

## 20230108 THE HEART TOUCHED BY GOD'S LOVE

The Gospel and Transformation – Part 1  
(1 Thessalonians 1:2-6)

- 2 We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.
- 3 We 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.
- 4 For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you,
- 5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.
- 6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

**The ultimate purpose of our life:** Our transformed heart by the touch of God's love displayed upon the cross of Jesus Christ

### Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey (Acts 13-14)



### Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey



### Via Egnatia



(Thrace)



### Cultural background of the Thessalonian church

Thessalonica was the capital and largest city of Roman province of Macedonia. Via Egnatia, the most important Roman highway went through Thessalonica.

This highway, along with the city's thriving seaport, made Thessalonica one of the wealthiest and most flourishing trade centers in the Roman empire. Recognized as a free city, Thessalonica was allowed self-rule and was exempt from most of the restrictions placed by Roman on other cities in the empire. With its international flavor came many pagan religions and cultural influences that challenged the faith of the young Christians there.

### Theological background of the Thessalonian church

Paul stayed in the city about three weeks and led some people to Christ. Although Paul was in Thessalonica only about three weeks, he touched on many of the great doctrines of the

church. Among them was the second coming of Christ. This theme was not above the heads of the new converts, according to apostle Paul.

The Thessalonians did have some questions about their new faith. Paul had not had time to answer all their questions during his brief visit, and in the meantime, other questions had arisen. So, Paul wrote these two letters to answer their questions and to commend them on their faithfulness to Christ.

### The main question from the Thessalonian church: **About the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**

- 1 Thessalonians: The particular phase in the second coming of Christ which he emphasized in the first letter was **Christ's coming for believers**. The second coming of Christ in relationship to believers is a comfort.
- 2 Thessalonians: The theme of the second letter to the Thessalonians is Christ's coming upon the earth and the signs before this happening. (Two major signs before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ upon the earth:
  - **The apostasy**, that is, the complete betrayal against the biblical faith by the professing church must happen.
  - **The man of sin**, that is, **The Anti-Christ** must come first. Of course, the removal of the true believers at "our gathering together unto Him (the Rapture)" makes **the apostasy** in the professing church 100%.

## THE TRANSFORMATION

### 1. What were the proofs of the heart touched by God's love through the gospel of Jesus Christ? (v3)

<sup>3</sup> 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.

- (1) Work produced by faith (changed life)
- (2) Labor prompted by love (serving God and serving others)
- (3) Endurance inspired by hope in the Lord Jesus Christ (Overcoming challenges without giving up the faith)

<sup>4</sup> For we know, brothers loved by God, that He has chosen you, *These confirms God's election of them. (v4)*

### 2. In what manner was the gospel message delivered to the Thessalonian believers? (v5)

<sup>5</sup> 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.

- (1) With both words and power – Life transformation
- (2) With Holy Spirit and deep conviction – Heart transformation
- (3) Through life sharing – Togetherness (Transformation only happens when believers share their life together in brokenness without pretense.)

### 3. How was the message received by the open-minded people in Thessalonica? (vv6-8)

<sup>6</sup> You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>7</sup> And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

- (1) They decided to follow Christ. (Membership-dedication)
- (2) They welcomed the gospel truth with joy that comes from the Spirit of God. (Discipleship-trained and equipped)
- (3) They shared their faith with others. (Evangelism-speaking for Christ and leading others to Christ)

### 4. What were the results of the heart touched by God's love? (vv9-10)

<sup>9</sup> For they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

<sup>10</sup> and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

- (1) They turned to God from idols – New life perspective and priority
- (2) They waited for Jesus coming for His church – Heavenly mindset with expectancy

## APPLICATION

### Be open-minded and teachable!

*(Be obedient to God's ways)*

<sup>18</sup> Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18a)