

Conversion

by Wayne Goff

One can read a New Testament epistle and learn from it some valuable lessons. The apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians shortly after being driven out of their midst. They constituted a young church and needed further instruction and guidance. Just the same, Paul wrote about the things for which he was thankful concerning them: The Genuineness of their conversion, 1:2-3. “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.”

You could tell that their conversion was genuine because of their evangelistic spirit, v. 8. Paul said that the Word of the Lord had sounded forth, not just in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place! How exciting that this new body of believers was so zealous to spread the Good News!

You could tell that their conversion was genuine because of their transformed hearts, v. 9. God’s Word preached by Paul had an “entry” into their hearts. It was confirmed by the fruit it produced: “how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” There were many gods being worshiped in the first century, and these Thessalonians had worshiped some of them. But after hearing the Gospel message, they quickly turned from those vain things unto the living God. What an example for others!

You could tell that their conversion was genuine because of their expectation of the Lord’s return, v. 10. “...to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” The second coming of Christ was very real to them, and they expected His return at any time! As you read the rest of this epistle, and then 2 Thessalonians, you realize just how fervently they desired the Lord’s return. They were not worried about it, they welcomed it!

Their Imitation of Christ & the Apostles, 3:1-3. Like Jesus and the apostles, the Thessalonians quickly suffered for their faith! But it did not deter them, discourage them, or depress them.

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