
Words of Truth

I Thessalonians 2:10

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After reminding the saints in Thessalonica how they worked with their hands while they were in Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 2:9); Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus wrote this: *“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe”* (I Thessalonians 2:10). Earlier in this chapter we saw that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus referred to God as a witness to their behavior in teaching (I Thessalonians 2:5). We will not cover that point again in this study.

What we are seeing now is that these brothers refer to the saints in Thessalonica as witnesses to their behavior while they were in Thessalonica (cf. I Thessalonians 1:5). Having a good reputation matters (Proverbs 22:1). One of the qualifications of an elder is having a good report from those within and on the outside (I Timothy 3:7). One of the qualifications of a widow, to be taken under the care of the local church, is that she is well reported of for having done good works (I Timothy 5:10). We read of Demetrius having a good report of all (III John 1:12). That tells us a lot about him. Paul and some of those laboring with him had individuals that were slandering their good names (Romans 3:8). Since messengers of the Gospel are measured, in part, by their fruit (Matthew 7:15-20); they needed brethren that would speak well of them. It is common that people are aware of “marking” someone who is false (Romans 16:17-18). However, saints are also taught to “mark” those who are faithful as well (Philippians 3:16-17).

Think about how great it is that these brothers could refer to the saints in Thessalonica as witnesses to their character and behavior. In other words, the saints in Thessalonica were references for Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. Consider this: *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well”* (III John 1:4-6). Paul knew the power of having someone speak well of you. Think about how Barnabas aided him greatly after he initially obeyed the call of the Gospel when no one trusted him (Acts 9:1-31).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus specify that the saints in Thessalonica could bear witness to their behaving holily, justly, and unblameably. The Greek word translated “holily” [ὁσίως] only appears in this one verse in the New Testament. The definition of that term is: “piously: - holily” (Strong’s # 3743). That tells us that the saints in Thessalonica witnessed that

these brothers were devoutly religious. They were not just those that spoke the word of God, they lived it (I Timothy 4:12-16 and James 1:18-27; 2:14-26).

The Greek term “δικαίως” is translated in this verse as “justly” (Strong’s # 1346). That term is defined as: “1) just, agreeably to right; 2) properly, as is right; 3) uprightly, agreeable to the law of rectitude” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon). When we consider this Greek word, it is also translated “righteousness” and “righteously” in other passages. As commentary on this word, consider those passages: *“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame... Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world... Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously”* (I Corinthians 15:34, Titus 2:12, and I Peter 2:23).

The Greek term “ἀμέμπτως” is translated “unblameably” in this verse. The definition of this term is: “faultlessly: - blameless, unblameably” (Strong’s # 274). The only other time this Greek word is used in the New Testament is in this same letter and is translated as “blameless” in that verse. Notice: *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (I Thessalonians 5:23).

Christians are taught of God to be holy (Ephesians 1:4 and I Peter 1:13-16). Christians are taught of God to be just by faith and in works (Romans 1:17 and Romans 2:13). Christians are taught of God to live in a manner that we are without blame (Philippians 2:12-16). Consider how these things come together in having us prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless”* (II Peter 3:9-14).

Finally, the saints in Thessalonica were referred to as “you that believe.” It is possible for believers to fall away (Luke 8:13-14, Hebrews 3:12-13, Hebrews 6:4-6, etc.). Yet, this is a phrase of hope. Those that believe are those in whom the word of God is actively, productively working (I Thessalonians 2:13). From what we can read, there was more hope for these brethren than for some others in the first century (i.e. Galatians 1:6-10; 3:1-3; 4:11; 5:7-9).