

REASONS TO BE GLAD FOR THE THESSALONIANS **(1 Thessalonians 2:13-14)**

I. The way they received the word of God.

- A. Paul tells these brethren that he thanked God for them without ceasing.
 - 1. Think of how encouraging this must have been to these brethren that an apostle was continually praying for them.
 - 2. People to whom I speak when sick often comment on their gratitude for the brethren praying for them.
 - 3. It is one of the simplest yet most powerful things we can do to encourage others.
- B. He was thankful for the way they received the word he preached.
 - 1. Received literally means to associate oneself or to call to one's side.
 - 2. They heard the gospel and associated themselves with it by their obedience to it.
- C. They associated themselves with it in a way that showed they believed it was from God and not from man.
 - 1. Their view of God's word was one we should emulate.
 - 2. They did not accept it just as the word of some mere man.
 - 3. They realized that what they were hearing was not of human origin.
 - a. If the Bible is objectively studied, it does not take long to see that it is from a greater Being than man.
 - b. Its continuity of thought, preservation, lack of contradiction and authority all show its being from God.
 - 4. These brethren received it as it really is - from God.
 - a. There was no doubt on their behalf about from where it came.
 - b. It must be received this way or our faith in it can be shaken.
 - c. If someone presented a good argument for its being from God, and you were convinced by the argument and not material, when someone else gave a convincing argument that it was not from God it would be tempting to follow their ideas.
- D. This word was believed to be from God because of the work it did in changing their lives.
 - 1. The words "effectually worketh" are from one Greek word from which we get our word energy.
 - 2. It worked in them in way that they felt and knew there was a change based on their belief in and obedience to it.
 - 3. When one believes it, it will change his life.
- E. Paul rejoiced because of the way they received God's word.

II. Their walk in Christ.

- A. Paul next rejoiced because the way they lived in Christ Jesus.
- B. The way the Thessalonians worshiped and lived was after the model of the original congregations of the Lord's people in Judea.

- C. These brethren served as a model for all Christians, including us.
 1. They were the first established because of the Lord's command to first preach in and around Jerusalem and then spread.
 2. These congregations worshiped correctly and lived lives worthy of imitation, which is the meaning of the word followers.
- D. By doing this, the Thessalonians could know they were in Christ.
- E. One of the best things we will ever do as Christians is to find someone who is truly Christ like and learn from them.
 1. Paul told Titus to have the older teach the younger.
 2. The reason for this is experience in the trials of life should give the older brethren a wealth of knowledge.
 3. We need our older Christians to pass on what they know to younger Christians.
- F. There never needs to be a disconnect between the older and younger generations.
- G. We need to make sure that both of these groups are connected and maintaining a good relationship for the betterment of each group.
 1. The younger can learn from the older.
 2. The older can be encouraged and comforted by the younger.
- H. May we ever strive to have a walk that is in Christ that others can emulate.

III. **Their willingness to suffer.**

- A. One of the ways they emulated the Judean Christians was in their dealing with suffering.
- B. The Jews persecuted God's true Israel unmercifully.
 1. We know what Paul did.
 2. He was not the only one that treated God's people in that manner.
 3. The Jews as a whole were extremely enraged against Christians.
 4. Tradition holds that during of the many Roman persecutions of the church, the Jews ran to collect fire wood in order to burn Christians at the stake in Smyrna.
- C. The Thessalonians likewise were persecuted for becoming Christians by people in their own city.
 1. They were drug before the city council.
 2. They were treated harshly and abused for their belief.
 3. A lot of this was caused by the Jews in that city.
 4. The Jews would be the ones in the background agitating things in order to get the Gentiles to act against the Christians.
- D. The Jews were not looked upon with great regard by Gentiles because of their attitudes and actions.
 1. In Corinth, recorded in Acts 18, the Jews themselves brought Paul before the judge of the city.
 2. He told the Jews that he had nothing to do with their law and then the Gentiles took the ruler of the synagogue and beat him.
 3. There was no love lost on the Jews so they had to do things in an underhanded manner.
 4. They used others to get Christians persecuted.

- E. What was wonderful is that the Thessalonians were remaining faithful in spite of the persecution they were suffering.
- F. Though they were young in the faith, they remained steadfast to Christ and refused to turn from Him during persecution.
- G. As suffering comes our way, we need to be steadfast and resolute in staying with Jesus and not turn away from Him.
- H. These brethren refused to do that and Paul was glad because of their stand with Jesus.