

There is another King, Part Two

May 31, 2020

1 Thessalonians



I believe it important for us to explore further the charge brought against Paul and Silas... and those in Thessalonica who had come to believe in Jesus.

**“They are all defying
Caesar’s decrees, saying
there is another king,
one called Jesus.”**

Dr. Luke described in Acts 17 how Paul dialogued with people. Was this Paul’s intent as he spoke to Jews and Greeks... to foment rebellion...to defy Caesar...to lead a movement to depose him?

This is what many had hoped Jesus would do during his public ministry – drive out the Romans.

But is this the message of the gospel?

Are the followers of Jesus a guerilla army, who fight to install Jesus as King in every capital of every nation in every generation?

On the one hand the accusations of Paul's adversaries were right.

Jesus is the King of kings.

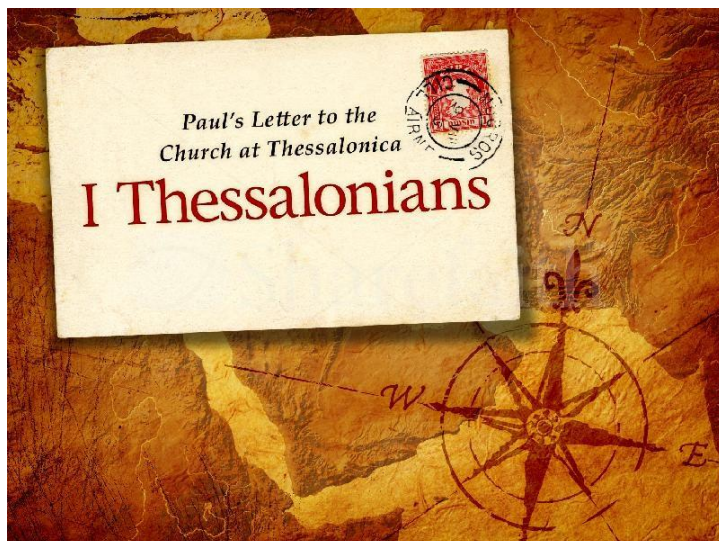
But on the other hand, like Pilate, Paul and Silas' adversaries...



... hadn't rightly grasped what kind of king Jesus is.

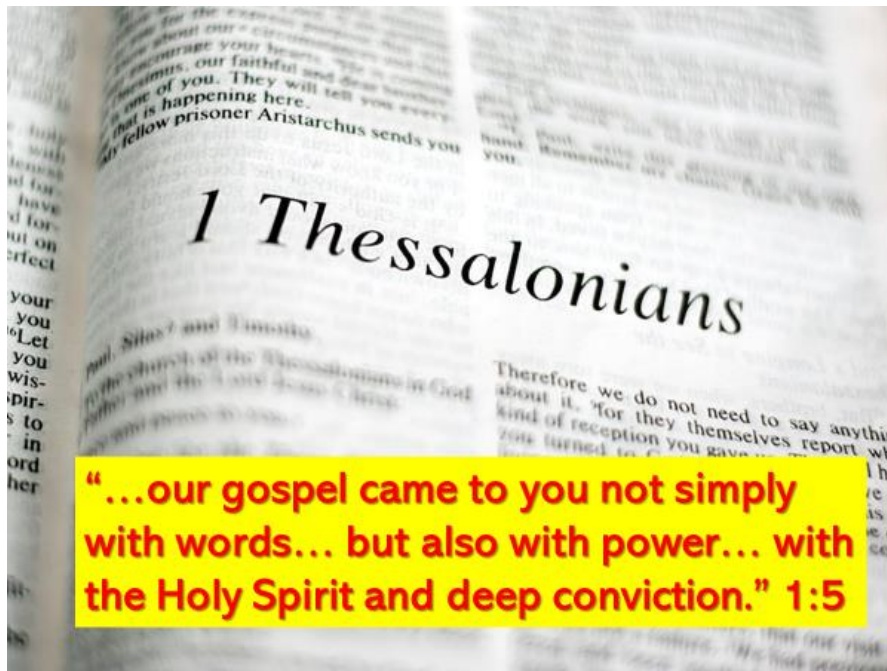
After being forced... to flee Thessalonica, weeks later Paul wrote a letter to the believers of this young church.

