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The Turn that Transforms

4 **1 Thessalonians 1:1-4**

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. ² We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

5 **1 Thessalonians 1:5-6**

⁵ because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit

6 **1 Thessalonians 1:7-8**

• ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

7 **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**

• ⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you 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, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

8 **4 things you need to know about
1 Thessalonians**

- It is one of the earliest N. T. Books.
- It is one of the shortest N. T. Books – Only 89 verses – You can easily read it in 30 minutes.
- It is one of the easiest N. T. Books to understand.
- It is one of the most practical N.T. Books.

9 **Background information**

- Acts 17:1-9 records the story of the founding of the church at Thessalonica – a seaport town in ancient Greece – an important crossroads for East-West travel.
- The port contained an excellent harbor.
- In Paul's day 200,000 people lived there – mostly Greeks – but also many Romans and a strong Jewish minority.

10 **Paul's concern for them**

- After a short ministry, Paul left Thessalonica because of persecution.
- Timothy later reported back to Paul regarding the state of the young church.
- Rumors were being spread about Paul – Paul wanted to return and correct the situation, but circumstances prevented it, so he wrote this letter of encouragement to the young

church.

11 **1 Thessalonians 1**

- Paul's ministry there was very brief.
- Paul relates their spiritual biography.
- They had made The Turn That Transforms.
- Paul is relating the story of how they had turned from their pagan religion to become faithful followers of Jesus Christ.
- This is truly a first century miracle.

12 **How did this happen?**

- Over the next two or three centuries, the number of Christians increased exponentially to thirty million or more.
- Acts 15:3: *So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles and they caused great joy to all the brethren.*

13 **The converted parrot**

14 **2 sides of conversion**

- The word *church* means *a called out people*. So God, in His divine plan from eternity, is calling out a people from the world.
- In order for a person to be converted, two things must happen
 - Something from God's side
 - Something from the human side.
 - God's side must always come first.

15 **The Divine side**

- v. 4: *For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you.*
- NKJV: *knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.*
- Seminary professor: *Try to explain election, and you may lose your mind. But explain it away – and you may lose your soul!*

16 **The Divine side (2)**

- Salvation begins with God – not man.
- The entire plan of salvation was born in the heart of God long before man was created or the universe formed. (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Ready*, p. 24)

17 **Ephesians 1:4**

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.

18 **Conversion flows out of the love of God**

- ELECTION is not God's scheme for sending people to hell, but His eternal plan for rescuing them from hell.
- Romans 5:8: *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

19 **The human side**

- v. 5: *because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.*
- The human instruments: Paul and Silas

20 **Acts 17:1-4**

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ. ⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women

21 **The message preached**

- *Our gospel*
- *not only in word*
- *In power and in the Holy Spirit*
- 1 Corinthians 1:18: *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

22 **The Holy Spirit's conviction**

- v. 5: *in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction*
- John 16:8: *When He (the Holy Spirit) is come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*
 - The word convict means to convince someone of the truth; to reprove; to accuse, refute, or cross-examine a witness. Warren Wiersbe – *Be Ready*, p. 25

23 **The evidence of conversion**

- Receiving the Word, v. 6: *And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit.*
- Living the Word, v. 7: *so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.*
- Sounding forth the Word, v. 8: *For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere.*

24 **The turn that transforms**

- Verse 9: *For they themselves report . . . how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*

25 **The U-Turn becomes a You-Turn!**

26 **The turn that transforms**

- From idols, v. 9
- The transformation, v. 9: . . . *to serve the living and true God.*
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27 **The wait**

- v. 10: *and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

- What's the urgency?
 - Life is short.
 - Jesus could come at any moment.
 - When you turn to Him, you are delivered from the wrath to come!