

The Gospel Coming with Power

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. Paul, Silas, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians, and God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace to you.

We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For we know, brothers, loved by God, that He has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction.

You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, in spite of severe suffering. You welcomed the message with joy given by the Holy Spirit, and so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

The Lord's message rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia. Your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us.

[1:13] They tell how you turn to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Please open your Bibles with me to 1 Thessalonians, the passage that was just read. I like letters written to churches.

There's something for Grace Fellowship Church in every letter that's written to churches, or it wouldn't be in our Bibles. And so I find it with this letter.

We're not going to study the whole letter. We've done that before, but just from chapter 1, seek to draw lessons for our encouragement and our challenge. Thessalonica.

It was with stripes still healing on the backs of Paul and Silas after being beaten in Philippi and thrown into jail, that they pressed on some 100 miles further west into Europe and came to this important trade city of Thessalonica, a place that was strategically located between trade routes going from east to west.

[2:33] And as his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue and on three successive Sabbath days, he reasoned with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.

This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ, he said. And some of the Jews were persuaded in joining Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

But the Jews were jealous, and so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob, and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd, but they did not find them.

And Paul and Silas were sent off and moved on to the next city with the gospel. Paul was concerned with them since they had come to birth right in the midst of such opposition.

And so he had sent Timothy back to see how they were doing. And he has just received Timothy back with a good word there. They're holding firm, steadfast in the Lord.

[3:55] And Paul now writes this letter to this new infant congregation. Now, it's a letter that starts with much thanksgiving to God.

And rightly so, because every church is a standing miracle of the Lord Jesus Christ. That there is a church in Bremen is to the credit of Christ alone.

It's not having anything to do with us. God is to be thanked that there's a church here, just as the fact that there was a church in all places, as in Thessalonica.

When we step into the created world and we look around and we enjoy the created things, we ought to give God thanks. Why?

Well, because He is the creator. He is the author, the sustainer of all that we're enjoying. That's why we pause to thank Him before we eat. Well, now, when we step into the church, whatever we see and enjoy in the church, we ought to pause and thank Him.

[5:02] Why? Because He's the creator of it. He's the sustainer of it. He's the author of it. And He deserves thanks. So, Paul and Silas and Timothy, here in verse 2, are always thanking God for this church in Thessalonica.

What for? Well, verse 3 tells us, for their faith and the work that was produced by faith. For their love and the labor prompted by that love.

For their hope and the endurance inspired by that hope. They're thanking God for what they see Him doing in that church.

And as I thought about that this week, I had to give thanks to God for you and what I see God doing in you. For your faith.

How many of you have put faith in Jesus Christ? You are trusting Him for time and eternity. And when troubles come, you run to Him as to a strong tower.

[6:05] You look to Him. You pray to Him. You cry to Him. And you find help in Him. And that faith is not a dead faith, but a living faith that works. And God is to be thanked for what I see.

And what shall we say of your love? Where did you get that love? Just as God is the author of faith, Jesus is the author and finisher of faith, so God is the God of love and those who have received His love love others.

And that love is not merely in word. Love you, brother. But it's in deed and truth. It's producing labors of love. Hard toil, sweat, produced by love.

And so I thank God for what I see of love in this congregation. And hope. Where do you get that? Oh, from the God of hope.

Who spreads this hope abroad in our hearts. When we're going through trials, we find hope that inspires endurance.

[7:22] And I see people enduring and persevering in trials and in tests. Not with some sad resignation to fate. Well, I can't do anything about it. If I've got this problem, I just must put up with it.

No, no, not that. But with a glad hope that all the promises of God are true. And one day Jesus will come back and make everything right.

I do see faith. I see love. I see hope. And so I am to give God thanks for what He's doing in His church. He's to be thanked for everything good in the church.

Let us be overflowing with thanksgiving. But there's another lesson here and it's for you Christians. God is to be thanked for choosing you to be saved.

God is the one to be thanked for choosing to save you. The Bible's teaching on election can be summarized in this way. Before the creation of the world, God the Father chose to save certain sinners, hell-deserving sinners, all of them.