We know this letter...



In this letter, Paul spoke extensively on the theme of Jesus being another king. How he encouraged the Thessalonians to live in light of who Jesus is and the hope of his return...is as important for our faith as it was for theirs.

This letter also gives us insight into Paul's heart attitude... especially when it came to how he communicated the news of Jesus.



While Paul described it as... “our gospel” I remind you that the gospel is not a human being's musings on how to know God.

The gospel is the good news of what Jesus did in order to rescue humanity from sin and death.

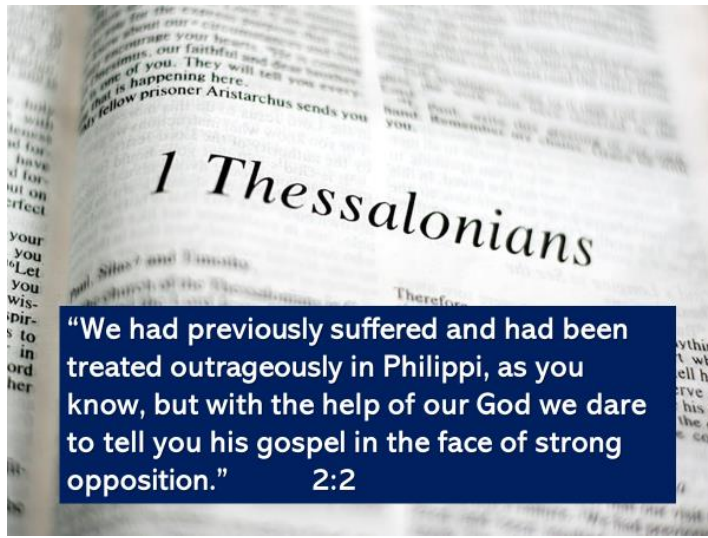
Without question.... Paul had a brilliant mind.

He had trained under one of the best rabbi scholars of that day – Gamaliel.

He was a gifted communicator.

But none of these factors, in and of themselves were enough to explain why the hearts and minds of his listeners were so gripped and transformed as they were.

As Paul and Silas reasoned from the Scripture...there was supernatural evidence of God at work... in and through... them.

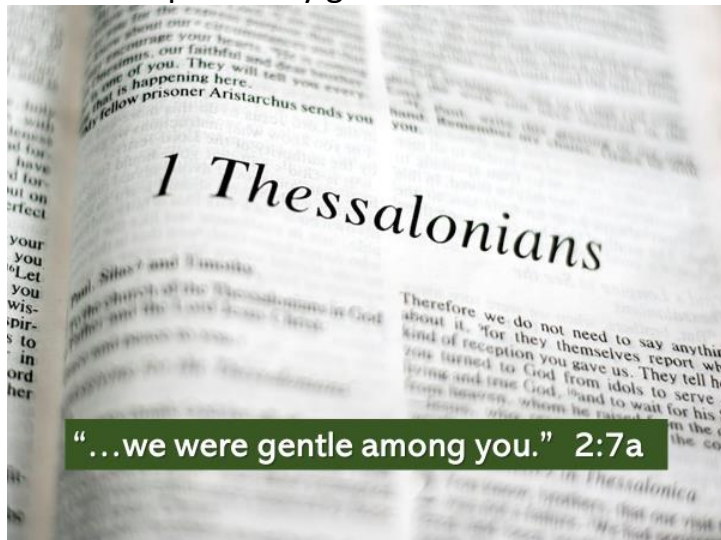


In Philippi...Paul and Silas had suffered greatly. They came to Thessalonica... and faced strong opposition. And yet, Paul wrote, they dared to speak the gospel of Jesus.

Why was this?

It was not because they were brave, but because...as Paul wrote... God helped them.

But what specifically gave evidence of God's life and power in them?



