

Showing Your Faith by Being an Example to Others

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1

Introduction:

1. The Apostle Paul, in the first chapter of First Thessalonians, is telling us today that the church at Thessalonica was showing their faith by being an example to others – *known by their fruits – actions speak louder than words*. “So then, you will know them by their fruits.” **Matthew 7:20**
2. As Christians today, **we are** under the same **scrutiny**; our example must be good to others because we are ambassadors of Christ – we are constantly being observed by those outside of the church – and as an ambassador to Christ we must show Christ working in us because our lives may be the only Bible that the world sees.
3. Our very lifestyle shows how much our faith and trust in our Great God we have.
 - a. As a Christian we must be separate from the world: “*Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,*” says the Lord. “*AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.*” – **2 Corinthians 6:17**
 - b. The church at Thessalonica had great faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by showing the works of their faith – (v7)
 - c. Today our faith is shown by our example as being a Christian.
 - i. Each and every one of us is an example as to how much we really believe in our Christianity or in other words, how strong is our convictions?
 - ii. It is either good – which means that we take our Christianity serious,
 - iii. Or, bad which means just the opposite of the good example.
4. This morning we are going to look at the first chapter of First Thessalonians to see how Paul found the faith of the church at Thessalonica.

I. Greetings from Paul and those who are with him. (v1)

- A. Is to the local congregation of Christians in the city of Thessalonica – no different than the local church here at Christ’s church in St. Joseph, MO.
- B. The greetings are from Paul, Silvanus and Timothy.
- C. To the Christian brotherhood at Thessalonica.
 1. Christians only – no denominations’ (only Christ’s church – the church that He died for and is the Head of.)
 2. Who are **In God** the Father.
 3. Who are **In the Lord Jesus Christ**.

Their very lives, as a Christian, in what they do are shown by their faith.

II. Their faith (v2-3)

- A. In the presence of God the Father
 1. God **knows their** very moves and thoughts
 2. God **knows our** very moves and thoughts
- B. By **their work** in the Lord Jesus Christ
 1. Steadfastly with **strong convictions**

2. The same as for us today, are we steadfast and **do we** have strong convictions?
- C. By **their labor** of love in the Lord Jesus Christ
- D. By **their steadfastness** of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ
 1. Only hopelessness outside of Christ
 2. Only being In Christ brings real hope an attainable hope.
 3. This is what the church at Thessalonica possessed – a **hope** that surpasses all difficulties, trials and persecutions.
- E. A faith in Christ that is shown by their works - "*You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*" – **James 2:18**
Their faith is shown by their example.

III. Their example (v5-10)

- A. The gospel **not in word only**, but with a **strong CONVICTION**.
 1. The **gospel** or the **good news** – the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ – **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**
 2. **Knowing** that it was He who died for their sins on that cross of Calvary.
 3. **Knowing** that the gospel of Jesus Christ had the power to save. "*...the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*" – **Romans 1:16**
 4. **Knowing** that obedience to the gospel is necessary for salvation. – when Christ returns "*... dealing out retribution (vengeance) to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus...paying the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power*" -- **2 Thessalonians 1:6-9**
 5. **Knowing** that their sins are remitted, forgiven at baptism when being immersed – **Acts 2:38**
 6. **They were living the gospel** – the good news.
- B. With the power of the Holy Spirit working in their lives.
- C. The strong conviction that they had based upon a solid foundation.
 1. Not upon the foundation of sand that man has developed over the centuries as being a better way to God.
 2. But, by the very foundation of Jesus Christ (*the chief corner stone of the spiritual building*) who is the one and only who has the power to save and who is the only Way to God, the One and only who has the name whereby men may be saved. *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the*

Father but through Me. – **John 14:6**; "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." – **Acts 4:12**

D. **Example** to other believers.

1. **By their faith** in the Lord Jesus Christ
2. **By their spreading of the good news** about their salvation. (v8)
3. **By their life style** – beyond reproach.
 - a. **Turning away from their idols** to the worship of the true and living God. (v9)
 - b. **Patiently waiting** for that day when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to take them home forever more to a life without end. (v10)
4. **By their steadfastness** – even under trials, temptations, and persecutions.
 - a. They did not give up and throw in the towel, so to speak, when troubles came – they overcame the troubles and so can you, because "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith." – **1 John 5:4**; Jesus said "...In the world you have tribulation, but **take courage**; I have overcome the world." – **John 16:33**
 - b. An old cliché stated, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going" (when situations are difficult, strong people rise to the occasion) **and so can we**.

Conclusion:

1. The kind of faith that God wants each and every one of us, as Christians, can be shown by the types of examples that the Christians at Thessalonica displayed – **so can our faith in Christ**.
2. They had strong convictions and did not give up during times of stress, trials and persecutions – **so can we**.
3. Their faith was strong enough to weather the battles that they faced, because of the great promises set before them of eternal life in heaven – **so can we**.
4. Their faith was strong because they lived their Christianity – **so can we**.
5. Their faith was strong because they overcome, just as Christ overcame the world – **so can we**.
6. Today we can be the examples Christ wants us to be by displaying our strong faith in our Lord in everything that we do and by remaining faithful until the end and we shall receive a crown life, "... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." – **Revelation 2:10**
7. Yes, we can be the example that Christ wants us to be by showing our faith and with strong convictions **in the knowledge of the truth**.

Sunday evenings message:

The Blessings Found In Good Wisdom

Text: Proverbs 2:1-22

Introduction:

1. Wisdom -- The right use or exercise of knowledge
 - a. Understanding of what is true, right, or lasting; insight.
 - b. Common sense (not so common today - JDL); good judgment (not so good today -JDL).
2. We receive blessings by doing the right thing today.
3. These blessings are found in making 'Wise' choices.
4. Tonight we are going to look at how our wisdom (spiritually) is gained and how we are blessed by this True Wisdom.

