

Rooted in the Spirit

Word and Power • Message 7

Perry Duggar

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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Thank God for His love.
- Pray that God's Word will come alive in our hearts.
- Pray that our church will be a strong witness for Him.

Scripture Reading:

Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:7 (NLT)

A. Introduction.

(1 Thessalonians 1:1-3. C/R: Hebrews 4:12)

We continue our series, *Rooted in the Spirit*.

Today's message is entitled, *Word and Power*.

1. We will focus on the supernatural nature of the Word of God, printed in the Bible and spoken by pastors, evangelists, and believing people with equal effect.
2. The Bible is true, but it becomes influential in our lives through the Spirit's application.
3. Our passage is 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10, the opening of Paul's letter to a young church.
4. **1 Thessalonians 1:1 (NLT)** - *This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy.*
We are writing [AD50-51 from Corinth, Paul's 2nd missionary journey] to the church [ēkklēsia, "the called-out ones," or "the elect ones"] in Thessalonica [Thessaloniki today (formerly Salonika until 1912) in N. Greece], to you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [related to, not merely believe in]
May God give you grace [God's undeserved favor in complete forgiveness of sin and granting eternal life] and peace [a result of God's grace - peace with God and within].
5. Thessalonica was the largest and most important city in the Roman province of Macedonia.
6. It was a thriving seaport located on the major east-west highway of the Roman Empire, with a diverse cosmopolitan population of a quarter million people, including native Greeks, Romans, Jews, sailors, travelers, tradesmen, and businessmen.
7. **1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NLT)** - *We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ. [Salvation evidenced through faith, love, and hope.]*
8. Paul was thrilled by what was happening in the church; joyful over the spiritual progress the people were making following his ministry there for only a few months a year earlier.
9. This was a healthy, growing church that was producing works that evidenced their faith.
10. Everything that was occurring in Thessalonica was the result of *God's Powerful Word!*

B. God's Word is...

(1 Thessalonians 1:4-10)

1. Expression of LOVE.

(1 Thessalonians 1:4. C/R: Romans 1:7; Ephesians 1:4-5; Colossians 3:12)

1. **1 Thessalonians 1:4 (NLT)** - *We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people.* [also 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 1:7]
2. Paul was certain that God had chosen these people to be His own, because of His love for them, not because of anything they had done. (Remember, they are Gentiles, not Jews!)
3. **Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)** - *Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure.*
[Names in the Lamb's book at Revelation 13:8; 17:8]
4. God in eternity past expressed His love when He chose believers to salvation, then drew them to Himself in time by the work of the Holy Spirit.
5. God prompts us by the Spirit, and we respond through our will, resulting in conversion.
6. This call and response begin a relationship that results in spiritual transformation.
7. **Colossians 3:12 (NLT)** - *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.*
8. It is the change that Paul observed and heard about that confirmed God's love and call.
9. APP.: Do you know God called you because He loves you? (It's essential to your identity and life that you do.)

2. Energized and enlightened by the HOLY SPIRIT.

(1 Thessalonians 1:5. C/R: 1 Corinthians 2:13-14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13)

1. **1 Thessalonians 1:5a (NLT)** - *For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. ...* [Romans 10:10]
2. The divine power revealed as the gospel message was *preached and heard*, evidences the truth of God's calling and the genuineness of the Thessalonians' salvation.
3. Paul was describing the Thessalonians' experience as they heard the gospel - and *knew it was true* - confirmed by the Spirit with *full assurance of its truth!* [APP.: Sound familiar?]
4. He declared the Holy Spirit guided and empowered the *delivery and receipt* of the gospel.
5. **1 Corinthians 2:13-14 (NLT)** - *When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. ¹⁴ But people who aren't spiritual [Or who don't have the Spirit; or who have only physical life] can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. [NIV: The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.]* [also 2 Corinthians 4:3-4]
6. Paul and his fellow preachers were Spirit-empowered when they spoke, knowing that their words alone could not save hearers; it depended on God's power revealing and confirming the truth in their minds and hearts to effect salvation. (APP.: Spirit speaks.)
7. The gospel is expressed in words which are essential to salvation [Romans 10:13-15], because it explains the source of our salvation - God sent His Son to die for our sins - but it must be accompanied by God's power for transformation to occur.
8. **1 Thessalonians 1:5b (NLT)** - *... And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you.*
9. Paul, Silas and Timothy were convinced of the Spirit-empowered faith of these people.
10. They demonstrated their conviction of the new believers' conversion by living carefully, thoughtfully, consistently, before them, to encourage the Thessalonians' growth.

