

What is the focus of our commission?

I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

For by grace you have been saved ***through faith***. And this is not your own doing; ***it is the gift of God***, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10

🗣️ We are saved by the grace of God through faith that He himself gives.

How does this happen?

Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

🗣️ The word of Christ gives us hearing and hearing causes faith. Without the word of Christ, there is no hearing and thus no possibility for faith, which saves us.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And ***how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?*** And ***how are they to hear without someone preaching?*** And ***how are they to preach unless they are sent?*** As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us? Romans 10:13-16

🗣️ The Lord sends us out to preach His own word so that the world might hear and thus believe and thus call on the name of Jesus and thus be saved from sin and death.

Paul's ministry to the Thessalonians

Word of Christ Proclaimed:

But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, ***we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict***. For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 2:2-6

🗣️ Paul was sent to deliver the gospel with boldness and at any personal cost.

🗣️ The word of Christ was met either with persecution or it was received:

Word of Christ Received: Faith in Christ tangibly demonstrated and word of Christ proclaimed to the world.

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you ***received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit***, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, ***you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers***. For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews. 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14

🗣️ Receiving the word of Christ is a supernatural occurrence as God's word is alive and at work within us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

🗣️ Receiving the word of Christ will result in suffering, persecution and afflictions, period.

For not only has ***the word of the Lord sounded forth from you*** in Macedonia and Achaia, but ***your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything***. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how ***you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son*** from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

🗣️ Those who receive the word of Christ in turn proclaim the word of Christ.

Faith in Christ exhorted, established and encouraged:

We sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to ***establish and exhort you in your faith, that no one be moved by these afflictions***. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For when we were with you, ***we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction***, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain. 1 Thessalonians 3:2-5

- The received word of Christ produces faith and faith leads to afflictions on account of keeping His word. This fact was not hidden. On the contrary, Paul made it clear ***beforehand*** that they were destined for such affliction on account of the Word.
- Sidestepping or avoiding affliction on account of the word of Christ indicates a lack of faith. Willingness to endure suffering on account of the Word is the litmus test to reveal the condition of our hearts. Are we seeking comfort and ease or are we hoping in and proclaiming the word of Christ?

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you—for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ***as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?*** 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10

- What is our focal concern for our brothers and sisters in Christ? Is it to be liked by one another or to supply (speaking the truth in love) what is lacking in our faith?

We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because ***your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing***. Therefore ***we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering***—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-8

- Steadfastness and faith that is growing amidst affliction on account of the word of Christ is evidence that God is making us worthy of His kingdom.
- What then does it mean if we are either not encountering persecution or when we are, we timidly shrink back in silence? (See the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15)

We take the word of Christ into the world for the sake of the faith of those who will hear.

I will remain and continue with you all, ***for your progress and joy in the faith***, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind ***striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents***. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. Philippians 1:25-30

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, ***that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil***, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. Colossians 1:28-29

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ***that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God***. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and ***the firmness of your faith in Christ***. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ***rooted and built up in him and established in the faith***, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Colossians 2:5-7

We are messengers of the only good news there is in the entire world!!

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. ***We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

- 🕒 God has done a big thing - a thing that is so big that no one else can replace or imitate what He has done. We simply make this thing known in the world. We implore others to be reconciled to God.

I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. ***For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,*** to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ***For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,*** as it is written, The righteous shall live by faith. Romans 1:15-17

- 🕒 We are to preach the gospel because it is the power of God to save sinners. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed which leads to life.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been ***approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak,*** not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you remember, brothers, our ***labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.*** You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. For you know how, like a father with his children, ***we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God,*** who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13

- 🕒 God approves us (through afflictions) and has entrusted us with His gospel - his announcement that in Jesus Christ, our sins are no longer counted against us and we are free from the bonds of death and brought into the eternal kingdom of God.
- 🕒 Paul labored and toiled and incurred suffering (gave his life) so that he could bring the gospel of God to the Thessalonians. The gospel message was what he came to deliver - had he not, his coming would have been in vain.

I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore ***do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord,*** nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed ***a preacher and apostle and teacher,*** which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

2 Timothy 1:6-14

- 🕒 A testimony: telling others the big thing that God has done in Jesus Christ
- 🕒 Preacher: to make known in a public arena
- 🕒 Apostle: a messenger; someone who takes information from one source and makes it known to others
- 🕒 Teacher: to make something known to another to the degree that it can be understood and internalized

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, ***that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*** Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10

- 🕒 Proclaim: to tell abroad, to make known

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, **to make the word of God fully known**, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom**, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. **For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.**
Colossians 1:24-29

- Our mission is to make the word of God fully known
- Proclaiming Christ will cause us suffering and require toil and struggle (by God's power at work in us)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and **testify to it and proclaim to you** the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— **that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you**, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. **This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you**, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:1-5

- As God reveals himself to us, we proclaim Him to others
- Relationship does not occur before the proclaimed testimony of Jesus but *after*. The Word of Life is proclaimed to the unsaved *in order that* they might have fellowship with God and those whom He has redeemed out of the world through the preaching of His Word.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And **how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?** And **how are they to hear without someone preaching?** And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, **How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!** But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us? So **faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.** Romans 10:13-17

- Only the name of Jesus is sufficient to save. The church is commissioned to preach His name (the good news of God)
- Faith, which saves us, comes from hearing, and hearing is enabled through the word of Christ. If we are not seeking to speak the word of Christ, then what are we doing?

And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and **he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God** and to heal. And he said to them, Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them. And they departed and went through the villages, **preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.** Luke 9:1-6

- Jesus sends us for a task that can only be done in His power and in His authority.

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, **for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth**, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time **manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior.** Titus 1:1-3

- We live for the sake of those whom God will call to faith by the preaching of His Word
- Hope is found only in God's Word.
- God commands and entrusts to His Church the preaching of His Word

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, **do the work of an evangelist**, fulfill your ministry.
2 Timothy 4:1-5

- We are solemnly and earnestly urged to preach God's Word and to be ready to do so when it seems to make sense and when it does not seem to make sense