I. Knowledge – The Beginning Of Wisdom (v3-5)

- A. Must search for knowledge.
 1. Must look in the right places to get the right answers.
 2. You don't read a cookbook about how to change a timing gear in a car, the same is that don't go to a grocery store and read the National Enquirer about how God wants us to live our lives. You go to the source of True Wisdom of what God requires of us and that is His Holy Word the Bible.
- B. Must lift our voice in trying to understand.
 1. Pray to God for guidance – being able to understand what He is telling you through His word.
 2. Meditate upon the knowledge that you have acquired.
- C. Must seek as a buried treasure
 1. For it is, likened to a buried treasure
 2. A treasure beyond expectations
 3. A treasure beyond our wildest dreams.
- D. When found you will discern (understand) the fear of God.
 1. A reverential fear.
 2. A *want to* (or *get to*) and not a *have to* worship of God.
- E. When found you will discover the knowledge of God (v5)
 1. In all that He has for you and wants for you to have.
 2. The plans that He has for you.
 3. His desires for your life.
 4. His love that He wants you to have.

II. The True Source Of Knowledge and Wisdom (v 6-8)

- A. From Him comes Divine wisdom.
 1. Ask for wisdom and you shall receive. *“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” – James 1:5*
 - a. *“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.” – James 3:17*
 - b. Ask in faith never doubting that God can give you wisdom – shown through trials and temptations to make one grow stronger – makes one wise.

2. Wisdom is given to those who are *'right'* with Him. (v7)
- B. God is the true source of True knowledge.
 1. But, in order to get this knowledge, one must *"fear the Lord"* because this is *"the beginning of knowledge"* – **Proverbs 1:7** –
 - a. As one said it is the *'sinful'* realizing that they are in the presence of the Holy One.
 - b. In the book of Job it is said to be the starting point of True wisdom, *"And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.'" – Job 28:28*
 2. Through this comes the assurance of understanding a mystery of God and that is Christ Himself.
 - a. Of how He fits into our lives.
 - b. Of what it means for Christ to be a part of our lives.
 - c. Of giving us a hope of eternal life that before the understanding of our Great God was at one time unattainable.
 - d. Of giving a joy and a peace that the world tries to offer, but cannot attain without the knowledge of the True God.
- C. From this True knowledge we come to the understanding that He provides the way of His children, (v8)

III. The Blessings of Understanding the Knowledge We Have Gained and The Wisdom of How To Use It. (v 9-22)

- A. Being able to discern (know the difference) between what is right and wrong in the eyes of God. (v9)
- B. Knowing that God is a Just God and there is no One like Him.
- C. Knowing that God is no respecter of persons. (*rich or poor*) makes no difference.
- D. Knowing that by gaining the True Knowledge we can make the right and wise decisions in anything that we do – if right then **do it**; if wrong then **don't do it**.
- E. Knowing that the knowledge gained and the wisdom that we use with this gained knowledge we can have a understanding of God's will – (v11)
 1. This gained wisdom (through knowledge) will keep us out of trouble.
 2. This gained wisdom will keep us from evil – because evil is wrong and all parts of evil are wrong – this will keep us on the right path that God has chosen for His people.
 3. There are those who leave the paths of *'upright'* (today it would be those who are Christians) and returned to walk in darkness (*the way of the sinners - backsliders*). (v13)
 - a. Those who have fallen away delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil. (v14)
 - b. Their paths are crooked and devious.
 4. Solomon compares the paths of these sinners who do evil to an adulterous woman. (v16-19)
 - a. A woman who flatters with words – a symbol of how joyful and nice sins appear to be.
 - b. She leaves the companion (her husband) of her youth forgetting the covenant of her God – one who falls away from the true God who

forgets the covenant that they have made with God to remain faithful until death. (v17)

- c. The tracks of the adulterous woman leads to death (separation from God forever) – the same as one who leaves the fold of God and returns to their sinful ways. (v18)
 - d. One who goes to her will not return again – this is the same as one today who leaves God and **DOES not repent and return**, they will never reach the path of life (ever) – (v19)
- F. But, with the blessings of the wisdom and the understanding that we have in the knowledge of the Lord God we can walk in the way of good men and the path of the righteous. (v20)
- G. As Solomon tells how the Israelites (God’s people) would live in the land being blameless, but the wicked would be cut off from the land and removed. (v21-22) – a symbol of things to come when Christ returns – “*....the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed--for our testimony to you was believed.*” – **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10**

Conclusion:

1. We understand that knowledge is the beginning of wisdom
 - a. One must have knowledge about something before he or she can make a logical wise choice.
 - b. One must have knowledge (especially in the realm of religion) before one can know what God wants of them.
2. We understand that the True source of knowledge and wisdom comes from God.
 - a. Understanding that the Bible contains the inherent Word of God
 - b. With this knowledge we can make the wise (wisdom) choices with the understanding of what God wants for us in our lives.
3. We receive blessings from God with the newfound knowledge that we have acquired in reading, studying and meditating upon His Word, the Bible.
 - a. Our choices we make daily are based upon the knowledge that we have received from the Bible.
 - b. By understanding this very basic principle of how we acquire wisdom (through knowledge and the understanding of this knowledge with the trials and persecution and temptations that are associated with it), we can be forever grateful to our Great God in providing us with His Word and giving us the wisdom how to deal daily with the problems and trials that are set before us.