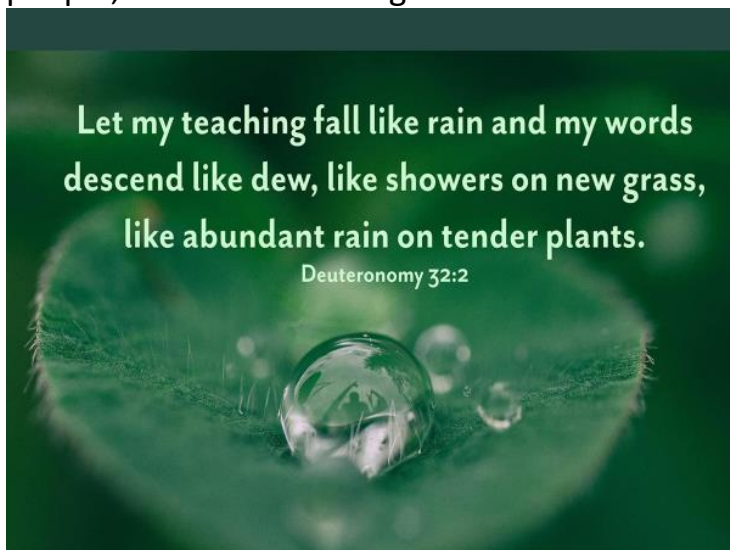
David Mathis writes: gentleness in the Bible is emphatically not a lack of strength or ability, but the godly exercise of power... that serves good, life-giving ends. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-strongest-men-are-gentle>

Gentleness is one of the fruit of the Spirit.



This multi-faceted fruit that the Spirit produces in the follower of Jesus is actually the character qualities of Jesus.

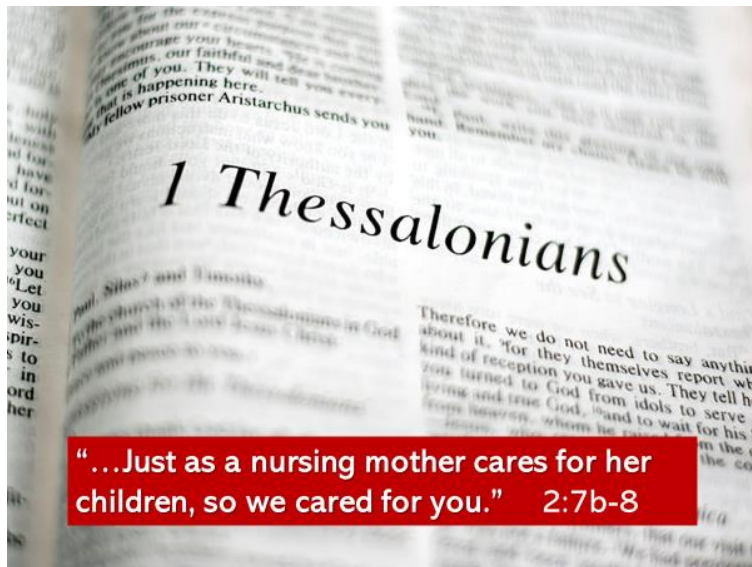
The gospels describe how Jesus was gentle not only in his interactions with people, but in his teaching.



The means of delivery is important.

The farmer prays not for hard rain, or no rain, but for... *gentle rain*.

Paul and Silas gave evidence of God's life and power in them by the gentle manner and tone they had towards the Thessalonians.

