

**Sermon Title: The Picture of a Consistent Congregation, Part 1**

**Sermon Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to reflect the character, conduct and commitment that gives authenticity to the Gospel.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 4 key aspects of a consistent congregation that validates the Gospel.**

**Introduction:** The recipients of this letter are those who have been alienated from their society due to their new allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord. The Divine invitation and love of God the Father has transformed these people from different ethnicities, cultures, religious backgrounds, and various sections of society into a new community, that impacted the old political, economic, and religious establishment.

- I. The **Gospel** of a consistent congregation. V.5
- II. The **Obedience** of a consistent congregation. V.6-7
- III. The **witness** of a consistent congregation. V.8-9
- IV. The **deliverance** of a consistent congregation. V.10

**I. The **Gospel** of a consistent congregation. V.5**

The first foundation for Paul's conviction about this congregation is their faith in and reflection of the Gospel. Paul states, "we know how God chose you, we know that our Gospel came to you not simply with words."

**2 Thessalonians 2:14** to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 4:3** But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

The Gospel is referred to as "the gospel of God," (**2:2, 8, 9**) "the gospel of Christ," (**3:2**) "the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**2 Thessalonians 1:8** in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ and His salvation. The church countered the imperial claims of Sovereignty and hope with the announcement of the "gospel of Jesus Christ" (**Mark 1:1**) whose coming was understood as "the good news" of the fulfillment of the hope of Israel for the victory of God and the establishment of His unreserved sovereignty.

**Isaiah 40:9** O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength, Lift *it* up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

**Isaiah 52:7** How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good *things*, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

**Isaiah 61:1-2** "The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound; **2** To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

A. The Gospel was **explained** by Preaching. V.5a

B. The Gospel was **evidenced** by Power. V.5b

There is a direct link between proclamation and power that validated the message. This power created effectual changes in the lives of those who responded to the message, and the power evident also in the messenger. (**1 Corinthians 1:17; 4:19**)

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5** And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. **2** For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. **3** I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. **4** And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

In Thessalonians 2:1-12, Paul takes time to distance himself and his companions from the ancient **rhetors** and their methodologies.

- C. The Gospel was **effective** by the Person. V.5c  
This is the way the gospel came to Thessalonica and therefore, recognized and received by them as a divine message. (**1 Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 1:8**)  
**Luke 24:46-49** Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, **47** "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** "And you are witnesses of these things. **49** "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."  
**Acts 5:23** saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!"
- D. The Gospel was **efficient** in Purging. V.5d  
There was conviction that brought about full assurance (plerophoria) can mean "complete fullness," in this case the fullness of the divine work, not only in purging the people of their old ways, but also in validating the character and conduct of the messengers.  
**Colossians 2:2** that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,  
**Hebrews 6:11** And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,  
**Hebrews 10:22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.  
**Mark 16:20** And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.  
**2 Corinthians 6:6** by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

Paul now turns from the miraculous impact the Gospel had on the Thessalonians, in order to highlight the character, conduct, and methods of the messengers, and their impact on those who hear.

## II. The **Obedience** of a consistent congregation. V.6-7

- A. True obedience requires **imitation**. V.6  
This is an emphatic "you" this focuses on their reception and reflection of the "gospel and Christian" message. The Gospel not only saves you but instructs the believer on how to behave. These believers modeled the suffering and adversity of Paul, his companions, and the Lord Jesus Christ, as a result of their new identity. (**Titus 2:11-13**)  
**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.

1. The imitation of a severe affliction.  
"Xenophon, for example describes the role of the teacher saying, 'Now the professors of other subjects try to make their pupils copy their teachers.'" [**Gene L. Green: The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letters to the Thessalonians , p.97**]

Believers are called to:

- a. imitate **leaders** of the church (**2 Thessalonians 3:7, 9**)  
**1 Corinthians 4:16** Therefore I urge you, imitate me.  
**Galatians 4:12** Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I *became* like you. You have not injured me at all.  
**Philippians 3:17** Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.  
**Philippians 4:9** The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.
  - b. imitate **members** of the community of faith (**Philippians 3:17**)  
**Hebrews 6:12** that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
  - c. imitate what is **good**  
**3 John 11** Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.
  - d. imitate **Christ** and **God**  
**Ephesians 5:1** Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.  
**1 Corinthians 11:1** Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.
2. Imitate a **sanctifying** attitude.  
We have joy because we share in the sufferings of Christ. This joy is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.  
**Matthew 5:11-12** "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. **12** "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.  
**Luke 6:22-23** Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile *you*, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. **23** Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward *is* great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.  
**Acts 5:41** So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.  
**2 Corinthians 4:8-10** *We are* hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; **9** persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-- **10** always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

3. Imitate the seasoned amplification. V.7

“In Jewish literature the imitation of model lives was a common place in moral instruction, whether one imitated the conduct of a person, a person’s suffering, or the character of God Himself.” [Ibid. 97]

The Thessalonian believers came into this common Christian reality, but because of the way they responded to their suffering, affliction, and adversity as a result of their new allegiance to Jesus Christ, they themselves became examples to the rest of the believers and unbelievers in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia. The congregation of Thessalonica was a consistent congregation in these areas, and were to be imitated, and their example followed by other congregations.

**2 Thessalonians 1:3-4** We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, **4** so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

Paul and his companions heard about this congregation wherever they travelled (**Acts 17:15; 18:6**) as well as members of the congregation travelled, and other churches could see firsthand their character, conduct, and commitment. (**1 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:10**)

**Acts 17:15** So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

**Acts 18:6** But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

This because a powerful testimony of the authenticity of Paul, Silas, and Timothy’s message and ministry.