

WEEKLY REFLECTION

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1)

Paul’s admonishment to the church of Corinth sets the tone for our passage of 1 Thessalonians 1. Because the Thessalonian church became imitators of Paul and his missionary team as they themselves imitated Christ (v.6a), news of their “work of faith”, “labor of love”, and their steadfastness of hope in...Jesus Christ.” (v.3) went forth everywhere. (v.8a) The church itself became “an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia” (v.7b).

In contrast to the age of self-importance we find ourselves in today, where everyone and everything is encouraged to “build their own brand”, the church of Thessalonica only had eyes for Jesus. Paul and his missionary team served as their teachers and leaders, but ultimately they were pointed towards none other than Christ Himself. The result was a living, vibrant, and active faith put into action, that spoke louder than words and spread like wildfire.

How did the church of Thessalonica even come to have such strong faith in the first place? Beyond the examples found in Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, Paul points to how the gospel came to them “not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.” (v.5a) Their understanding of the good news found in Jesus Christ also allowed them to be steadfast in their faith, despite the challenges of persecution and affliction surrounding them. (v.9-10)

Before you consider the impact of your faith on yourself and others, ask yourself this: did you receive the gospel not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction? Do you truly understand the good news that can be found only in Jesus Christ, He who will deliver us from the wrath to come? (v.10b) Who are you following? Who are you imitating? Are your eyes fixed on the people or the things around you, instead of Jesus and Jesus only?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

Take a moment to think back on how you became a follower of Christ.

Was it a long or a short process? Who, or what was involved? What different ways did God use to get your attention with the message of the gospel?

QUESTION TWO:

Paul describes how the gospel came to the church of Thessalonica in verse 5.

According to Mark 1:1, 14-15; Romans 1:1-4, 16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; and 2 Timothy 2:8-9, what are the main elements of the gospel message?

QUESTION THREE:

The message on Sunday focused on the theme of imitation. Who or what do you imitate in your life? What positive or negative traits have you picked up from that imitation, and how do they impact your faith journey?

As you look at your own faith, how would you say it is put into action? Would that people around you be able to look more like Jesus simply by interacting with you?

Is there anything that needs to change, and if so, how would you put that into action for the next week?