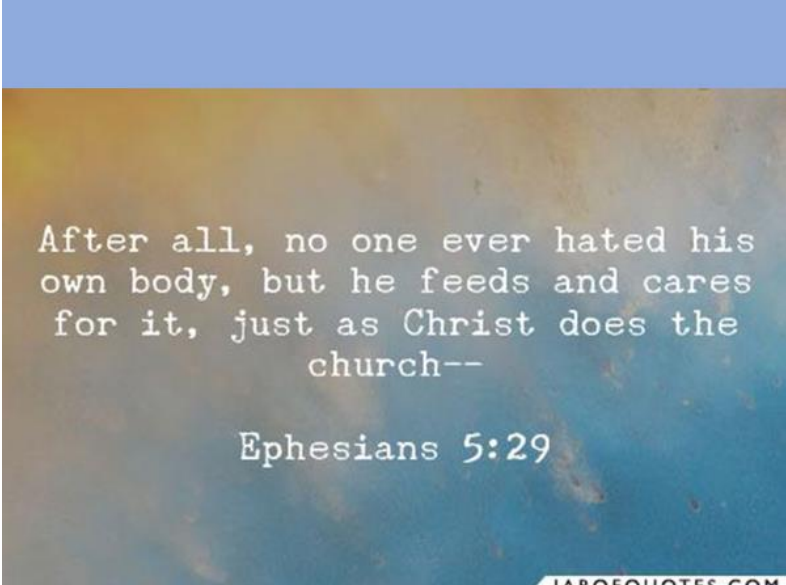


How does a nursing mother care for her child?



This particular word... "care" ... describes a tenderness that cherishes and nurtures life.

The same word is used in Ephesians 5:29...



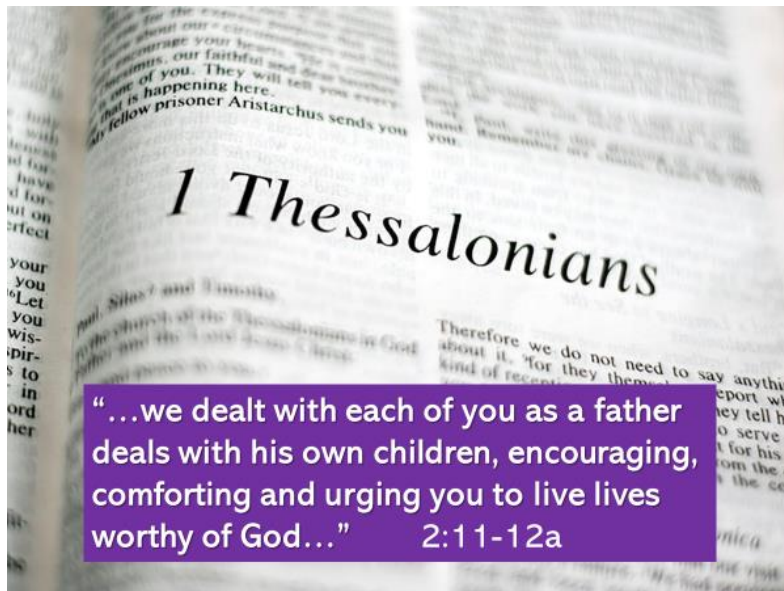
After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--

Ephesians 5:29

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Jesus Christ tenderly nurtures and cherishes his church.

Paul and Silas gave evidence of God's life and power in them by the way they tenderly cared for the Thessalonians.



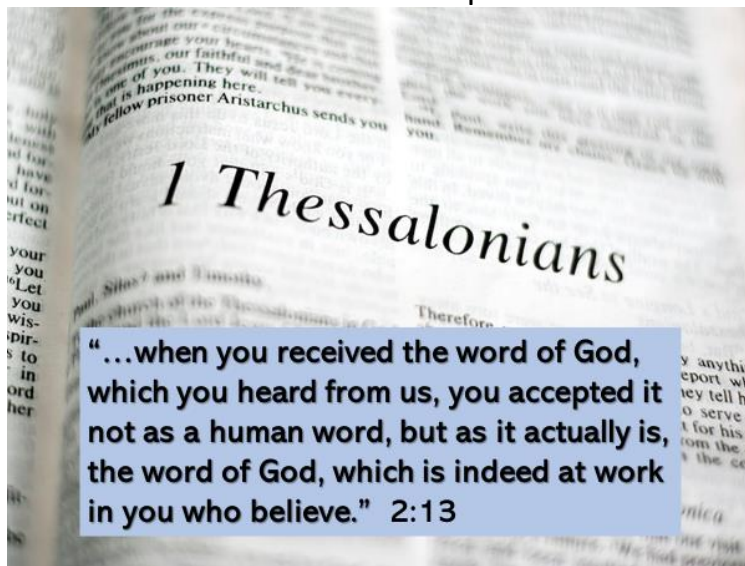
Paul and Silas did not look upon those in Thessalonica as warm bodies or nameless faces to be manipulated. The same God who helped Paul and Silas to be bold, empowered them to be transparent.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-6

³ For the appeal we make does not spring from **error or impure motives**, nor are we trying to **trick you**. ⁴ On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are **not trying to please people** but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵ You know **we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask** to cover up greed—God is our witness. ⁶ **We were not looking for praise from people**, not from you or anyone else...

