

Sermon Title: The Picture of a Consistent Testimony

Sermon Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to a testimony that verifies the effectual work of the Gospel in their lives.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 aspects of a living testimony that verifies the Gospel's work.

Introduction:

2 John 4 I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.

3 John 2-3 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. **3** For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth.

- I. A Gospel based testimony is verified by reception of the Word. V.13**
- II. A Gospel based testimony is verified by response to suffering. V.14-16a**
- III. A Gospel based testimony is verified by rejection of prejudice. V.16**

I. A Gospel based testimony is verified by reception of the Word. V.13

A. Thankful for their receptivity of the Word of God. V.13

Psalm 19:7-9; Acts 17:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5

(Paralabontes) received refers to an objective reception of a particular message, in this case the gospel. Thus the Word of God is infinitely superior to the words of man and human opinion, that the Thessalonians were used to hearing. They accept Paul's message as the true message of salvation from God. (**Galatians 1:11-12**).

B. Thankful for their reflection of the Word of God. V.13b

The verb rendered "performs" or "effectually works in you who believe." Refers to its divine affect.

1. The word saves men. (**James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23**)
2. The word sanctifies us. (**John 17:17**)
3. The word matures us. (**1 Peter 2:2**)
4. The word frees us. (**John 8:31-32**)
5. The word perfects us. (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**)
6. The word counsels us. (**Psalm 119:24; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25**)
7. The word ensures spiritual success. (**Joshua 1:8-9; Psalm 1:2-3**)

II. A Gospel based testimony is verified by response to suffering. V.14-16a

A. Thankful for their testimony of imitation. V.14a

Not only were the Thessalonians imitators of Paul, and his companions, and the Lord (**1:6**), but also of the churches throughout Judea, in the sense they were being persecuted for Christ's sake.

Acts 4:1-4 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, **2** being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. **3** And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. **4** However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Acts 5:26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

Acts 8:1 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

They drank the cup of suffering.

Matthew 26:39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."

Both the description of churches of God and in Christ Jesus underline the churches union with God and Jesus Christ and distinguishes them from other human assemblies.

Acts 9:31 Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

Acts 11:1 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

Acts 11:29 Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.

Galatians 1:22 And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ.

Though the Thessalonian church was founded in the midst of persecution, Paul points out that their suffering and all Christian based suffering is not unique to them. Some aspects of suffering for the advancement of the Gospel (Word of God) may include social rejection, verbal abuse, false accusations (**Acts 17:5-9**) and possible physical attacks that result in martyrdom or prison sentences. (**1 Thessalonians 4:13**)

Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

Galatians 1:22-23 And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ. **23** But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to* destroy."

Acts 12:1-5 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church. **2** Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. **3** And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was *during* the Days of Unleavened Bread. **4** So when he had arrested him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. **5** Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

The persecution was initiated by the Jewish community, but spilled over into the Gentile population.

Acts 17:5-9 But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. **6** But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. **7** "Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king-- Jesus." **8** And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. **9** So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

It started for the church, with the crucifixion of Jesus and continues throughout the Judean territory of churches. They would use the Roman authorities and political system very often.

B. Thankful for their testimony of submission. V15

1. Were not like those who killed the Lord Jesus. V.15a

This is a clear statement from a human perspective by Paul those who were responsible for Jesus' death. There is no debate as for a Scripture and history that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus Christ, through Roman.

Mark 3:6 Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Mark 15:14-15 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!" **15** So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him*, to be crucified.

John 11:43-45 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" **44** And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go." **45** Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.

2. Were not like those who killed the prophets. V.15b

The pattern is consistent in Scripture, that rejection of the message first, then persecution of the messenger.

3. Were not like those who drove out the Apostles. V.15c

Aorist participle "expelled," "Driven Out"

Prophets: (**Luke 11:47-51**)

1 Kings 19:10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

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Nehemiah 9:26 "Nevertheless they were disobedient And rebelled against You, Cast Your law behind their backs And killed Your prophets, who testified against them To turn them to Yourself; And they worked great provocations.

Apostles: (**Acts 8:1**)

Acts 9:28-30 So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. **29** And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. **30** When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

Acts 14:5-6 And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, **6** they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region.

Acts 16:39 Then they came and pleaded with them and brought *them* out, and asked *them* to depart from the city.

Acts 17:10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

4. Were not like those who opposed God. V.15d
Rebellion against God and His law is characteristic of those who do not please God. (**Romans 8:8**) The fact that the Jews do not please God, is evident in how they treated His messengers.
5. Were not like those who opposed what was but for mankind. V.15e
Jesus desires that all be saved (**1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9**), so the Jews desired no one be saved.
6. Were not like those who opposed the equality of mankind. V.16a
Tacitus, the Roman historian, says about the Jews, “that they were loyal to one another, but toward every other people ‘group’ they feel hate and enmity.”

III. A Gospel based testimony is verified by rejection of prejudice. V.16

- A. True Christians reject partiality in the sharing of the Gospel. V.16a
(**Acts 13:48-51; Acts 14:2, 19; Acts 17:5-10**)
- B. False Christians reject the impending judgment of God. V.16b