John 15:18-20 - 18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. NASB

1 Peter 3:13-16 - 13 And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. NASB

But consider without the bad news, (that is the coming judgment of God because of personal sins), there is no reason for the good news of the substitutionary atonement of Christ on the cross for sins, and the forgiveness which God now gives for personal sins to all who trust in what Christ has done to save them. If people don’t understand sin and judgment, they will not understand the need for salvation from God’s wrath because of sin. This is where we desperately need the help of the Holy Spirit as we tell people the Gospel. He must open their eyes to sin and righteousness and judgment or they simply will not see in their natural state.

John 16:7-12 - 7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. NASB

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 - 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. NASB

And consider that without the death of the Son of God, there is no proof of the resurrection either. And without the resurrection of Christ we have no sure hope of eternal life. But Jesus is in fact raised from the dead, and He promises to give eternal life to all who trust in Him and His saving work.

John 5:24 - 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. NASB

And so it is these Thessalonians showed another supernatural evidence of their election, that is, they were faithfully imitating their teachers even receiving the message of the Gospel in the midst of much affliction and with the joy of the Holy Spirit. As Calvin points out, “the Gospel cannot be properly, or sincerely received, unless it be with a joyful heart. Nothing however is more at variance with our natural disposition, than to rejoice in afflictions!” Even though the Thessalonians were persecuted for their faith, in a very hostile climate, they not only held their faith privately, but practiced it publically, and this they did with great joy.

1 Thessalonians 1:7-8 - 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. NASU

A. so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia – The words “so that,” point us back to verse 6, they became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,” and by this they became an example to all the believers.” It is no small thing that Paul says of this church, that they were a pattern for all believers. This commendation Paul does not give to any other church! Note then, the high quality of the Thessalonians’ faith, that it is regarded as an example. And the specific Questions? shaansloan@att.net www.heavenslight.org 13
characteristics of their faith are given as to why they are an “example.” It is the fact that they “became imitators” of both the Lord and the Apostles, and “received the word in much tribulation with joy.” And this “imitating,” mimetes in the Greek, from which we get our English word mimic, resulted in “the word of the Lord has sounded forth” v-8 from them, in all of Greece. These specific qualities of their faith are pointed out;

- They were imitators of the Lord and the Apostles
- Receiving the word with joy, even in the midst of much tribulation and opposition
- They were very Evangelical, (that is Gospel-centered) sounding forth the Gospel in every part of their world

Learn here, that the way these Thessalonians lived their Christian life is an “example to all believers,” that we must seek to imitate. When the Scripture points to this activity as a model church, we ought to seek to pattern our church after it.

B. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. – The way that Paul describes their evangelical efforts is quite remarkable. He says that it has “sounded forth from you not only” in the entire provinces of “Macedonia and Achaia,” but even beyond those places. Now this is no small feat. Paul is saying that the Thessalonians had received the word with so much joy, that they told the world about it and did it with such force that Paul didn’t need to publish it at all because they had done it on their own. The terms “in every place” is an obvious hyperbole, but nevertheless the idea is that they had given testimony of their faith in Christ to much of the Greco-Roman world, and the nature of this testimony is reported in verse 9, “how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God.” The Thessalonians were not ashamed of the Gospel or of their faith in Christ, even telling the hostility provoking message of repentance from the pluralistic worship of pagan idolatry to engendering themselves in the service of the true God. He says that “in every place your faith toward God has gone forth” which does not necessarily mean that all these places were evangelized, but at a very minimum, they had given testimony of their own personal faith in Christ. They certainly were by this evidence, seeking to evangelize their world. Paul mentions this again in 2 Thessalonians and notice here how he describes it.

2 Thessalonians 3:1 - Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; NASB

The Thessalonians were so excited about their faith, they had told much of the Greco-Roman world about it. It is because of this activity that they were identified by Paul as a model church.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - 9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, NASU

A. For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you – Here Paul points out that he didn’t need to tell people in other places that the Thessalonians had been saved, for they had published the news on their own. He describes the fact that others had been so moved by the Thessalonians witness that, “they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you.” The Thessalonians had made a profound impact on the world around them.

B. and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God - Not only had they told others the Gospel, but they gave the specific information that they had “turned to God from idols” the common religion of the Greco-Roman world, that of pagan idolatry, “to serve a living and true God.” Here we see what engendered so much opposition. In this message is two very important points. First, that their “idols” are not “God,” but rather false gods in contrast to the