

Wednesday in the Word
Digging Deeper
March 17, 2021
1 Thessalonians 1:5-10
Turned To God From Idols

1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 KJVS

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. [6] And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: [7] So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. [8] For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. [9] For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye 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, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

A revolution in devotion takes place when a religious culture awakens to the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether it be a demonic pagan worship, recognition of false gods or even a Christian based dead religion. Life and light are delivered to us through faith in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. John 1:4, 8:12, 2 Timothy 1:10. Our nation as a whole was profoundly affected by the teachings of the bible but now revolt and rejection are rapidly filling the gap left open when Jesus was expelled. Take a moment to read the addended page attached to the lesson today.

In our text for today Paul reminds his hearers that his original message was sincere and supported by the power of the Holy Spirit. He lays out for them the example set by his missionary group and how that message brought joy through the afflictions they endured. The Greek word for 'affliction' is thlipsis which means pressure. This pressure was the result of the Thessalonian's old ties to the culture and people left behind when they dropped the false gods of their families and neighbors. Remember the trouble Paul caused when he decimated the business of idol makers and silversmiths. Acts 19:23-28. Continue reading on if you wish for more detail. If you want to start trouble, attack the gods of a culture. As the aforementioned article describes, the idols and gods of others are often worshipped in violence and demonic influence. Is it any different now in America with our idols of mainline religion, lifestyles, wealth or apartheid? Now we learn that the US is opening the door to old fashioned idolatry much like that which destroyed early Israel and modern India. Next, as Paul clearly states the truth of our God and His Son he remarks that they turned to God from Idols.

Let's dig in to the idolatry of the Thessalonians. The following is excerpted from an article found on cutpaste.typepad.com

Religion in Thessaloniki - Like many Greco-Roman cities, Thessaloniki was religiously pluralistic. Thessalonians worshipped a plethora of "gods," such as the city's patron god, Cabirus, along with the likes of Dionysus, Aphrodite, Zeus and Asclepius, the god of medicine and physicians. Macedonia, like much of the Roman Empire, was a region of strong emperor

worship, where Caesar was also considered to be divine. In short, most everyone in Thessaloniki was an idol and emperor worshipper before Paul and his companions arrived there to proclaim the Gospel of Christ (see 1 Thess. 1:9).

Thessaloniki's patron god, Cabirus, was considered a "martyr" god, meaning he had been supposedly slain and was expected to return again to deliver the Thessalonians from future powerlessness. On one hand, those holding to belief in Cabirus would easily have rejected Christ as an imposter or counterfeit. On the other hand, the elite class in Thessaloniki had made a special claim on Cabirus, such that he supposedly cared more for them than for ordinary people. This may well have given some commoners a reason to shift allegiance to Christ, who not only had actually existed and been wrongfully killed and risen again to bring good news to the lost and downtrodden, but cared for them more deeply than did the pretend Cabirus, "god" of the elite.

As we encounter an evolving culture of idolatry in our beloved nation, pray for the boldness to lovingly confront those living in darkness. Philippians 1:18.