

PLEASING OR NOT PLEASING TO GOD

--1st THESSALONIANS 2:13-16--

INTRODUCTION:

God's great plan of salvation, the redemption of mankind from his sinful state into a state where man stands justified before God, where God by the Holy Spirit is doing His work of sanctification in us, conforming us to the image of His Son, and where we look forward in hope to the end result when we will be glorified.

This is the glorious side of God's plan of redemption and in contrast to this is those who reject the gospel, who reject God's offer of salvation and all that awaits them is endless shame and the punishment of eternal damnation because of their rejection. This contrast is clearly seen in our passage today.

Paul clearly shows us in this passage a people who were pleasing to God, a people we can rejoice with seen clearly in the believing Thessalonians, and a people who were not pleasing to God, a people we can be sad for, the unbelieving Jews and all those hostile to the Gospel.

I. THE THESSALONIANS RECEIVED GOD'S WORD

(1st Thessalonians 2:13)

- a. The time that Paul, Silas, and Timothy spent ministering and preaching the gospel in Thessalonica is _____.
- b. Paul now gives the reason that he and his companions constantly thank God for these believers, and it is because they _____ the word of God.
- c. The word "_____" in this first verse is translated from a Greek word that means an inward welcome of the message. (Galatians 1:11-12)
- d. Unlike man's words, the word of God is _____, it is not empty or without power. (1st Corinthians 1:18-25)
- e. The Thessalonian believers grew spiritually because in faith they believed the _____ of the cross.

II. THE THESSALONIANS IMITATED THE SAINTS

(1st Thessalonians 2:14a)

- a. Paul had written in chapter one that the proof of the Thessalonians' full acceptance of the Gospel, and their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was seen in their becoming _____ of Paul and his co-workers, Timothy and Silas, and imitators of the Lord.
- b. How could the Thessalonians be imitators of the churches in _____?
- c. Judea was a Roman province in the southern part of _____.
- d. Paul refers to these churches in Judea as the churches of _____, which emphasizes God as their source and their foundation.

III. THE THESSALONIANS PERSEVERED IN SUFFERING

(1st Thessalonians 2:14b)

- a. Paul spoke of the Thessalonians suffering at the hands of their own _____ in imitation to the churches in Judea who had suffered persecution from the Jews.
- b. Paul and his co-workers left Thessalonica immediately after this _____ uproar but from Paul's letter it is implied that this was not the end of the church's persecution.

IV. THE FATE OF NOT PLEASING GOD (1st Thess. 2:15-16)

- a. Paul makes an abrupt transition in verse 15 as he begins his criticism of the _____.
- b. This is not the first time that Paul has spoken of the unbelieving Jews with words of _____.

V. THE JEWS REJECTED GOD'S WORD (1st Thess. 2:15a)

- a. Paul begins in verse 15 with a very clear _____ to the Thessalonians' immediate acceptance and love of the truth.
- b. The Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, support what Paul says here about the Jews _____ the Lord Jesus.
- c. The Jews guilt for the murder of the Lord Jesus also relates to their deadly _____ toward the prophets.

- d. This _____ that the Jews had toward anyone who brought God's word to them was also extended to the apostles of Christ.

VI. THE JEWS HINDERED THE MESSENGERS

(1st Thessalonians 2:15b-16a)

- a. The Thessalonian believers honored the messengers of God, but the unbelieving Jews tried to _____ or stop the messengers from sharing the Gospel.
- b. Paul continues and says that not only are they displeasing to God, but they are _____ to all men.

VII. THE JEWS JUDGMENT ASSURED (1st Thessalonians 2:16b)

- a. The Thessalonian believers had _____ suffering, they had persevered in persecution and had come through it triumphantly in the hope of eternal glory.
- b. But the unbelieving Jews faced an entirely different future, they would face eternal _____ that they would not be able to endure.
- c. The result of the Jew's hostility toward God's messengers and God's Word, Paul writes, is that they always _____ up the measure of their sins.
- d. Paul writes concerning the unbelieving Jews, "*But wrath has come upon them to the _____.*" (1st Thessalonians 2:16b, NASB95)

CONCLUSION:

Today, just as in Paul's day, the choice between God's blessings and God wrath is still a choice each of us must make. We can like the Thessalonians receive and accept the truth of the Gospel. Or we can be like the unbelieving Jew and reject the Gospel, reject Jesus Christ, and reject His messengers and hinder them from preaching the Word of God. If you have chosen to receive the Gospel, then you have every reason to rejoice, and I rejoice with you. But if you have chosen the path of rejection then I am sad for you and I pray for your salvation.