



Grain

“In spite of the fact that the circumstances we live in technically suck..., are we inspired to imitate Christ?”

–The Reverend Dr. Joy J. Moore

Field

1 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 always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly 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 and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹ For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming. 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Thoughts

“We always give thanks to God for all of you.”

We’ve had so many problems during the last several months. Let us pause from considering any mistakes we have made adapting to the pandemic and to whatever else life has thrown our way. And now, recall how you have imitated Christ. What are the idols that tempt you, but with God’s grace, you have turned away from individually or as a community? When have the needs of our neighbor led you to take action? When have you wanted to clarify the truth in the midst of campaigns of misinformation and contempt in your personal life and in the news? When has the aggression in our politics led you to rise in righteous anger with a public voice or at other times to say, “Enough, I want to be kinder?” Imagine Paul’s words of gratitude are for you.

A sign of imitating Christ for the Thessalonians was persecution. We don’t know for sure why they were persecuted, but it may have been because they refused to participate in the Caesar cult or to take imperial oaths. Followers of Jesus may have also drawn people from all classes, threatening the ruling order. I wonder about their conversations: “This whole culture is telling us we’re wrong. Maybe we are. Is being attacked a sign that we’re not right with God?” But the Spirit led them to realize that they were in alignment with what gave them their deepest meaning, and that whatever may follow, they were free. And so are we. Let us give thanks to God for one another. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy