



II. THEIR CONTINUANCE WITH THE APOSTLES (1 Thessalonians 2:13-20)

A. Their Faith in the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

1. A cause for thanks
 - a. The cause stated
 - (1) For this cause...
 - (2) Because...
 - b. The thanks stated
 - (1) We thank God
 - (2) Without ceasing
2. A truthful acceptance
 - a. The word was heard from men—"which ye heard of us".
 - b. The word was received as it is in truth.
 - (1) Not as the word of men
 - (2) But as the word of God
 - a) One important biblical aspect of the principle of inspiration is that the words are the words of the Holy Ghost.
 - b) The medium in which God communicates with mankind is through words and these words were not the words of the men who spoke or wrote them, but rather they were directly from the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:13; Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Hebrews 3:7).
 - c) The scripture was inspired, not the men themselves. The men were moved by the Holy Ghost and they did not speak of their own will, but spoke the words which the Holy Ghost taught them to say. This is biblical inspiration.
3. An effectual working
 - a. The purpose of the word—it works effectually in those that believe.
 - (1) God gave His words on purpose and for a purpose (Isaiah 55:11).
 - (2) Though different passages have different purposes, the underlying purpose is always the same—working in the hearts of men (1 Thessalonians 2:13; see Hebrews 4:12).
 - (3) In the parable of the sower and the seed, the sower sowed the words of God into the hearts of men (Matthew 13:19). He did so because he wanted the seed to work in the heart of man to bring forth fruit.
 - (4) Initially, God wants His word to work in man toward salvation (1 Peter 1:23). After salvation, the Lord wants His word to keep the new believer from sin; but as a basic purpose, He wants His word to be the necessary food that brings growth (Psalm 119:11; 1 Peter 2:2).
 - (5) If a man does not allow the word to work in his heart for conversion, it will work in his heart for condemnation (John 12:48). Either way, the word of God will work.



- b. The limitations placed on the word—this suggests that man can limit the effectiveness of the word by unbelief (see Hebrews 4:2).
 - (1) God’s ultimate desire is that His word would work in hearts to bring about His perfect will. Yet, the Bible teaches that there is a basic requirement for this to happen—faith.
 - (2) Again, in the parable of the sower and the seed, hardened soil would not allow the seed to take root. The underlying truth is that a heart hardened by unbelief cannot allow the seed of God’s word to take root.
 - (3) According to Psalm 78:41, the children of Israel “turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.”
 - (4) A careful study of Psalm 119 will demonstrate that the extent of a person’s walk with God is intrinsically tied to his love for and application of the word of God. The foundation is laid in the very first verse of this psalm (Psalm 119:1). Many of the things desired of God’s people on a daily basis are directly dependent upon their reception of God’s word. These things include:
 - a) Praise (Psalm 119:7)
 - b) Witnessing (Psalm 119:27)
 - c) Giving of thanks (Psalm 119:62)
 - d) Fear of God (Psalm 119:120)
 - e) Zeal (Psalm 119:139)
 - f) Prayer (Psalm 119:147)

- B. Their Fellowship in Suffering (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16)
 - 1. The fellowship stated (1 Thessalonians 2:14)
 - a. Ye became followers of the churches which were in Judaea.
 - b. Which are in Christ Jesus
 - 2. The fellowship explained (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16)
 - a. Ye have suffered like things of your own countrymen (1 Thessalonians 2:14)
 - b. As they (the churches of God in Judaea) have of the Jews who (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16):
 - (1) Killed the Lord Jesus (1 Thessalonians 2:15); Note: Many love to focus in on the Jews and their involvement in the Lord’s crucifixion, but it must be understood that there are really five parties responsible for Christ’s crucifixion.
 - a) The Jews (Acts 7:52)
 - b) The Romans (John 19:1-24)
 - c) God, the Father (Isaiah 53:4; Acts 2:23)
 - d) God, the Son (John 10:17-18)
 - e) You (1 Corinthians 15:3)
 - (2) Killed their own prophets (1 Thessalonians 2:15); Note: For this point and the previous point, consider the parable given in Matthew 21:33-46.
 - (3) Persecuted the ministers of the gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:15)