[8:31] But He chose to save some of them whom He gave to Christ before the world began. And He chose them not because of anything He saw in them, but He chose them simply out of His good pleasure and will and for the glory of His own name.

Now, because it happened before creation, no one was there to take notes. No one was there to write down the names real fast of which sinners God the Father gave to His Son as a bride.

And yet the Apostle Paul with Silas and Timothy can say to us here in verse 4, we know, brothers loved by God, that He has chosen you.

Incredible. Paul is able to say of these believers at Thessalonica, we know that God has chosen you, that before the creation of the world, you were on His heart, you were the ones He gave to His Son.

How does he know this? He has no special access into the Lamb's Book of Life, into the secret decrees of God. There was no new special revelation given to him whereby he could see those whom God has chosen.

[9:50] No, he knows God has chosen them because of the powerful effect of the Gospel in their lives. The powerful effect of the Gospel when it came to Thessalonica.

You see how he says that? Verse 4, we know that He's chosen you. Verse 5, because our Gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction.

He sees the changes that the Gospel brought about in the lives of these people.

And so he traces it back to the source, God's election, God's choosing them before the world began. He argues from the effect back to the cause.

You come to my house this fall, and you'll find some apples growing on a tree, and you'll say, oh, this is an apple tree. Now, how did you know that?

[10:53] You knew it because you saw the apples on it. The apples don't make it an apple tree. The apples aren't the cause of it being an apple tree.

They're the result. They're only there because it is an apple tree. And it's the same way that Paul reasons with this church. He says, ah, look what the Gospel has done in their lives.

That's the effect. And he traces it back to the cause. You know how far back he goes? Back into creation. Back beyond creation into eternity past. He says, I know that God has chosen you.

I know that back there He chose you. Why? Because I see the apples on the tree. I see the marks of election all over your lives. Faith, hope, love, repentance, holiness, perseverance.

I see it in you. And that is the effect of election. Therefore, God is to be thanked for choosing you. That's exactly what he says in the second letter.

[11:58] In chapter 2. Notice it just quickly. Chapter 2 of the second letter to the Thessalonians. And verse 13. So, we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved.

Through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth, He called you to this through our Gospel that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, God's to be thanked for choosing you to be saved. Now, what are the sure marks of those chosen by God? You see what we're after here.

What are the fruits of being chosen by God? How will you know them? How will you know who's chosen by God? How will you know if you are one of them? Well, Paul says, you can know, and I know it about you, Thessalonians, because our Gospel came to you.

And then he has a negative word, and then he has a positive word. First, the negative. I know it because our Gospel came to you not simply with words. Our Gospel came to you not simply with words.

[13:12] Now, it did come with words. The Gospel always comes with words. It's a message. It's a message to be understood and to be believed, and therefore, it's a message to be spoken.

That's God's authorized method method for bringing the Gospel. The spoken word, the preached word. So, he's not saying our Gospel came to you without words.

No, he's saying our Gospel did not come to you simply with words. You see, the Gospel is a message that must be spoken. It's the message about what God, how God has done for us in Jesus Christ, what we could not do ourselves.

We could not obey His law. So, in the fullness of time, God sent His Son, born under the law, born of a woman under the law, that He might obey the law and redeem those who had broken that law. And we could not ultimately and finally satisfy God for the sins that we have committed. Do you know that as a finite human being, it will take me eternity to pay for my sins and there will never come a time when I can say, ah, at last, I've made the last payment for my sin.

[14:31] No, it will go on forever and ever and ever because it's a finite man suffering the punishment of sinning against an infinite God. And so I could never finally and fully pay off what I owe for God's, the offense done to God for my sin.

So Jesus comes and He takes my sins upon Him and He goes to the place of punishment at Calvary and He's punished in my place and He fully satisfies the justice and wrath of God.

That's what the gospel is. It's a message. Not first telling you what you must do. No, no. It's absolutely opposite of that. It's telling you what God in Christ has done for you.

What you could never do. And then that gospel message comes with a command. Now you, repent and believe it.

