

You Turned From Idols: 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10 Explained Scriptures for Today

1 Thessalonians 1:6-10

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.

Introduction — The Book of 1 Thessalonians

Paul is writing to believers who didn't have it easy. They heard the word, believed it, and immediately faced affliction. This is a young church, but they are already standing strong.

This passage shows what happens when people believe the truth. The truth doesn't stay hidden. The truth spreads, and it changes direction.

What happened before this? (1 Thessalonians 1:1-5). Before this, Paul reminds them how the gospel came to them. The Gospel came to them in power, in the Holy Ghost, and with full assurance. FULL ASSURANCE!

They didn't just hear something. They believed it. And they are fully assured they have received everlasting life that cannot be lost. That sets up what you see next. Remember, these are believers.

Received the Word — In Affliction, With Joy

1 Thessalonians 1:6

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord.” They followed Paul and the others only because they were following the Lord. This is not attaching themselves to men—it is following the example of people who are following Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

“Having received the word.” They heard the word and accepted it. Not just listening—receiving it as truth.

In Acts 17:11, the Bible says: "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." They received the word with ALL READINESS of mind. This is very important for all of us to do.

"In much affliction." This didn't happen in a comfortable situation. They believed the word while facing pressure, trouble, and opposition.

"But notice—"with joy of the Holy Ghost." That joy didn't come from the situation. It came from the Holy Ghost. The circumstances were hard, but the response was still joy. This means the Holy Ghost has great JOY He can give to you. If you've lost your joy, you need more of the Holy Ghost!

In Acts 5:41, the Bible says: And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. REJOICE that you suffer for Jesus Christ. Have JOY in that suffering. They followed the Lord, received the word, faced affliction, and still had joy because it came from the Holy Ghost, not the situation.

They Became an Example

1 Thessalonians 1:7

So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

They didn't stay quiet. They became examples. Other believers saw what was happening with them. They saw how they received the word and how they handled affliction. We are to do the same for each other and for others out there.

They need to see how we do things according to God's words. The people here in Thessalonica are examples for us as well. We read this. We study this. And we take their example of doing things the right way and apply it to our lives. And show others the right way. Set the example.

The Word Sounded Out

1 Thessalonians 1:8

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.

"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord." That means it went out from them, not just to them. "Sounded out" is like a trumpet—it carries, it travels, it keeps going. They didn't keep the word to themselves. Isaiah 58:1 says "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet." Don't be quiet about the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Not only in Macedonia and Achaia." It started in their region, the places closest to them. The message didn't stay local. The message continued out further and further.

“But also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.” Now it goes beyond that. People in other places are hearing about their faith toward God. Not just hearing the message—they’re hearing that these people believed it. Romans 1:8 says “your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.” Our faith here should be spoken of throughout the world!

“Your faith to God-ward.” The direction matters. Their faith is toward God, not toward men, not toward religion. Not towards the preacher. Not towards the name of the church. Not towards anything **BUT** the Lord God Almighty. We put our faith in God Almighty. That gives us strength.

“So that we need not to speak any thing.” Paul is saying we don’t even have to introduce you. Your reputation has already gone ahead of us. People already know what happened. People already know. The Thessalonians were doing a great job.

They didn’t just receive the word—they sent it out, and their faith became known far beyond their own area.

Turned from Idols — To God

1 Thessalonians 1:9

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;

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you.” People in other places are talking about what happened when Paul came to Thessalonica. They’re repeating how the gospel came in and what the response was. The impact was clear enough that others could describe it.

“And how ye turned to God from idols.” That’s a real change in direction. They were serving idols before—false gods, empty things—and they turned to God. Not halfway, not adding God alongside idols. They turned away from one and toward the other. Acts 14:15 says “that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God.”

“To serve the living and true God.” Turning is followed by serving. They didn’t just change what they believed—they changed who they were serving. The contrast is clear: idols are dead and false, but God is living and true. Jeremiah 10:10 says “But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God.”

They turned away from idols, turned to God, and now they serve the living and true God instead of what they used to follow.

Waiting for His Son

1 Thessalonians 1:10

And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

They are waiting for Jesus Christ. That's part of the Christian life—looking for His return. He was raised from the dead. That confirms everything. 1 Corinthians 15:4 says "he rose again the third day."

And it says He delivered us from the wrath to come. Romans 5:9 says "we shall be saved from wrath through him." That is future wrath. Jesus already delivered believers from it. It's done. It's over. DELIVERED is past tense. We don't have to worry about facing God's wrath.

Summary of 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

Paul writes to believers in Thessalonica and starts by thanking God for them. He points out their work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope, showing they truly believed the gospel. He reminds them that the gospel didn't come in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and with full assurance.

They received the word, but it wasn't easy. They faced affliction right away, yet they still had joy from the Holy Ghost. That response made them an example to other believers, and the word of the Lord spread out from them into other regions. Their faith became known beyond their own area.

People were talking about what happened when the gospel came to them. They turned to God from idols and began serving the living and true God. They didn't add God to what they already had—they changed direction completely.

Now they are waiting for Jesus Christ to return from heaven. He was raised from the dead, and He has already delivered believers from the wrath to come. They heard the gospel, believed it, turned to God, and now they serve Him while waiting for Jesus Christ, knowing they are delivered from future wrath.

Practical Applications

1. You can receive the word even in hard situations. Affliction doesn't stop the truth.
2. When you believe the truth, it spreads. It doesn't stay contained.
3. Turning to God means leaving what you were serving before.
4. Jesus has already delivered believers from the wrath to come.

Conclusion: 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10

They heard the word, believed it, and everything changed direction. They turned from idols, served the living God, and now they are waiting for Jesus Christ. That's the same pattern we want to follow. We aren't saved by following Jesus Christ. We are saved by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. But then, we want to follow Him because we love Him.

Let's pray.