

Wednesday in the Word

Digging Deeper

March 10, 2021

1 Thessalonians 1:1-4

Faith, Hope and Love

All of Paul's letters are written to churches he founded or was at least instrumental in doing so. We read these epistles in fidelity to his request to circulate these writings among all believers. We saw this in Colossians 4:16. The interesting thing though is that we, for two millennia, have had the good fortune to be established houses of worship and for several hundred years we could simply reach to our side to grab the bible and read. Imagine being in Thessalonica or any great city two thousand years ago and floundering along forming a church body in it's infancy. How does a group have church with no bible? They greatly anticipated a letter from Paul to instruct them and answer their questions. They had as much as possible of the Hebrew writings and hopefully a core Jewish membership to interpret God's Word. They certainly sang the Psalms as did Christ and as we today. This Yeshua they knew of was gone and they often fumbled about to keep the Way as best they could. Thank God for the Holy Spirit who was not even mentioned until 4:8. We know from the history in Acts 2:4 that He was instrumental in the formation of the church of Christ. He also was the Person of guidance and revelation for them. See Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 3:5. Even today the bible would be little more than some fun stories and useful philosophy if it were not administered by our loving God through His Holy Spirit. Perhaps you've noted that the world at large, both outside and within the church has little interest in this most important collection of spiritual information. For one thing it cannot be grasped at all without the Spirit's leading. 1 Corinthians 2:13-14, John 14:16-17. Also, since this is God's Word and Mind we are studying we are fully dependent on Him to make it alive within us. John 14:26, 1 John 2:27. Even our prayers are weak without His input. Romans 8:26. Peter acknowledges to us that all the Word of God came by the direction of the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21. Compare 2 Timothy 3:16. Incidentally, our bible came together as men of God investigated the correlation and consistency of the many books within. Now, as Paul commences his letter to the Thessalonians we hold confidently to accept these words as being directly from God Himself.

What instruction can we glean from these opening verses in our text today? We note first that we are IN God the Father and IN the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not simply followers or students but are adopted into oneness with our Creator and Lord. We are one as He is one. John 17:11,22. We learn next that true grace and peace come directly and only through them. The world cannot provide such. John 14:27. We also ought always to thank God for each other. Do you? Refer to Colossians 1:1-4 and notice this consistent practice of Paul as it must be with us. Romans 1:8, 1 Corinthians 1:4. In consideration of others Paul focuses on three characteristics of the brethren. It would do us well to follow his model in recognizing the qualities of those we love. Faith, hope and love. Look for these in fellow believers. You'll not have to dig too deep. In fact these three show up together very often in scripture. 1 Thessalonians 5:8 speaks of them as necessary armor for the battles of life. Odd, isn't it? We are told to fight evil and darkness with faith, hope and love. Try it next time. God will surprise you. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. See also 1 Corinthians 13:13, Galatians 5:5-6 and many more. We have a wisdom within us the world cannot withstand. Trust God. All of this is based in our 'election' of God.

Election here in the Greek is eklogē or Divine selection. A 'choosing out of' the world. God saw you before the earth was formed and knowing you from eternity, He based His choice of you on your response to Him. Ephesians 1:4, 2 Timothy 1:9. Beg and pray the Lord that those you love will also so respond to His offer. We can't know God's Eternal Mind but we are given a share in it and can influence others for salvation. 1 Corinthians 2:16.