

The Gospel Came in Power

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By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Scripture Text: [1 Thessalonians 1:1-10](#)

Introduction

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Thessalonica. The first time he mentioned the Thessalonians was in the book of Acts, but it was not a good commentary, for he said, these (the Bereans) were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they (the Bereans) received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to see if those things were so.

But thank God there were also noble men in Thessalonica, for later, many of them have also received and believed the Gospel. The lives and hearts of Thessalonian Christians were greatly affected.

[1 Thessalonians 1:6-10](#)

They became faithful followers of the disciples and of the Lord in the midst of much affliction. They followed the Lord with joy of the Holy Ghost in spite of much affliction. They became example and encouragement to other believers. They left their idols and served the living and true God. The lives of these men and women were radically transformed because of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The world needs a powerful Gospel. We need a Gospel that does not only promise future salvation. We need a Gospel that does not only promise salvation from Hell and an eternal home in Heaven but also a Gospel that has power to change hearts and lives.

That is the Gospel that Jesus Christ established. That is the Gospel we must preach.

I - What is the Gospel?

Gospel means “good news”. It is “good news”, because it solves and removes the greatest and worst problem of men - sin and its consequence. Sin brought guilt, corruption, condemnation, suffering, death, and hell. But the Gospel solves all these problems.

It is "good news" not only because of what it removes but also what it brings! It brings forgiveness, salvation, reconciliation, justification, life, peace, joy and heaven.

The gospel is simple. I like how the Scriptures put it in such simple terms ...

[Luke 19:10](#) For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

[2 Corinthians 5:19](#) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. [20:](#) Now

then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21: For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

II - How the Gospel should come

How did the Gospel come to the Thessalonians? How is it that they received the word in much affliction? How is it that even in the midst of much affliction they were still filled with joy of the Holy Spirit.

We read these things so casually. What we miss when we don't pause and meditate and look at them, oh, what a wealth of meaning.

In those days, to receive the Word, to be a Christian brings much affliction. To believe in those days may mean being disowned by family, having property confiscated, imprisonment, even death, but in spite of all these they believed. So the question is why or how is it that in the midst of these afflictions they believed and they were filled with the joy. The only explanation I could offer is found in 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

1. The Gospel came not only in word

1 Thessalonians 1:5 **For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.**

To some the gospel comes only in word. They hear, they understand, they agree, and to some extent they even admire, but produces no effect.

But thank God, there are those who heard, understood, fully convinced of its reality and so they believed. It produced a powerful effect on the heart and life.

The Gospel came in word. Words were used. The Gospel must be communicated through preached word. But no man is ever saved just by preaching alone. Preaching alone, words alone, sentences alone, will not convert a soul.

It is clear in this text, that something more is needed for the conversion of souls. The Gospel must come not only in word but in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance.

2. The Gospel came in power

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also **in power**, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Secondly, the Gospel came to them in power. Yes, the Gospel must come in word, for it is the instrument that God uses to rescue sinners.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

It may be foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are saved it is the power of God.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for **it is the power of God unto salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

It is the Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. It is the preaching of the cross that is the power of God. It is not skits, nor drama, nor music that will convert sinners to Christ. However well-prepared the drama is, or the musical is. God's means of converting sinners to Christ is still the preaching of the Gospel. That is where the power lies. The Gospel must be communicated through preached word and it is the instrument that God uses to produce faith in sinners.

Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Throughout the New Testament, the gospel is associated with power:

Romans 15:18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me (accomplished through me), to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, 19: Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. 20: For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

3. The Gospel came in the Holy Ghost

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and **in the Holy Ghost**, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Thirdly, the Gospel came to them in the Holy Ghost.

Spurgeon as he goes up to the pulpit to preach, silently and repeatedly says these words, "I believe in the Holy Ghost. I believe in the Holy Ghost. I believe in the Holy Ghost."

We believe in the third person of the Trinity. We believe that there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. We need to be more conscious of the Holy Spirit. We need to be more reliant on the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit there is no conviction of sin and no conversion to Christ.

[John 16:8](#) And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: [9: Of sin, because they believe not on me;](#) [10: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;](#) [11: Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.](#)

No one will be saved without the Holy Spirit coming in power. We must have the convicting and convincing power of the Holy Ghost. The power does not lie in the ability of the preacher but in the quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

If the preacher only speaks, then it is a matter of word only, but when the Holy Spirit works through the word, a great spiritual work is accomplished. The preaching of the Gospel must be accompanied by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the conversion of his hearers.

But we must also remember that the Holy Spirit will only come with power when the Gospel is faithfully preached. We can pray all we want for the Holy Spirit to come in power but if we are preaching a watered down Gospel, He won't.

4. The Gospel came in much assurance

[1 Thessalonians 1:5](#) For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and **in much assurance**; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Lastly, the Gospel came to them in much assurance. It came to them with firm conviction. They heard and they were fully convinced of truth and they embraced the truth.

It is true that the Holy Spirit convicts and convinces of sin, righteousness and judgment. But the Holy Spirit also comforts and gives full assurance. After the Holy Spirit convicts He comforts. The Spirit bear witness by shedding the love of God abroad in our hearts.

III - Implications

1. These great truths should drive us to our knees

This is the reason that we must always have the spirit of prayer and intercession. The work of rescuing sinners is a work of God. It is a supernatural work. No human can do it. We are completely dependent upon God.

[John 6:63](#) It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

It is the Holy Spirit that gives life to spiritually dead sinners. It is the Holy Spirit alone that can give a new heart. These blessings we seek from God must come by prayer and by intercession. By God's people pleading with God, the Holy Spirit is given and the Holy Spirit comes and the Holy Spirit moves in our midst.

2. These great truths should encourage us

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

It should encourage us to participate in publishing the good news, knowing that the success does not depend on our gifts and abilities but it lies on the power of God alone.

We need to understand that success in the ministry is not our responsibility, that is God's responsibility. Our responsibility is to proclaim the good news, and God will give the increase.

Brethren, let us pray that the Word would not just be heard but also that it would be understood, believed and embraced. That it would produce a powerful effect on the heart and life.

May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering!

AMEN!