
Words of Truth

I Thessalonians 2:13

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“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (I Thessalonians 2:13). The statement “for this cause” refers back to the previous verse: *“That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory” (I Thessalonians 2:12).*

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were thankful to God, without ceasing, because the saints in Thessalonica received the word of God aright. They had already told these brethren that they were thankful for them (I Thessalonians 1:2-3). This appears to be typical for Paul (Romans 1:8-9). The specific here is for their reception of the truth. Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus knew that glory belonged to God for this rather than to themselves. Consider what Paul wrote to the church in Rome: *“So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith... So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 1:15-17; 10:17).*

Obedience is two-fold. God’s part is accomplished through His word as you have just read. Man’s part is in either receiving or rejecting His word. Rejecting the word of God is as simple as just not receiving it. Jesus said: *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).* Receiving the word of God is not just an intellectual acceptance. Reception of the word of God includes obedient action and continuation of such thereafter. Notice: *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand*

souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers... Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain” (Acts 2:36-42 and I Corinthians 15:1-2).

The Thessalonians did not consider the Gospel to be the words of men. They were right. Men such as Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were not preaching their own words. While Silvanus and Timotheus were taught by Paul (II Timothy 2:2) and they taught what they heard (I Corinthians 4:17); Paul received what he taught from the Lord through the work of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:1-13). Notice what Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia: *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:8-12).* If you’d like to consider more on the inspiration of the word of God (II Timothy 3:15-17), consider the following Scriptures: II Samuel 23:2, Job 32:8, Jeremiah 1:9, Matthew 10:16-20, John 16:1-13, I Corinthians 14:37, and II Peter 1:20-21.

The word of God is the truth (John 17:17). The truth is in Jesus (Ephesians 4:21). Whether we use the terms “truth”, “word”, or “Gospel” in reference to what the Lord has spoken; we are talking about the same thing (Colossians 1:5). Spiritual birth is through the word of God (James 1:18 and I Peter 1:23-25). Even under the Old Law, conversion was dependent upon the word of our Lord (Psalms 19:7). Yet, the word of God does not stop working at the point of conversion. We see this by what Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus wrote to the Thessalonians in this verse we are studying. Remember, specifically, these words: *“the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*

The phrase “effectually worketh” means: “to be active, efficient: - do, (be) effectual (fervent), be mighty in, shew forth self, work (effectually in)” (Strong’s # 1754). The Gospel doesn’t just aid one in becoming a Christian, the Gospel keeps working (I Peter 2:1-2). Remember what Jesus taught in what is known as the “Parable of the Sower”: *“And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred” (Mark 4:20).*

What we learn here about the saints in Thessalonica is that they permitted the word of God to work in them and through them. They were not just hearers of the word, they were also doers (James 1:19-27). If they or we desire to spend eternity in Heaven, we have to do more than just intellectually receive the truth (Matthew 7:13-27, Luke 6:46, and Luke 11:28).