

It Is Written

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Glorifying God's Word

By Stan Cox

There is an interesting phrase from the pen of the apostle Paul, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you" (2 Thessalonians 3:1). The phrase is, "that the word of the Lord may...be glorified." Paul was asking that these faithful brethren petition God on his behalf. It was his desire that through his efforts, the word of the Lord would spread swiftly. That is, that many would hear and repeat it. Also, that it would be glorified. By this Paul meant, as noted by Thayer, that through his efforts the value of the word of God would become evident or made manifest.

A similar statement is made by the Lord regarding our influence. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). We extol the greatness and righteousness of God whenever we live in accord with His will. Men see it, and "glorify" Him.

The Thessalonians themselves were wonderful examples of extolling the words of the Lord. Consider how the word of God was glorified by them.

They Received it as the Word of God

Paul noted this truth in his first epistle to them. "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Many fail in this. The prevalent view of the inspiration of scripture is more akin to a poet's muse than what scripture reveals it to be. People believe that men were moved to write, but the words of scripture are the product of men, rather than God. The Bible reveals something far different. When Paul wrote that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God", the phrase is emphatic. The word inspiration (theopneustos) literally means "God breathed." All scripture is God breathed. It is "of God." It is not merely the product of motivated men. Rather, its ultimate author is God Himself.

As this is the case, we can trust in its completeness, its relevancy, and its inerrancy. Since these attributes are so, it carries with it authority. God wrote it, so we have an obligation to heed and obey it.

They Heeded the Call of God's Word

This is exactly what the Thessalonians did. As the words were from God, they listened. In fact, their faithfulness to God's will served as a wonderful testimony to Paul and others. "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" (2 Thessalonians 1:4). They heard the gospel preached, and as it convicted them, it changed them. "...How you turned 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, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).

They Lived by the Gospel so as to Please God

God's word contains instructions. His will for each of us. What He requires. "Finally then,

brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:1-2). Through gospel preaching the Thessalonians began to know how to live. When they learned these things, they applied them and changed their lives. As such, they earned Paul's confidence, "And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you" (2 Thessalonians 3:4).

They Became Good Examples to Others

Paul commended them, "...you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe" (1 Thessalonians 1:7). Consider the importance of demonstrating the teaching of the gospel in your own lives. A good example reinforces the practical effectiveness of God's will. The world is in desperate need of Christians who are "light" people! "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

They Sounded Forth the Word of God

The Thessalonians understood God's imperative to share the blessings they received through the gospel of Christ. They understood the value of what they had received, and desired for the world to attain those same benefits. "For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything" (1 Thessalonians 1:8). As such, they did their part in implementing God's plan for evangelizing the world. "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Each of us should learn from the example of the Christians in Thessalonica. We each have the capacity to pray that "the word of the Lord run swiftly and be glorified", and to do our part to glorify it in our own lives. It is our solemn duty. Are you doing your part to glorify the word of God?

The Preaching of the Cross

By Kyle Campbell

Regarding the preaching of the cross, Paul wrote, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God ... For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-24).

Paul was willing to only boast in the cross (Galatians 6:14). The cross is crucial to our salvation because we can have life by His lifting up (John 3:14). One who seeks to be justified by Mosaic Law is "under a curse" (Galatians 3:10). Nothing good can come of one who would try to be justified by perfect law keeping because there will inevitably be a time in which the follower will make a mistake and sin against the law (Romans 3:23). The "curse" Jesus bore relates to the command given in Deuteronomy 21:22-23 (Galatians 3:13). This is capital punishment for capital crimes. If a man did something deserving of death, he was to be put to death and he was to be hung on a tree for all to see. Though innocent, Christ was treated in His death as if He had been guilty; that is, He was put to death as if He had personally deserved it.

His resurrection proved He was God's Son (John 8:28; Romans 1:4). The resurrection is explained in the gospel, and it is this gospel that can draw men to God (John 12:32). In fact, if this won't move a man, a man can't be moved.