You Became an Example A Reading from 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Lee Magnus
jlmagness@milligan.edu

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You Became an Example
A Reading from 1 & 2 Thessalonians
Lee Magness

This reading features some of the ethical teachings of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Although the eschatological passages rightly attract much of our attention, it is important to remember that the purpose of apocalyptic material is always to give believers hope and direction in the present circumstances of their lives. The reading is configured here for two voices and may be read by two individuals, two small groups of readers, or responsively by a congregation.

Thanksgiving
1 We always give thanks to God for all of you, and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith (because your faith is growing abundantly), and labor of love (and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing) and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (for your steadfastness and faith during all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring).

1 For we know, brothers and sisters, beloved by God, that he has chosen you, 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. We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God, that you heard from us, you accepted it, not as a human word but as what it really is, God’s word, which is also at work in you believers. 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, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 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. 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, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming. (1.1.2–10; 1.2.13; 2.1.3–4)
Exhortation

1 Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus
   that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God,
   (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more.
2 *For this is the will of God, your sanctification.*
   *For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness.* (1.4.1–3, 7)

1 Now concerning love of the brothers and sisters,
   you do not need to have anyone write to you,
2 *for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another;*
   *and indeed you do love all the brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia.*
1 But we urge you, brothers and sisters to do so more and more,
   to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs,
   and to work with your hands, as we directed you,
2 *so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and be dependent on no one.* (1.4.9–12)

1 But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you,
   and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you;
   *esteem them very highly in love because of their work.*
2 *Be at peace among yourselves.*
1 Admonish the idlers,
2 *encourage the fainthearted,*
1 help the weak,
2 *be patient with all of them.*
1 See that none of you repays evil for evil,
   but always seek to do good to one another and to all.
2 *Rejoice always,*
1 pray without ceasing,
2 *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*
1 Do not quench the Spirit.
2 *Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything;*
1 hold fast to what is good;
2 *abstain from every form of evil.* (1.5.12–22)
**Benediction**

1 To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God will make you worthy of his call…
2 and will fulfill by his power every good resolve and work of faith,
1 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him,
2 according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you.
2 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all,
   just as we abound in love for you.
1 And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness
   that you may be blameless before our God and Father
   at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. (2.1.11–12; 1.3.11–13)

2 May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely:
1 and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless
   at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (1.5.23,28)

**Lee Magness** teaches Greek and New Testament part-time at Milligan College and Emmanuel Christian Seminary in retirement after forty-six years of full-time teaching. His life is a tug-of-war between the mountains of East Tennessee and four grandchildren in the Mid-Atlantic. Much of his academic life is currently devoted to developing the website prodigalsall.com. He has always been drawn to the Thessalonian Letters as perhaps the earliest Christian documents still speaking to us today (jlмагNESS@Milligan.edu).