Repent and believe the gospel. And it comes with a promise. Whoever believes shall not perish but have everlasting life. That's a message. I sought to summarize it in a few words but it always must come in words.

[15 : 39] And that's the message Paul preached when he came to town. And it came to many that day and those three weeks simply with words.

Nothing but words. They were heard and they were forgotten. There was nothing life-changing about it. It was a dead letter to them. It was void of the Holy Spirit's converting operation.

And that's how the gospel comes to some in this place week after week after week. Simply with words. What's the preacher all worked up about these words?

That's all they are to you. They're words. So you're bored with them. You're distracted. They're just words. The realities behind them have never gripped you.

They're just words. But to these who now comprise the church of Thessalonica and to many of us here the gospel did not come simply with words.

[16 : 45] And he turns now to the positive. Not simply with words but also along with the words came power the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.

When the gospel came to you it was not just the naked word. No, the gospel words were clothed clothed with the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Power first of all. There was a power attending the words. A power that changed you even as you heard them. It's a recreating power.

You know the whole Bible is about God creating and then recreating what was ruined by the fall. How does God create?

Well the Bible tells us by faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command. Psalm 33 9 He spoke and it came to be.

[17 : 49] He commanded and it stood firm. God created by His powerful word. How does God recreate when things have gone bad through sin?

How does God recreate? How does He recreate people and make new creations out of people?

Well He does so by His powerful word. 1 Peter 1 23 For you have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and enduring word of God.

And this is the word that was preached to you. James 1 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of all He has created of all His new creation and how were we made alive and new?

By His word. His word. Wonderful thing that God is doing right now. He is recreating people making them new creations. They're the ones that will live in the new heavens and the new earth but right now that's future.

Right now He's recreating people and He's using His powerful word and in 2 Corinthians 4 Paul brings together the two creations. He says He's been preaching to people who are blind and cannot see the glory of God in the person of Christ.

[19 : 09] He's talking all about Christ but they see no glory in Him that they should follow Him. He says Oh but with some the word of the gospel went out with more than word and the Spirit went with it and the God who said let there be light who spoke by His word originally and created light said the same thing to my poor heart and light sprang into my darkness and I saw the glory of God in the person of Christ.

Oh preacher you've been talking about Jesus for every year that I've been here but suddenly my eyes saw Him. I don't mean a vision I don't mean a sight that you see something I mean understanding the sight the mind is the organ of sight to the man and we see we see it.

I didn't see glory in Jesus before but now I see Him and I wonder why I stayed away from Him for so long. The Spirit came with the word and powerfully opened your eyes made you a new creature gave you to see the Lord Jesus in all of His glory and you trusted in Him.

It's a recreating word it's a recreating power and it's an irresistible power and it conquers all the obstacles in the way all the reasons why I would not come to Jesus there they are and they keep me from coming to Him.

When the word goes out with power every one of them falls like a domino and there's nothing to do but to receive Christ because the word didn't come simply with words the gospel didn't come simply with words but with power irresistible power overcoming all my unwillingness all my procrastinating nothing can stand before this gospel clothed with power there's a clothing of the preacher's words with an irresistible force that gives entry into the heart that has long been closed shutting out the light and it makes them willing in the day of His power the same message to one just words to another more than words for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but

the same message of the cross to those who are being saved is the power of God for I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek for the word of God is living and active powerful so the word didn't come the gospel didn't come in word only it also came with power and right away [22:11] He ties this power to the Holy Spirit with the Holy Spirit there is such a thing as a dead letter and a life-giving spirit the same word can come as a dead letter to us it's just words on the page but it can also come with the life-giving spirit and Paul didn't want anything to do with gimmicks you know when the spirit's absent we've got to figure some way to get a response out of people and so we we try all kinds of emotional appeals and we try to work on their will and we try to get them worked up into a state where they'll do something what's all that about that's about people that have lost confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to save sinners Paul didn't want to have anything to do with that so he says my message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power

