

Sermon Outline – November 2, 2025 (Scroll down for sermon notes)

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:13–20

Background:

- Written by Paul in 50 AD
- Paul’s ministry faced big opposition from Jewish leaders.
- This letter expresses gratitude, encouragement, and a call to live worthy of God

I. THANKFUL FOR THE WORD RECEIVED (v.13)

A. The Reason for Thanksgiving

- “For this reason we thank God without ceasing...”
- Possibly refers back to v.12 or forward
- Either way, Paul rejoices because they recognized and received the message as God’s Word.

B. The Response to the Word

- The Thessalonians welcomed the message as truth.
- Contrast: The Jews heard but rejected it
- Have you received and welcomed the Word of God?

C. Authority of Scripture

- 2 Timothy 3:16 — “All Scripture is God-breathed...”

- Psalm 19:7–9 — The Word is perfect, sure, pure, true, trustworthy.
- The Bible is our final authority
- Paul rejoices because the Thessalonians trusted and acted on Scripture.

II. IMITATORS THROUGH SUFFERING (vv.14–16)

A. Following Godly Examples

- v.14 “You became imitators of the churches in Judea...”
- Evidence of a changed life: Faith in action.

B. Sharing in Suffering

- They suffered from their own countrymen, just as Judean believers suffered from Jews.
- Hatred of truth breeds hostility toward Christians.
- Christians still face persecution today (e.g., 4,475 killed, 7,679 churches attacked in 2024).
- Standing for truth invites opposition—but it’s worth it.
- Paul’s sufferings remind us: Faithfulness is never in vain.

C. Wrath for Rejection (v.16)

- Those who forbid the gospel “fill up the measure of their sins.”

- God's wrath comes on those who hinder salvation.
- To reject or obstruct the gospel is dangerous and deadly.

III. PAUL'S HEART FOR PEOPLE (vv.17–20)

A. Torn away (v.17)

- Paul's departure was forced, not voluntary—like a father separated from his children.
- True shepherding: presence of heart even when absent in body.

B. Desire for Fellowship (v.17–18)

- “Eagerly desired to see them.”
- Love produces longing for face-to-face fellowship.

C. Satan's Opposition

- Paul discerned that Satan, not God, blocked his plans.
- Ephesians 6 / 2 Corinthians 12
- Application: Expect Satan to hinder ministry—but don't give up.

IV. JOY AND HOPE IN ETERNAL REWARD (vv.19–20)

A. Paul's Motivation

- His joy was people transformed by the gospel.

- His reward: Seeing believers in the presence of Jesus at His coming.

B. The Thessalonians: Paul's Glory and Joy

- v.20 — “You are our glory and joy.”
- Ministry is about souls saved and lives changed.
- Jesus lived to serve others
- Paul followed that example—and calls us to do the same.

C. Invitation

- Romans 3:23 / 6:23
- Ephesians 2:8–9 — Salvation is a gift
- Romans 10:9–10 — Confess and believe.

Conclusion

- Paul's message to Thessalonica still speaks today:
 - Receive the Word.
 - Live the Word.
 - Stand firm in suffering.
 - Serve with love.
 - Hope in Christ's return.

Sermon Notes

Nov 2, 2025. I Thess 2:13-20

Paul, as his custom was, went to the synagogue and preached that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. Jewish leaders were not pleased about this. Because of this, it was difficult for Paul and his team to do ministry.

This letter is a challenge to walk in a manner worthy of God.

13 “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. 14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, 16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

Paul loves the church at Thessalonica. He is very happy, and excited.

Vs 13, “for this reason...” What reason are they thanking God? VS12, “that you would walk worthy of God who **calls** you into His own kingdom and glory” verse 13- received the Word of God and welcomed it”.

They are thankful because they receiving the true voice of God Almighty.

They received the truth and fully believed it to be the word of God.

Thessalonians had limited opportunity to believe-

Contrast that with the Jews who heard, knew, listened, and still rejected the truth.

Paul realized that it is the power of God that transforms and renews lives.

Have you received the Word of God and welcomed it into your life? The bible says that He is not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance. God’s desire is for everyone to turn away from sin and believe in him rather than face utter destruction.

2 Tim 3:16. Scripture is from God and is true and pure. Psalm 19:7-9, says we can trust the Bible because for it is pure, clean, truth and trustworthy.

The bible, is the supreme authority and the final standard on all things.

Vs 13

“For this reason, we also thank God without ceasing because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe”.

“We thank God without ceasing”. Thankful. Happy. Why? They responded, accepted and eagerly embraced it. Recognized it as divine truth. Paul was God’s tool to speak God’s Word. Paul is a pretty happy person.

Vs 14, “For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans,”

Became imitators. Of who? Other believers in the churches. Those believers were imitating Paul, Timothy and Silas who in turn imitated Jesus. Its action. They heard the Word, responded and then put action to it. They had a longing in their heart to be like Christ. Evidence of a changed life. This is what the church should look like.

The Thessalonians received the Word while the Jews rejected the Word Jesus came to speak the truth, help, heal, to bless- and they killed him and went after all those who preach the gospel. “Not pleasing to God”. Why? They hated the truth.

In some places of the world, there is tremendous hostility towards Christianity. 4,475 Christians were killed in 2024 for their faith in God. 7,679 churches were attacked in 2024 according to UK Parliament House of Commons Library.

Vs 16

16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

That’s what the Jews did. They hindered them from speaking to others about Jesus.

“forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved.”

Saved from what? Saved means rescued or delivered and implies danger. That is why God sent his son Jesus. To rescue us from sin.

“...so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. Your cup is full now, it's at the limit, wrath will be the result of your hostility.

17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured more eagerly to see your face with great desire. **18** Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again— but Satan hindered us. **19** For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? **20** For you are our glory and joy.

“But we brethren...” Brethren, a term of endearment. “Having been taken away from you.” Torn away from you. He didn't leave because he wanted to, he left because he was being torn or ripped from the Thessalonians. Paul depicts himself as a father cut off from his children. Absent in body but present in spirit. You are in my heart is what he is saying.

“...endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire”.

Eagerly/ great desire. “To see your face”. Face to face meetings speaks intimacy, personal connection, If you love someone, you want to spend time with them. If you truly love someone, or a group of people, you want to spend time with them. Face to face.

18 Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again— but Satan hindered us.

We wanted to... but someone hindered them. Satan....

Satan. The enemy of God. He is real, Eph 6, “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness”. Satan is active. Paul's desire was to return but Satan hindered the business of ministry. When serving the Lord, expect Satan to attack and hinder you.

Satan succeeded in frustrating Paul's plan to return to Thessalonica, but this was God's plan.

19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? **20** For you are our glory and joy.

Vs 20, "you, are our glory". Paul says this is what we live for. Others

Jesus who gave His life up for others. He lived a life serving others.

Mark 10:45 says, "for even the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a reason for many."

Paul wrote the book of Thessalonians and the book of Romans.

Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". Everyone past, present, future has or will sin.

Paul also wrote Romans 6:23, "the wages of sin is death BUT the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord".

Paul also wrote in Eph 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast."

The gift of salvation is for everyone, the bible says, "**whosoever** calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." That means you...

Romans 10:9-10, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Have you called out to Jesus to be saved?