- (4) Please not God (1 Thessalonians 2:15)
- (5) Are contrary to all men (1 Thessalonians 2:15)
- (6) Forbid the ministers of the gospel to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved (1 Thessalonians 2:16)
- (7) Filled up their sins always (1 Thessalonians 2:16); There is a sense in which every nation of people has a limitation on the sin that can be committed before demanding a swift and severe response from God.
 - a) A cup to dread
 - i) Its possessor
 - (a) In the hand of the LORD (Psalm 75:8; Jeremiah 51:7)
 - (b) At the hand of the LORD (Isaiah 51:17)
 - (c) At the hand of the LORD (Jeremiah 25:15, 17)
 - (d) The cup of the LORD's right hand (Habakkuk 2:16)
 - ii) Its contents
 - (a) The description
 - (i) The wine is red (Psalm 75:8; see Job 21:20)
 - (ii) It is full of mixture (Psalm 75:8)
 - (iii) The dregs (Psalm 75:8)
 - (b) Its filling (Revelation 17:4; Revelation 18:6)
 - (i) Abominations
 - (ii) Fornication
 - iii) Its pouring
 - (a) Snares, fire and brimstone, a horrible tempest (Psalm 11:6)
 - (b) Fury (Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15)
 - (c) Astonishment (Ezekiel 23:33)
 - (d) Desolation (Ezekiel 23:33)
 - (e) Wrath (Revelation 14:10; Revelation 16:19)
 - (f) Indignation (Revelation 14:10)
 - b) A cup to drink
 - i) By man
 - (a) Historically
 - (i) The wicked drank of the cup (Psalm 11:6; Psalm 75:8)
 - (ii) Israel drank from the cup God's fury (Isaiah 51:17; Ezekiel 23:31-33)
 - (iii) All nations caused to drink the cup of God's fury (Jeremiah 25:15, 17, 28)
 - (iv) Babylon used as a cup in the LORD's hand (Jeremiah 51:7)
 - (b) Future
 - (i) Jerusalem shall be made a cup of trembling to the people round about (Zechariah 12:2)



- (ii) The wicked will drink of the cup (Psalm 11:6; Psalm 75:8)
- (iii) Those who worship the beast shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God (Revelation 14:10-11)
- (iv) Babylon shall drink of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath (Revelation 16:19-21)
- (v) All nations will drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (Revelation 18:1-6)
- (c) By Christ
 - (i) The Father gave His Son a cup to drink (John 18:11)
 - (ii) Christ submitted Himself to the will of the Father (Matthew 26:36-39, 42; Mark 14:32-36; Luke 22:39-45)
- c) A cup to refuse
 - i) For a better cup (Psalm 116:13)
 - ii) For a better portion (Psalm 16:2, 5)
- (8) Had the wrath come upon them to the uttermost (1 Thessalonians 2:16)

C. Their Kinship in Christ (1 Thessalonians 2:17-20)

1. Their desire (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18)
 - a. The apostle Paul, and those with him, were taken from the Thessalonians for a short time (1 Thessalonians 2:17).
 - (1) In presence
 - (2) Not in heart
 - b. However, they endeavoured to see them (1 Thessalonians 2:17).
 - (1) They endeavoured more abundantly.
 - (2) They desired greatly to see the face of the Thessalonians.
 - c. The effort was not successful (1 Thessalonians 2:18)
 - (1) They would have come unto the people of Thessalonica.
 - a) Once
 - b) Again
 - (2) But Satan hindered them.
2. Their interdependence (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)
 - a. The *patience of hope* mentioned in chapter 1 that led the believers of Thessalonica to labour in the Lord would one day yield great dividends.
 - b. Paul pointed to such an outcome as he again mentioned the Lord's return for His Church in this first epistle to the Thessalonians.
 - c. The message: the Christian's faithfulness would be directly affected by his continued hope in the Saviour's return. This faithfulness will be rewarded when Christ comes for His saints.



- d. What was Paul's expected reward? What was his joy or crown of rejoicing? It was the people to whom he was writing.
- (1) They were his reward; his "glory and joy" (1 Thessalonians 2:20).
 - (2) They were his "work in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 9:1).
- e. Paul's expectation of Christ's soon return caused him to faithfully preach the gospel.
- (1) Those who trusted Christ through Paul's preaching would join Paul in Heaven.
 - (2) These believers are a part of Paul's reward for faithfulness.
 - (3) This truth expands beyond Paul to all believers throughout the Church Age. The Christians' crown of rejoicing or joy includes seeing those we have affected with the truth join us in meeting Christ at His return (2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 4:1).
- f. History provides an appropriate illustration of an unnamed young man who died shortly after coming to Christ. On his deathbed, this young man lamented of having no more time to witness to others. His testimony, shared in a sermon by A. G. Upham and heard by Charles Luther, later became the foundation for the following song in 1877.

Must I Go, and Empty-Handed?

*Must I go, and empty-handed?—
Thus my dear Redeemer meet?
Not one day of service give Him,
Lay no trophy at His feet?*

*Not at death I shrink nor falter,
For my Saviour saves me now;
But to meet Him empty-handed! —
Thought of that now clouds my brow!*

*Oh, the years of sinning wasted,
Could I but recall them now,
I would give them to my Saviour:
To His will I'd gladly bow.*

*Oh, ye saints! arouse; be earnest!
Up and work while yet 'tis day,
Ere the night of death o'ertake you!
Strive for souls while yet you may.*

Refrain

*Must I go, and empty-handed?—
Must I meet my Saviour so!—
Not one soul with which to greet Him?
Must I empty-handed go?*