I don't want your faith in Christ resting upon my ability to spin an argument my ability to argue with you or to present a case with worldly wisdom and with such persuasive words that kind of faith will be gone in a day I want your faith in Jesus Christ to have as its explanation one thing that is that the Spirit of God came and gave you new life and you believe because of the power of the Spirit that your faith might rest on God's power not on human wisdom well that's it the Word came to you with power the power of the Holy Spirit and not simply with words but with power with the Spirit and with deep conviction with full confidence with assurance with certainty about the realities that these words speak about yes there is a reality behind every word and the Holy Spirit comes in and makes it more than words the realities become real to you there is a certainty about the things found in the Gospel there seems to be as real as the pulpit as real as the chair you're sitting on these things are real that's the Holy Spirit bringing the Word with deep conviction with full confidence

Robert Haldane was teaching the Book of Romans to a group of seminary students in Geneva they were going to a liberal seminary that didn't believe that God's Word that the Bible was the Word of God but then they would come over to Robert Haldane's apartment and he would he was just leading them through an exposition of the the Book of Romans and he was opening up total depravity man's sinfulness from chapters 1 to 3 and one of his students after the study shouted out I see it I see it it's in the Bible and Haldane says but have you seen it in your heart that's that's the Word coming in more than Word the Gospel coming in more that's the Word coming with with the Holy Spirit and it engages you you see yourself in the Bible you are the hell deserving sinner that's being spoken of you are the one that needs Christ to save you you suddenly see that you feel it you know it's true in a way that before you never saw it the Word has come with the Spirit's power and conviction not truths that are detached from you a million miles away but you see that you're the lost one in need of Christ and you see Christ and you see how he perfectly meets your need as a sinner there's a deep conviction in the authority of God's Word chapter 2 and verse 13 says we also thank God continually because when you receive the Word of God which you heard from us you accepted it not as the Word of men but as it actually is the Word of God which is at work in you who believe you see it's the Spirit of God that makes you receive this Word not as the Word of men but as the Word of God you receive it with the authority as if God's voice spoke from heaven and we were sitting here listening to Him booming His voice from heaven it carries that weight with you well what gave it that weight with you not when the Word simply came with Word but when it came with the Spirit it came with this sense of authority

God is speaking in His Word this God who made me this God who sent His Son to die for sinners this God who will judge me He's speaking and your heart is responding with conviction that this is His Word and so God is to be thanked I may have been able to brush these words aside for years they may have simply come with words but one day it came clothed with power with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction same gospel naked and clothed and it made all the difference all the difference it grabbed me it wouldn't let me go it wasn't like other times oh I was moved for the day Monday morning came and I'd forgotten it I was back to my old ways how many testimonies have we heard pastors like that yeah I was convicted when I was in listening to sermons but Monday I was back to usual no we're not talking about that we're talking about when the Holy Spirit comes with the Word it grabs you and it does not let you go and the one thing needful becomes

I must be right with this God I must know that things are well between my soul and my God you can't escape it's like the great hound of heaven he's just ever at your heels he won't let you go he keeps coming keeps pressing until you find peace with God through a crucified risen Savior yes that's the Word coming with the Spirit's power and conviction that's how it came to these in Thessalonica and that's how Paul says I know God has chosen you because the gospel never comes in that way to the sinner who's not been chosen the gospel only comes with power and the Holy Spirit and deep conviction to those who have been chosen by God before time and given to his Son to be his bride forever and ever thank God if his gospel has come to you in more than word Paul goes on to speak of the result of this gospel coming to them in this way further marks of their election you became imitators of us and of the Lord he says in verse 6 you know how we lived among you for your sake verse 5 and you copied us you saw how we lived and you lived like us you mimicked us that's the idea of the Word here you became imitators of us the Word of God was at work in you who believe just as some of you go off to work you accomplish something at work so the Word of God was at work in you it was doing something it was doing more than just rearranging the furniture it was cleaning house and some things had to go and walls had to come down and additions had to be added on and new things were brought in the Word of God was at work within you 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says at the end and it was changing you and it was making you more and more like Jesus and his disciples