11. The Thessalonians not only heard the gospel preached, they had also seen it lived out in these evangelists, whose lives evidenced the power of the gospel they preached.
12. APP.: Has the Spirit revealed truth to you *powerfully*? Has He regenerated you? Is the Spirit shaping your life so that your faith is evident for anyone to see?

3. Evidenced by recipients' LIVES.

(1 Thessalonians 1:6-10. C/R: 2 Corinthians 3:18, 5:17-20; Titus 2:11-13; 1 Peter 3:15-16)

1. **1 Thessalonians 1:6a (NLT)** - *So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you....* [1 Thessalonians 2:14]
2. The authenticity of the Thessalonians' faith is evident in their joy and persistence amidst persecution. [Romans 5:3-5]
3. Religion in the city was dominated by the idolatry of Gentiles and the legalism of Jews.
4. These new Christians were attacked by both groups: Gentiles resented their rejection of idolatry with its immoral practices and self-righteous Jews resented Gentiles being converted into Christians. [1 Thessalonians 2:14-15]
[APP.: Rejection from both happens to us.]
5. **1 Thessalonians 1:6b (NLT)** - *In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord.*
6. These Thessalonian Christians, living in the middle of a hostile pagan environment, without any mature church leaders, relied on the power of the Holy Spirit to sustain them.
7. The Spirit of God is sufficient to sustain us despite struggles and hardship!
8. These Christians copied the character of the evangelists who communicated the gospel to them, but, more importantly, they reflected the character of Jesus Christ. [1 Corinthians 11:1]
9. Salvation starts the work of sanctification (becoming holy in progressive, practical ways).
10. **2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)** - *So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*
11. Human happiness dies under difficulty, but the spiritual gift of joy (Galatians 5:22) persists and grows stronger despite suffering. (Philippians 4:4-5: *Rejoice always, remember the Lord is near.*)
12. **1 Thessalonians 1:7 (NLT)** - *As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia.*
13. The character of these Christians became a model and an encouragement for others.
14. These people took their new faith and its expectations on their lives very seriously; they lived it out in exemplary fashion.
15. **1 Thessalonians 1:8-9 (NLT)** - *And now the word of the Lord is ringing out [used only here in N.T., means, “to blast forth” or “to sound forth very intensely”] from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don’t need to tell them about it, for they keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true God.*
16. This church was boldly, continually, trumpeting the gospel message. [ILL.: Brookwood]
17. The change in the lives of the Thessalonians was clear to people who knew them.
18. People who Paul encountered in his travels told him about what God had done in the city.
19. This was more than merely accepting the Hebrew God (since pagans worshiped many gods) and changing their belief about Jesus' identity.
20. It was a complete - and costly - reversal of allegiance from idols to serve *the living and true God*. [“Faith that doesn’t cost much isn’t worth much.”]
21. **1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NLT)** - *And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God’s Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.* [NIV: *the coming wrath*]
22. Another evidence that these people were born again was that they were awaiting the return of Jesus to *rescue*, or deliver, them from God’s anger against sin.

23. When we encounter the *Holy* Spirit, we often experience an awareness of our own sin, our need for a Savior to *rescue* us from judgment.
24. Out of our appreciation for Jesus' deliverance of us from punishment, we *ring out* the Good News that people can be forgiven!
25. APP.: Has your salvation altered your character and given you a message to deliver?
- Theme/Memory verse: Colossians 2:7 (NLT) - *Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.*