

# WEEKLY ENCOURAGEMENT

from Johnny Hunt

## CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL

### PART ONE

*Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7*

#### I. INTRO

- It really makes a difference in those of us who preach and teach the gospel when we're confident in the message we preach.
- From the very inception of this church, Paul looked to them with joy and gratitude as Christians worthy of the name. The Bible refers to them as examples to all that looked on them. In these three short verses Paul speaks of the confidence he had gained in sharing the good news. We are told that 80% of the people that will ever trust Christ as Lord and Savior will do so through the influence and witness of a friend. Eight out of ten people that will ever attend our church as a visitor will come at the simple invitation of a friend.
- Just as much as the church at Thessalonica was influential in the first century, we can and need to influence the 21st century and beyond. If you and I are to share the good news of Jesus Christ, we must have **confidence in our message**.
- Paul gained confidence through:

#### II. THE GOSPEL'S EMPOWERMENT | VERSE 5

##### A. THE GOSPEL'S CONNECTION | Verse 5a

- **"our gospel did not come to you in word only"**
- There's a never-ending mystery in this preaching and teaching of the gospel. How does the human word become the divine word? Or perhaps it's better to ponder how the divine word becomes the human word. The gospel must come in words. Though actions may speak louder than words, there is no communication of the gospel until words have been spoken. For the gospel is a story, the Good News of Jesus Himself. But, if the gospel becomes merely a matter of words, it degenerates into a travesty.
- Paul calls it **"our gospel"**—the message they shared was a personal possession and personal reality. We cannot proclaim a truth with confidence until we have experienced that truth.
- **"our gospel came"**—Paul puts the emphasis more upon the message as the means of realizing God's call than upon the bearers of the message.
- **THOUGHT:** Do you believe when Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem and the people waved palm branches and sang hosannas that the donkey thought the applause was for him? He was just the bearer of the good news.

##### B. THE GOSPEL'S CONFIRMATION | Verse 5b

- **"in power"**—(dunamis) dynamite; physical dynamite can tear something apart. God's gospel is not destructive but constructive. It doesn't explode or tear down; it builds and blesses.
- **EXAMPLE:** At SEBTS, they were making a man-made lake by dynamiting. It used to knock or shake our pictures off the wall.
- **Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes; for the Jew first, and also for the Greek."**
- **I Corinthians 2:4, "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."**
- **"power"**—refers to the clothing of the preacher's with that vital force.
- The Word of God faithfully proclaimed is the most powerful force in the world. God takes it and uses it to change lives, heal relationships, and the likes.

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## C. THE GOSPEL'S COMPANION | Verse 5c

- **“the Holy Spirit”**—God comes in His Spirit to empower the words used to proclaim the gospel.
- **Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, to the end of the earth.”**
- God’s power is always associated with the Holy Spirit. He makes the gospel meaningful. It was the moving of the Spirit of God, not the power of man’s personality.
- **Quote:** “The Spirit without the Word is weaponless. The Word without the Spirit is powerless.”—Warren Wiersbe