[30:27] Paul says you imitated me and the Lord part of their imitation of Paul and the Lord was their great joy in the midst of suffering verse 6 in spite of severe suffering you welcome the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit you know some people follow Jesus as long as the sun is shining but as soon as persecution arises and a storm rises then they're gone they pack it up and leave they apostatize back to the world that wasn't true of these Thessalonians Christians no they they receive the word with great joy even in the midst of great opposition there was persecution to become a Christian in those days and they still receive the word with joy that's not human nature that's the work of the spirit and that's what Paul says and so he's giving thanks to God for their likeness to Jesus you know where the one we're called to imitate was crucified do we even think about that anymore the one we are imitating was crucified by this world and so if we are becoming like him we must expect to have this world reject us if they've persecuted me they'll persecute you and so we don't run as soon as we meet up with that persecution we rather say this is exactly what Jesus said it would be it's exactly what Paul told us it would be like and so they count it as an honor to suffer for Jesus sake joy in the midst of suffering

Paul says that's how I know you're chosen by God the Holy Spirit producing perseverance in persecution and that with joy given by the Spirit and then in such a short time they had so progressed in imitating Christ that they became a model to other believers now this is a beautiful twist to the story isn't it verse 7 and so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia you became a model for other believers to imitate sometimes professional athletes will tell you well when I was a boy so and so was my hero and I looked up to him and I tried to swing the bat and I tried to throw the ball exactly like him I was imitating him and they got so good at imitating him that they're now the professional and other boys are out there trying to imitate him well that's what happened to the Thessalonians they got saved and they started imitating Paul and Jesus Christ and they they so progressed in imitating him that

Paul says now you've become a model for others to imitate the imitated or the imitators have become the imitated I would suggest we're ever in that process we're continually imitating Christ and in so doing others are looking to us and imitating their life their life after ours and so as I look at Grace Fellowship Church I bless God God is to be thanked for this this is the fruit of his election the fruit of the gospel in your life that there are people here who are wonderful models to imitate for bringing up your children there are wonderful examples here in this congregation of what it means to to honor your father and mother all the way to the end what it means to to love your wife as Christ loved the church to submit yourself to your husband in everything for the Lord's sake wonderful models and where did they get that it was by grace that they have been imitating Jesus and I see something of Jesus in you that moves me to imitate to be like that and as we imitate Christ we're growing in grace here's this young church and they're already a model for others to imitate and Paul can say y'all be like those folks down in Thessalonica a young church but the word the gospel had come in the power of the spirit and was transforming their lives making them like Jesus and their example was known everywhere Paul says I don't even have to talk about

you everybody else is talking about you you're being gossiped about all over the world remember where they were right on the cross of these trade routes and people coming through Thessalonica heard about it from the townspeople wherever they went throughout the known world they carried with them the message about what's happened to some idolaters back in

Thessalonica that heard the gospel of Jesus Christ notice what he says in verses 8 and 9 the Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Ikea your faith in God has become known everywhere therefore we do not need to say anything about it for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us and what are they saying about the reception you gave us when we arrived in town with the gospel what are they saying what did you do well this is what they said verses 9 and 10 they tell how you turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath that's what was being gossiped all over the world about these Thessalonians how you turn to God from idols now that's what always happens when the gospel comes clothed in the spirit's power and conviction people turn to God from their idols now this wasn't the

[36:26] Bible belt of the United States this was pagan Greece these were idol worshipers proud of their religion and here they are getting on with the only life they've ever known superstitious idol worshipers and all of their life revolved around their idols the food was sacrificed to idols everything's around their idols and then Paul and Silas came to town and brought the gospel and at once they forsook their idols they abandoned their idols for the living God now that's power that's the Holy Spirit that's what he does and that's why Paul knows that they are the elect and that is what happens in the Bible belt of the United States because we too have our idols anything that we put in the place of God anything that we give God like status and we trust in and we hope in and we look to for help and we rejoice and delight our soul in and we give ultimate loyalty to these are idols and when the gospel came with power you abandoned your idols and you took the living and true God to be your

