

**Title:** In Terms of Believing the Gospel, What Are My Options?

**Text:** 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16      **Date:** October 1, 2017

**Background.** Previously in 1 Thessalonians 2, Paul thanked the church for not believing the lies the angry persecutors had spread about him. Paul reaffirmed that he loved the Thessalonians like his own family, or as a parent would love his/her own children.

**Main Idea.** In 1 Thess 2:13-16, Paul explains that there is no neutrality when it comes to God's Word – you will either receive it or reject it.

The Thessalonians received God's Word and will be blessed when the Lord returns, but the angry Jews rejected God's Word and will be punished.

- 1) Paul is grateful that the Thessalonians received the Word of God (2:13).
- 2) Paul acknowledged the Thessalonians are now in a long lineage of believers who were persecuted for their faith (2:14-15).
- 3) Paul assures the Thessalonians that God will judge the hostile haters that seek to stop the Christian message from spreading (2:15-16).

**Questions:**

- 1) How did the Thessalonians respond to the Word of God? Why might poverty-stricken people today respond in a similar manner?
- 2) How is God's judgment of the Jews justified (verse 2:16)?
- 3) Do Christians show fear and reverence for God today? Why or why not?
- 4) Why is it hard for people who have participated in one religious tradition for so long to reconsider a different approach? Do we use our newest people in our church to lead?
- 5) What are a few key ways to evangelize people who are not Christians? What words should we use? What specific action steps should we take?
- 6) Who or what has the authority to determine if another's religious perspective is right or wrong? With what attitude should we have this conversation?
- 7) What are a few ways we can love/serve those people who are opposed to Christianity? Do you see more people opposed to Christianity? Who are those that you know that are opposed to Christianity?
- 8) Practically speaking, how does one receive the Word of God? What does it look like?
- 9) Can you think of a few examples of how many Christians today ignore God's Word, either through ignorance, busyness, or neglect?

10) Why are many today uncomfortable with the exclusive claims of Christianity? Do you know about the COEXIST bumper sticker? What do you think?