Paul and Silas gave evidence of God's life and power in them by the way they authentically interacted with the Thessalonians.

How did the Thessalonians respond?



What did the word of God compel them to do?

"...you turned to God
from idols to serve the living
and true God; And to wait for
His Son from heaven,

1 Thessalonians 1:9

Changing the direction of one's life is called repentance.

The Thessalonians turned to God... from idols.

As they turned to God and centered their life in him, they found the soul-satisfying purpose for which they had been created – to serve God.

This was the point in their lives when they welcomed Jesus to be the supreme authority in their life.

The implications of this yielding to Jesus leadership, to his kingship.... of willingly giving him first place in everything.... is what was misunderstood.

Jesus had told Pilate that his kingdom was from another place – John 18:36-37. Earlier in his public ministry when asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them...

THE **KINGDOM** OF GOD
IS IN YOUR MIDST

Luke 17:20-21

What did Jesus mean by that?

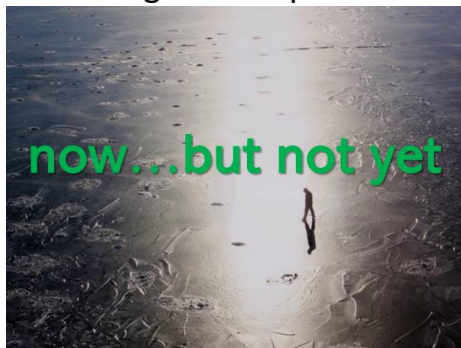
The kingdom of God was embodied in him.

The kingdom of God had come near, as Jesus preached, because he had come into the world.

After he rose from the dead and returned to his Father's home, Philippians 2 says that the Father exalted Jesus to the highest place.

Psalm 110 says that the Father told Jesus to rule... and then added... to do so... in the midst of his enemies.

Jesus' reign in this present time is best described by the phrase....



Jesus.... now... reigns as King in the lives of his followers.

Wherever his followers are, there the kingdom of God is manifested in them.

But there is also a “not yet” aspect to the reign of King Jesus, which Paul wrote of; a “not yet” that will however, be realized when Jesus bodily returns to the earth.