God in Jesus Christ that's what conversion is you see we're born with our backs to God and when the gospel comes to us in the power of the spirit we turn to God from our idols we were facing our idols and living for idols and we turn to God from our idols you can't turn to God without turning from your idols you can't turn to Jesus Christ without turning from your sin repentance and faith are ever dual graces found in every conversion and that's what happened here they turn to God from idols the Japanese are a people that like to save face perhaps even more than we do and so if you tell a Japanese to accept Jesus Christ into their life they'll do that they're happy to do that and they'll just scoot over on the mantle of their home all their idols and make room for your

Jesus that's not conversion accepting Jesus into your life no what conversion is is turning to God from idols conversion is when the whole idol shelf comes down and God is planted in its place and you now live for God what an exchange to serve the living and true God living God exchange for lifeless idols can you imagine the change in these people's lives lifeless idols that men created they can't do anything anything for you Isaiah makes fun of them in his writings but he speaks in Isaiah 40 that you seek out a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that cannot be toppled and so they make silver chains for their idols so they won't fall over and he's mocking how helpless they are they can't even hold themselves up much less you what a wonderful thing to be shed from the superstition of these lifeless idols these gods that have no reality no existence in the real world just in the mind of the imagination and to see them turning from those to the living

God the God who's alive and who's capable of relationship through Jesus Christ he's the living God these gods have mouths but they cannot speak they have hands but they cannot do anything they've got ears but they can't hear a mouth but they can't speak those that worship them will become like them we have a God who has a mouth that speaks and when it comes with the word and power of the spirit nothing remains the same conversion takes place men leave their that's what true means the genuine God the real thing and he says you now serve the living and true God the word therefore serve is the verbal form of the noun for slave *doulos* slave you serve as slaves for the real living God you see we're all slaves of something or someone we're all slaves either to our idols or to the true and living

God these forsook their idols and now they are serving as slaves they see their life is not their own they were bought with a price so their life isn't theirs to live as they please but they serve this living and true God they obey him they follow him and lastly they wait for his son from heaven that's what they were gossiping all about the town these people left their idols to serve the living and true God

and to wait for his son from heaven wow there's a lot of content to the gossip isn't there I mean we're learning who the son of God is it's Jesus of Nazareth it's the one who was dead and then was raised from the dead and the one who rescues his people from the coming wrath he's coming again there's all kinds of content you see because the gospel had been spoken it had been preached not trying to reduce it to the bare minimum but it was a full gospel and so when people talked about [42:30] Thessalonian believers in the church there they said those are people who are waiting for God's son from heaven they're a forward looking people that bunch they're not living for the present like everyone else like all the rest of us they got their eyes on the future they live as if the future belonged to them as if their best things are yet to come funny group and all their hope focuses all their hope and expectation for the future focuses on one person Jesus Jesus it's his human name God's son and on one event his second coming from heaven and there you see it they're waiting for God's son who's died risen ascended into heaven and he's coming back and they're waiting for it and this hope so lived within them that it affected the way they lived others saw it others knew it they knew they were waiting for

God's son from heaven does anybody know that you're waiting for God's son from heaven anybody talking about you that way you know that bunch at grace fellowship church they're they're waiting as if as if the ultimate event of events is still future and they can't wait till it happens when God's son Jesus will return to earth anyone following you around for a week come to that conclusion that you're waiting for something whoever has this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure you see where this hope lives it sanctifies and it defines our life it keeps us from settling into this world as if it were our home it gives us that pilgrim and stranger identity here in this world our citizenship is in heaven our treasure is there our inheritance is there our savior is there!

the one who rescues us from the wrath though the wrath of God is every day being poured out upon ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in their ungodliness yet there is a coming wrath there is a future wrath and it's to be revealed at the coming of Jesus when Jesus God's son returns to earth that's when this wrath is coming for he's coming to judge men for all the things that they've done in the body and to punish them for turning their backs on God for running after their idols from turning their backs on his law and his gospel and his son and wrath has been storing up for them for the day of God's wrath there's a coming wrath would anyone think that Grace Fellowship Church that you realize that there's a coming wrath do you ever speak of it there's a day coming when

