OUT A DOUBT!

c. **THE POINT IS: THE THESSALONIANS KNEW THEY WERE SAVED AND THE MISSIONARY/EVANGELISTS KNEW THEY WERE SAVED BY THE LIVES THE THESSALONIANS LIVED BEFORE ALL PEOPLE.**

GOD IS THANKFUL FOR THOSE WHO ARE ONE OF HIS "ELECT" AND WHO LIVE FOR HIM EFFECTIVELY

ILLUSTRATION:

II. THANKSGIVING FROM A PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE – VSS. 5-10

NOTE: Given because all three missionary/evangelists were able to see the fruit of the Thessalonians salvation.

- A. For the Way they Received the Gospel – Vs. 5
- B. For the Way they Followed the Lord – Vs. 6
- C. For the Way they Exemplified Christ – Vss. 7,8
- D. For the Way they Turned TO God FROM Idols – Vs. 9
- E. For the Way they Waited for the Return of the Lord – Vs.10

ILLUSTRATION:

LESSON/APPLICATION

IS GOD THANKFUL FOR YOU TODAY?

- 1) Each TRUE BELIEVER wants to have a **WORK OF FAITH, A LABOR OF LOVE, A PATIENCE OF HOPE AND ELECTION OF GOD.**
- 2) Each of us as Believers should have the desire to have God be thankful for us.
- 3) God being thankful for us on earth is the basis for God's reward for us in heaven.