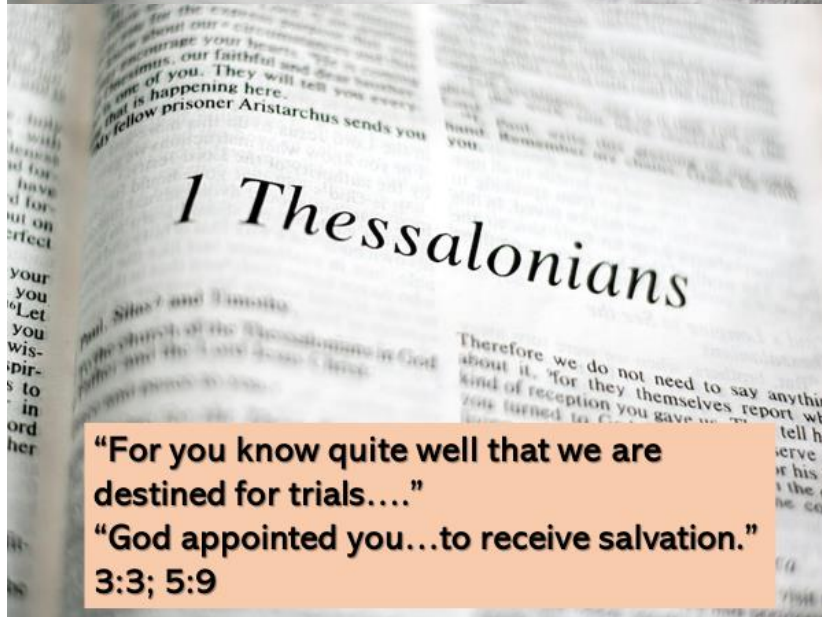
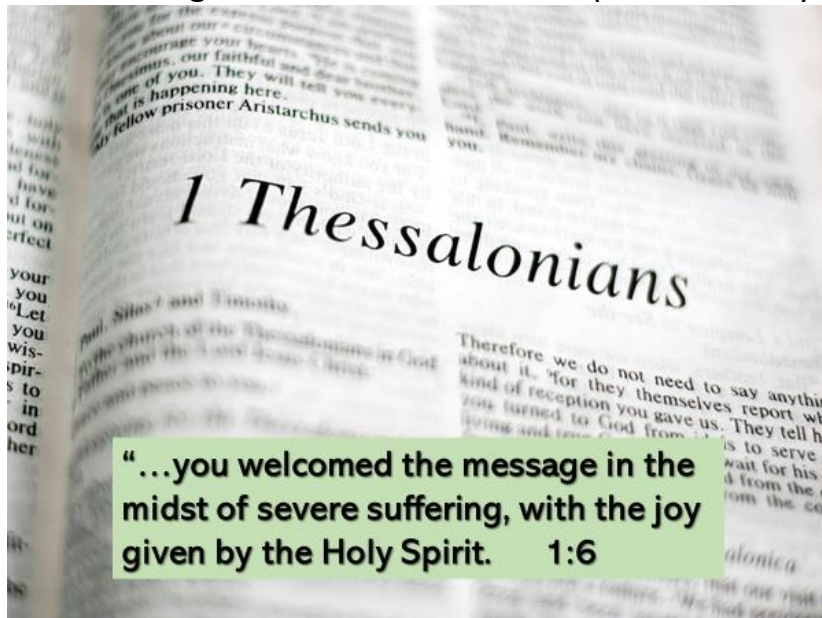
2:19 – For what is our hope, our joy...in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus **when he comes?**

3:13 – May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our and Father **when our Lord Jesus comes** with all his holy ones.

4:16 – For **the Lord himself will come down from heaven**, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God...

5:23 – May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless **at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

In his letter, Paul clarified to the Thessalonians how this “now, but not yet” aspect of Jesus’ kingdom made sense of their present reality.

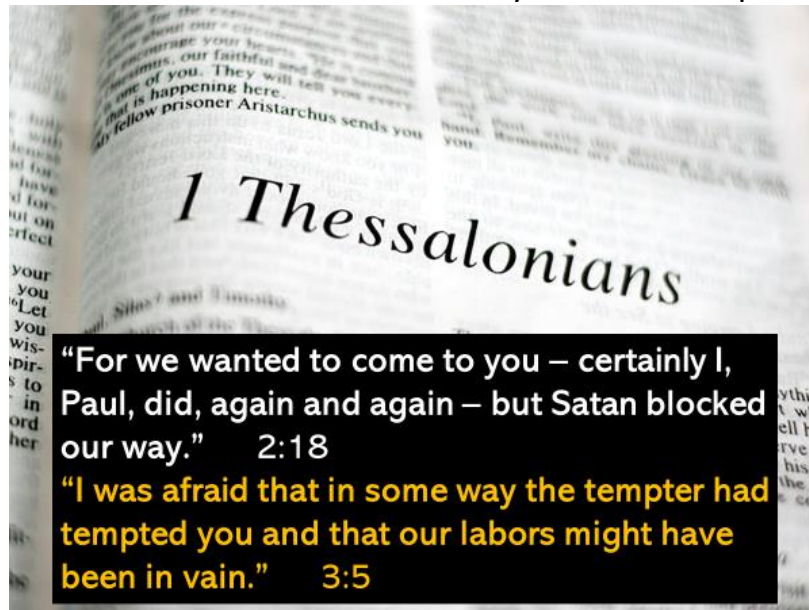


Yes, the followers of Jesus will experience suffering... there will be trials and trouble as Jesus had warned in John 16.

