

# **“Be Thankful In All Circumstances”**

## **1 Thessalonians 2:13-20**

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**Teaching Aim:** To examine the life-changing power of God’s Word as it affected the Christians in Thessalonica and relates to us today. To realize Christians who live out their faith will be persecuted. To understand by hindering us, unbelievers are actually fighting the Lord and are storing up wrath for the day of wrath when God’s hammer of judgement will fall. To recognize Satan will do everything in his power to discourage believers from making spiritual progress.

### **DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)**

#### **Part I: Receiving the Word of God and living life in a way that pleases Him (1 Thess. 2:13-14)**

1. What did the Apostle Paul rejoice over in **verse 13**? How might a believer “*pray without ceasing*” today? Charles Spurgeon said, “*We are to be in an atmosphere of prayer.*” What did he mean? What is God’s will for the Christian according to **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**?
2. The Bible is not the word of man, it is God’s revealed Word to us today. Sir Walter Scott wrote, “*His Word - the Bible - is inspired, or God-breathed, in all its books and parts as originally written. It is our only authority in all things, for all circumstances, and all times. There is needed a generation who shall tremble at the Word of God. It is life’s chart; our guidance, our light, our moral safeguard. Thank God for the Sacred volume.*” Why do you think more people don’t have reverence towards God and His Word today? What important truths do we learn from **2 Tim. 3:16-17**? How have you seen these truths play out in your own life?
3. What are some ways that the Word of God relates to your life today? Warren Wiersbe wrote, “*Meditation is to the spiritual life what digestion is to the physical life. If you did not digest your food, you would die.*” On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your spiritual walk with the Lord today? How often do you spend time meditating on God’s Word?
4. In what way did the church in Thessalonica have to imitate the Christian churches in Judea (**vs. 14**)? In many parts of the world, Christians are still being persecuted for their faith in Jesus. Church father Tertullian said, “*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.*” Why is this? Why do you think the church in America is so apathetic today? How could persecution divide the wheat from the tares and change the way we act as Christians today?

5. What situation forced the Apostle Paul to leave Thessalonica? (See **Acts 17:5-9**) Did Paul leave out of fear or to protect the believers there? Jesus didn't promise us health or wealth, but he did promise us that we will suffer if we follow Him. (See **Matt. 10:22; John 15:18-15**) According to **1 Pet. 4:15**, what should Christians not suffer for? What happens when a person suffers for doing what is right and being a Christian? (See **1 Pet. 4:16**) Paul suffered greatly for his faith, what practical advice did he give to young Timothy? (See **2 Tim. 3:12-14**)
6. How did Paul feel towards the unbelieving Jews, even with all the persecution he suffered at their hands? (See **Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1**)

## **Part II: The sin of the unbelieving Jews against Paul and the Thessalonian believers (1 Thess. 2:15-16)**

1. Paul wasn't about to let the unbelieving Jews get by scot-free. What did Paul reveal about these unbelievers in **verse 15**? What did Jesus say about the Jewish religious leaders? (See **Matt. 23:29-32**) Should we trust people just because they are religious, or should we check out what they say against sacred Scripture?
2. What did the Apostle Peter say about the unbelieving Jews in **Acts 2:22-23**? So often people do wrong while thinking they are doing right. Was the Pharisee Saul [*Paul's former name*] equally guilty before coming to faith in Christ? (See **Acts 26:9-11**) Why do you think Saul's name was changed to "*Paul*?" (Note: Paul's name means "*small*.")
3. According to **verse 16**, what did the unbelieving Jews forbid Paul and his companions from doing? What was their purpose in doing this? Was God keeping tabs on their actions? What will the end result of their unbelief and disobedience be? (See **Matt. 23:31-32; Rom. 2:5-6**)
4. It is important to note that God will allow sin for only so long before His hammer of judgment comes crashing down. What do you see as some of our greatest sins in the United States of America today? How should we as Christians respond to these sins in society?

### Part III: Paul's desire to see the Thessalonian believers again (1 Thess. 2:17-20)

1. Paul knew the Thessalonian believers were going through hard times. The Greek word interpreted "*taken away*" literally means, "*to be orphaned*." In what way were the Thessalonian Christians orphaned? How did this make Paul feel as their spiritual father (**vs. 17**)? What did Paul want to do (**vs. 18**)? What prevented him from doing this?
2. The word Satan means "*adversary*." Whenever we begin to grow spiritually, Satan tries his best to hinder our growth. Have you ever let Satan stop you from serving in ministry? If so, how? What are some ways that Satan has hindered you in the past from moving forward spiritually? What did he use to attack you?
3. Who is the person that led you to the Lord? Do you consider this person to be your spiritual father or mother? Have you been able to keep in touch with this person? What can we infer from **verse 19**? Have you ever experienced the joy of leading another person to faith in Christ? What did it feel like? What did it do to your relationship?
4. What is the meaning of the Greek word, "*Parousia*?" (Hint: Search online) What can we expect to occur at the *parousia* of Jesus Christ? (See **1 Thess. 4:16-18**) Is this something that excites you? Should the *parousia* of Christ excite unbelievers, or bring them to terror?
5. In what way would the Thessalonian believers be "*Paul's glory and joy*" at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? Does this verse indicate we will recognize other believers in heaven? Next to being in the presence of God, who would you like to see and talk to in heaven?
6. There is only one way to go to heaven, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. **Romans 3:23** says, "*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" Have you repented from your sin and turned to Jesus Christ for salvation? If not, why not do so right now in prayer?

### **MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!***

- The Bible is not the word of fallible men, it is the inerrant and infallible Word of God.
- Once we come to faith in Jesus Christ, the Bible comes alive; *"The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."* (See **Heb. 4:12**)
- Churches in many parts of the world are suffering persecution today because of their faith in Jesus Christ.
- The unbelieving Jews persecuted the prophets, they were responsible for having the Lord Jesus Christ crucified on the cross, and in Paul's day, they hindered him and his associates from sharing the Gospel message of salvation to the Gentiles.
- Whenever we are growing spiritually, Satan will do his best to stop that growth in its tracks.
- If we can't be with our spiritual parents today, we know that we will be with them again in eternity.