



**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

We honor those who not only gave us life, but who also show us how to live.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Heavenly Father, I need to know Your love in order to love others. I want to experience and share Your patience and kindness with those I care about. Fill me and use me

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord

(Eph 6:4 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", June 15, 2014)

**Series: Responding to
God's Grace**

**UNIT: Faith Leads to
Holy Living**

NEXT WEEK

**Faith That is Focused
(1 Peter 1:13-26)**

Faith That Sets an Example 1 Thess 1:2-10

Lesson Background and Introduction

Is it possible to make the gospel too simple? Some preachers and churches seem to think so. They preach a highly refined version of the Christian message in which their followers must maintain correct views about many obscure doctrines, must adhere to certain social standards, and so forth. Could it really be so simple that Paul could express the essentials in a couple of verses? Our gospel message must be centered on Jesus and His work. While there are many important aspects to the Christian life that call for study and practice, the core of the gospel need not be cluttered. Paul's message for the Thessalonians was that Jesus Christ came and died for their sins, that He was raised from the dead, and that He will come again. This simple yet powerful message was enough for hardened pagans in ancient Thessalonica to turn from their idols and embrace faith in Christ. Their hearts were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Their transformation was so radical that their reputation spread over two Roman provinces. Their testimony is worthy of our attention. Though this congregation experienced severe trials, the people refused to let their faith fade into the background. Instead, they stepped up their loving works so much that Paul touted them as already being an example to others. We sometimes distance faith from works in our teaching, not wanting to mislead Christians into thinking they can earn their salvation. However, the two are sometimes paired in the New Testament (see 2 Thessalonians 1:11; Revelation 2:19). What can be missing is the connecting factor: love. May we believe as the Thessalonians believed and then act on our faith as they did: full of the Holy Spirit and love.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

The Church in Thessalonica - Ever thought of a fellow brother or sister in Christ and smiled inside with a heart of thanksgiving? This is how Paul thought of the believers in Thessalonica. He started the church there under terrible circumstances. His enemies ran him out of town. Paul had only been able to work with the new congregation for three weeks. Yet the church was progressing along nicely.

The Work of the Holy Spirit - Paul constantly prayed for the newly established churches. He thanked God for the Thessalonica congregation as he witnessed the work of the Holy Spirit in its members. They longed to be like Jesus. Their faith had increased. He admired their love for each other and their hope and patience while facing difficult situations. Paul reminded them of God's choosing each one as His own. He called them beloved by Jehovah, a title in the past given to God's special leaders like Moses. The Father honored these Gentile converts with the same address.

The Holy Spirit's Work - Paul observed the Gospel's effect on the lives of these believers. Their faith extended beyond an intellectual exercise. The power of God was at work and the Holy Spirit moved freely. God's Spirit comforted the Thessalonian church, and they followed His direction and guidance. The congregation allowed the Scriptures to permeate their being, and they followed the example of Paul and his companions. They listened to Paul and closely adhered to his teachings, regardless of the rough external pressures. In some churches, Paul had to endure constant whining and complaining, but not this one. They rejoiced and stood out as excellent examples of what it meant to walk closely with the Lord. Those in the surrounding areas heard about their faith, resulting in unbelievers coming to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. At one time, this group of believers served false gods—but not anymore.

Set a Godly Example - A Christian who sets an example of a changed life will turn heads. One young woman's friend confessed, "I started investigating Christianity because I saw such a change in you. I wasn't happy with my life and I wanted something different, but I didn't know where to look or how to change. Then I saw the change in you." Sometimes believers forget the unsaved world is watching those of us who claim to be Christ's followers

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Example Through a Transformed Lifestyle (1 Thess 1:2-6)

Transformed Lifestyle through a work of faith

The work of faith is to believe in Jesus (John 6:28-29)
The work of faith should be done with all my strength and abilities (1 Cor 15:58)
The work of faith expresses itself through love (Gal 5:6)
Genuine faith is accompanied by actions (James 2:17)
The work of faith results in being credited as righteousness (Rom 4:4-5)

Transformed Lifestyle through a labor of love

Labor of love because without love there is nothing (1 Cor 13:1-3)
Labor of love because God commands us to pursue it (1 Tim 6:11)
Labor of love because God knows our deeds (Rev 2:19)
Labor of love is the only thing that counts in the Kingdom of God (Gal 5:6)
Labor of love comes from a pure heart and good conscience (1 Tim 1:5)
Labor of love prompts us to do good works (Heb 10:24)
Labor of love means that we love God (1 John 4:21)

Transformed Lifestyle through the patience of hope

Hope that anchors the soul (Heb 6:18-20)
Hope that should be held unswervingly (Heb 10:23)
Hope in the glory of God (Rom 5:2)
Hope that will not disappoint (Rom 5:5)
Hope found in the Scriptures (Rom 15:4)
Hope that makes us bold (2 Cor 3:10-12)
Hope into which we are called (Eph 4:4)
Hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7)

Example Through a Transformed Reputation (1 Thess 1:7-9)

Transformed Reputation by being an example

An example of godly speech, life, love and purity (1 Tim 4:12)
An example of following Jesus (1 Cor 11:1)
An example of God's patience and grace (1 Tim 1:16)
An example by doing good (Titus 2:7-8)
An example of perseverance in trials and persecutions (2 Thess 1:4)

Transformed Reputation by being a witness

Witness through the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)
Witness by using God's word (Rom 10:17-18)
Witness to others through teaching (2 Tim 2:2)
Witness starting at home (Luke 8:39)
Witness about what God has done for us (Ps 66:16)

Transformed Reputation by turning from idolatry

Turning from idolatry by fleeing from it (1 Cor 10:14)
Turning from idolatry by putting to death what belongs to the earthly nature (Col 3:5)
Turning from idolatry by being separated from it (2 Cor 6:16-17)
Turning from idolatry by keeping oneself from idols (1 John 5:21)
Turning from idolatry by trusting in God instead (Ps 31:6)

Example Through a Transformed Future (1 Thess 1:10)

A transformed future in heaven

A heaven where the former things will be gone (Isa 65:17-18)
A heaven that will endure (Isa 66:22-23)
A heaven that will be the home of the righteous (2 Peter 3:13)
A heaven where better things stored up for us (Ps 31:19)
A heaven where hope is stored (Col 1:5)
A heaven where a living hope of the inheritance is waiting for us (1 Peter 1:3-4)

A transformed future through resurrection

A resurrection that is based on Scripture (1 Cor 15:3-4)
A resurrection through being united with Jesus (Rom 6:5)
A resurrection taught through preaching (1 Cor 15:12-14)
A resurrection symbolized through baptism (1 Peter 3:17-21)

A transformed future of deliverance

Deliverance through being hidden in God (Ps 32:7)
Deliverance through God's faithfulness (2 Cor 1:10)
Deliverance through a living hope (1 Peter 1:3)
Deliverance in a time that has been appointed by God (Dan 11:35)