But Jesus gives to us his joy through his Spirit.

It sounds contradictory...but in the midst of suffering we have hope...hope of a glorious salvation.

The “now, but not yet” aspect of Jesus’ kingdom also explains the present reality for the follower of Jesus as to why Satan can be permitted to interfere and tempt.



Do we live in fear of our spiritual adversary Satan?

No, our hope is in the Father and our Lord Jesus...who clear the way, as 3:11 says, for us to move where and when God wills.

Our hope is in what God provides us with for our spiritual protection as 5:8 says – the breastplate of hope and love; the helmet of salvation.

Through the Scriptures God makes no attempt to explain his timing, except to encourage his people to trust him.

Just as the Father waited for the fullness of time in order to send Jesus to the earth to be born of the virgin Mary in order to save us from our sin...

... so he waits to send King Jesus to the earth a second time, not as a baby, but as the Victor to end the age of death...and to begin the age of the new heaven and the new earth.

What we do know with absolute certainty... is that this present... in-between time ...is a time of opportunity... for whosoever will...to come home to God through faith in Jesus.

God does not want anyone to perish, but all to be saved.

This is why he has patiently waited.... for 2000 years.

This is why there is urgency to the appeal made by the followers of Jesus to the generation in which they live.

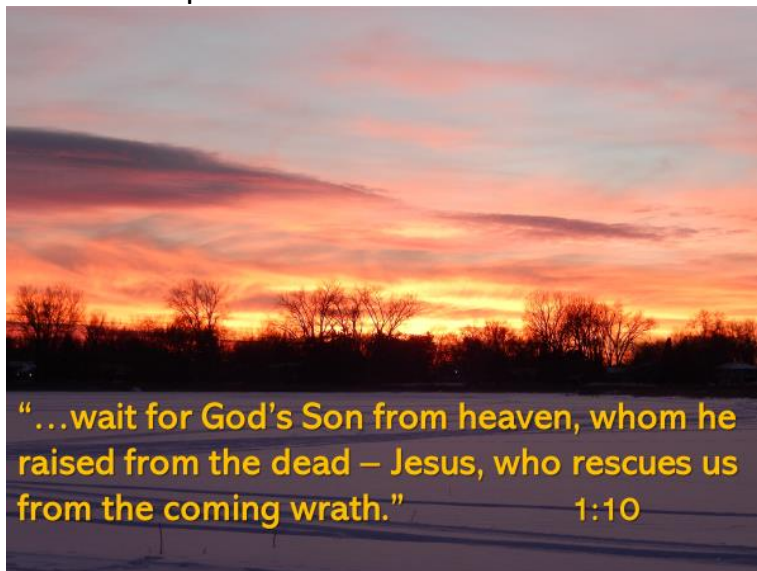
We don't know when the King will come again.

So we plead with people to be reconciled to God....today.

What we do know is that when Jesus does appears... these days of opportunity will end.

In this letter to the Thessalonians, in response to the certain return of the King, Paul presents two postures that he encourages them to take.

The first is spoken of in 1:10.



This is the message of the Bible to all who would walk with God.
Wait for him.

This is our take-away.

Wait...for Jesus.

Whether that be for the moment he welcomes you into his presence as you pass from this life to the life after death, or he returns to this earth.

You will see him face to face.

Your faith is a sure and certain hope.

Wait for him.

Don't impatiently give up on him.

He will complete the salvation he began in you and he will make all things new.

The second posture we take is that of actively pursuing a lifestyle that is...



...in order that our lives might demonstrate the validity of the good news we proclaim.

Look at how Paul elaborated on what gospel saturation looks like.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

⁹ Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, ¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

1 Thessalonians 5:14-22

¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil.

The church is an outpost of the kingdom of God.

In our community – by the way in which we live and serve, individually and together - we show the world how good and wise our great King Jesus is.

The Blessing

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24