

## ***Thankworthy living: confirming reports***

(1 Thessalonians 1:8–10)

An established faith in God and a faith being spread, testifying to Jesus Christ, was and is a worthy reason to give thanks to God. Paul thanked God for the Thessalonians because of the spreading testimony to God originating with the Thessalonians.

### **1. “The faith” was ringing out extensively.**

- a. “The Lord’s message,” literally, “the word of the Lord”, has an Old Testament, prophetic ring. In Acts it is used for the gospel (Acts 8:25; 13:44, 48; 15:36; 16:32).
  - b. The gospel was going out from the Thessalonians, though not necessarily directly by the Thessalonians.
  - c. The strategic location of Thessalonica, as capital and economic center, located on major trade routes, made it ideal for ringing out the gospel.
- ⇒ To what extent might the gospel ring out from our location?

### **2. Their faith was spreading.**

- a. *A faith that was personal:* The Thessalonians did not merely pass on a message, it had impacted them personally.
  - b. *A faith that meant conversion:* To convert literally means to turn. It is more than a change of mind, it is a change in action. They turned toward God away from idols. It was a choice they made that marked them as different in their culture.
  - c. *A faith that was talked about:* such a counter-cultural conversion was talked about. The impact of the gospel on the Thessalonians became so well-known that Paul did not need to speak of it.
- ⇒ Has the gospel become your faith? Is your faith a true conversion, i.e. have you turned to God from all else? Does your faith so stand out that it would be talked about?

### **3. The faithfulness of the messengers was being reported.**

- a. It was being reported “what kind of reception you gave us” (v 9a), or, better, “what kind of visit we had toward you.” The literal phrase is not limited to the initial reception, nor is the action of the Thessalonians to the missionaries the primary emphasis. The same word is used in 2:1 for their “visit.”
  - b. Paul introduced this idea in 1:4–5 and will develop it more in chapter 2.
  - c. The bigger picture of the gospel ministry includes the message, those who receive the message and those who bring the message. The messengers were truthful, bold, humble, pure, etc., matching the message.
  - d. The reports logically included the messengers as those the Thessalonians imitated.
- ⇒ It is important to give consideration to the character of gospel messengers, both ourselves and others. It can add or detract from the impact of the reports concerning the gospel.

The Thessalonians were a model church (1:7) and offer a model for believers today as well. But to imitate that model certain things must be true. You must understand the gospel message in order to proclaim the gospel. You must be changed by the gospel message for it truly to be your faith. You must live lives consistent with the gospel message to be good messengers of the gospel.