God's wrath will fall on this earth seismologists on the west coast record the tremors and the shiftings of the plates of the earth and they all tell us that there's the big one coming God's wrath is coming there is a coming wrath for whatever you've seen of earthquakes now there's a big one coming for whatever you've seen of God's wrath there's the coming wrath are you ready for it well it comes with the coming of Christ who when he comes will find men totally unprepared and they will cry for the rocks and hills to fall on them they'll welcome the earthquakes to cover them and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb for the great day of their wrath has come and who can stand Jesus who saves us from the coming wrath he rescues us and what a way of rescue what a way of salvation how does

Jesus rescue us from the coming wrath well he steps in between the wrath of God and the sinner and he lets the God's wrath fall on him full force so that there's nothing left for the trusting sinner now that's what he does for everyone who trusts in him he comes between he's the mediator and he takes the wrath he's redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us and so the big one's coming there's a coming wrath and there's one safe place to be in all the universe it's in Christ in Christ as as a strong tower to be in Christ is to be safe in that day because he rescues us from the coming wrath you see he drank all the cup of God's wrath that I should have been drinking forever so there's nothing left for me to drink the cup was emptied Jesus a few comments of application are you waiting for him you waiting for this one who took the wrath for you unbeliever then you'll understand why believers say even so come

[47:58] Lord Jesus come quickly we're going to see him face to face this one that's just words on the page to you he's our savior I would be in hell forever if it wasn't for him and I'm going to see him one he's coming I'm waiting for him the one who saved me from God's wrath this is the message that was gossiped everywhere about these believers in this church at Thessalonica you see how their changed lives spoke volumes so does yours this is why evangelism in the context of the church is such a privilege and is such a beautiful thing for me to be able to preach the gospel and to

have living proofs walking billboards all throughout this congregation of people who have turned to God from their idols who are serving the living and true God who are waiting for his son whose faith is working whose love is toiling and whose hope is persevering and I can say see what the gospel does do you see what the gospel will do to a man to a woman it commends the teaching of God our savior it adorns the gospel it's an honor to Christ and his gospel and folks this is our hope for the for the lost loved ones that we have this is our hope for their conversion they may have heard the gospel many times and rejected it every time and that track record may cause us to become tempted to quit giving them the gospel to quit praying for them or quit inviting them to church quit expecting their salvation but we see this morning there's an irresistible power of the Holy

Spirit when he comes with the word there is power to break down all that stands between the sinner and Christ and to draw them irresistibly into the arms of Jesus oh our hope is not in man in man's schemes man's methods our hope is in a demonstration of the Spirit's power oh that that breathes hope in me careless sinners sinners that are yawning today are bored today with the gospel distracted with the gospel careless sinners are never more than a moment away from the new birth do you believe that Christians just speak the word and my servant will be healed speak the word and my son will be converted my daughter will be saved that's a hope giving message Paul wasn't in town for more than three weeks but when he left he had idolaters who had chucked their idols and were glad to be worshipping the living and true

God through Jesus Christ oh let's cry to God for his spirit then to attend the gospel in saving power and lastly in light of the coming wrath you ought to make your calling and election sure Peter says in 2 Peter 1.10 I hope so may be a good answer to a question like are you going to the picnic this year but it's a lousy answer to the question are you prepared for the coming wrath are you one of God's chosen people I hope so just doesn't cut it friend the issue is too great no you must be certain this is something you must know for sure Paul was certain that they had been chosen by God because the way the gospel came and converting life changing power of the Holy Spirit and so I ask you has the gospel come to you in more than word but in power conviction are you trusting in

Christ alone to save you from the coming wrath have you turned to God from your idols are you serving the living and true God are you imitating Christ are you a new creature in Christ Jesus is the word of God at work in you are you waiting for his return from heaven these are just descriptions of these at Thessalonica who had put their trust in Christ announced in the gospel and become new creatures when he comes will you be richer or poor what will you have that will survive his coming wrath well Christ has done all the work for those who never could put your trust in him receive him today and be saved may may