

Message Main Idea

The Word of God is powerful and is to able transform lives. To realizing the full benefit of the Word, we should engage in study, application, proclamation, while trusting God to use it to transform us and those we share it with.

Explanation & Discussion

What does total commitment to Christ and the gospel look like in a person who is not gifted as an evangelist or missionary?

Is every follower of Christ called to radical commitment, or just those called into missions? Why? Do you have any Scripture to support your view?

Is your church more like the people in Thessalonica or those in Berea? What is the evidence for your conclusion here?

Who is displaying hostility toward our church organization and church members? What is the relationship between persecution and a church body's faithfulness to the mission?

In Mark 4:21-25, what does Jesus tell His disciples about the benefits and consequences based on how we respond to and use the word?

Missiologist Ralph Winter suggests that every Christian adopt a "missionary lifestyle" and give the money you save to the cause of missions. What do you think about this idea?

Commit to praying for church members individually to meet with divine appointments to share the gospel and for the hearers to be receptive of the gospel.

In what ways might we establish new points of contact for the sake of the gospel in our community? How can we connect with our community when we lack the contact points available in a town or city?

Think about the way you listen to teachers, preachers, podcasts, and other forms of Christian teaching. How do you interact as you listen? Do you weigh it against your existing understanding and ideas? If so, how were they formed? Do you compare it to God's word? What does that look like? Do you receive the word as a passive listener growing in knowledge or an active hearer who is growing in obedience?

What can we learn about teaching the Scriptures from Paul's example in Thessalonica? What words describe his teaching methods? Discuss what each of these might look like today.

Take some time to read 1st Thessalonians. What strikes you about what Paul says regarding the Thessalonians' heart for the Word? What about Paul's attitude toward the Thessalonians resonates with you? Why do you think some of the Jews were jealous? How does the story of Paul's trip to Thessalonica encourage you? How does it challenge you?

What does it mean to live as if "there is another King, Jesus"?

What words are used to describe the Berean's approach to the word? What challenges you the most about the Berean approach to God's Word? What might happen if churches today developed the same habits? How does the Berean visit encourage you?

In light of these two stories, take a few moments to pray for those who teach in your congregation and for those who hear the Scriptures.

Additional References

Romans 8:18 ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

1st Corinthians 1:3-5 ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

1st Thessalonians 1:4-10 ⁴ For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1st Thessalonians 2:1-4 ¹ For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. ² But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. ³ For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, ⁴ but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

1st Thessalonians 2:14-16 ¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind ¹⁶ by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!

Mark 4:21-25 ²¹ And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? ²² For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. ²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." ²⁴ And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. ²⁵ For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

Isaiah 40:8 ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Isaiah 55:10-11 ¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

Romans 10:13-14 ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

John Piper "When the heart full of God's love can draw on the mind full of God's word, timely blessings flow from the mouth."

Martin Luther "If he have faith, the believer cannot be restrained. He betrays himself. He breaks out. He confesses and teaches this gospel to the people at the risk of life itself."