

Faith that Sets an Example

Key Verses: “*Ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 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.*”
—*I Thessalonians*
1:7,8

Selected Scripture:
I Thessalonians
1:2-10

chosen by God.

The powerful Gospel message delivered through the preaching of Paul, Silas and Timothy, as they traveled from place to place, was substantiated by its sound doctrinal principles. (Rom. 1:16; Tit. 1:9) Moreover, their approval by God was shown by various miraculous

AS LABORERS TOGETHER, it is understandable that Paul, Silas and Timothy would send greetings to the church at Thessalonica, expressing gratitude to God for their devotion to Christ as well as remembering them in prayer.—Acts 17:1-9; I Thess. 1:1,2

This epistle would certainly prove to be a source of encouragement to the brethren as their faith, love and hope were manifest, despite their being relatively new in terms of the length of their Christian sojourn. They gave evidence of their rapid growth as a result of the persecutions they experienced. Furthermore, the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives was a witness that they were loved and

manifestations, such as their escape from jail following an earthquake. (Acts 16:25-35) This experience at Philippi was most dramatic, and news of this occurrence may have been widely circulated, thus attesting to strength of the one true God they served.—I Thess. 1:3-5

Even though the believers in Thessalonica received severe persecutions at the hands of those who opposed them, they welcomed hearing the Gospel message with great joy, convinced that their actions were pleasing to the Heavenly Father. This Paul confirms: “Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.”—vs. 6

Our Key Verses attest the overall faithfulness of the brethren in receiving and proclaiming God’s Word, though it brought much opposition and great suffering. Their example had a profound effect upon others to whom they witnessed, and who subsequently became followers of Christ.

Although our lesson deals with the experiences of the Early Church, the concept of suffering for righteousness is something that any of the Lord’s elect may encounter. Such may be the experience of those who faithfully proclaim the scriptural message. Consecrated Christians have pledged to follow the Master’s pattern, despite opposition from others who may reject this message. Thus, any trials that we presently endure are but light afflictions as contrasted with the glory which will be ours as part of the bride of Christ, if we are faithfully carrying out this privilege.—II Cor. 4:17

May the following words strengthen our resolve to share the Gospel message: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”—Matt. 5:10-12 ■