

In The Meantime Week 3
The Working Word
1 Thessalonians 2:13–16
October 19, 2025

I. The Backstory: Resistance to the Word (vv. 15–16; Acts 17:1–9)

Context:

Paul reminds the Thessalonian believers that they came to faith in a place of great opposition. From the beginning, the Word of God faced resistance.

- **Acts 17 snapshot:**
 - Paul *reasoned from the Scriptures*, explaining and proving that *Jesus is the Christ*.
 - Some believed—but others were *jealous* and *formed a mob*, dragging Jason and others before the city officials.
 - They accused them of *defying Caesar* and proclaiming *another King—Jesus*.

There have always been forces—then and now—actively working to silence the Gospel.

There were those actively working to prevent the Gospel from being proclaimed by any means necessary

But no opposition can stop the Word of God that is *alive and active*.

II. The Word Shared: How God's Word Works in Us (vv. 13–14)

"When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is—the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe."

Paul gives thanks because the Thessalonians did three things with the Word:

A. They Heard the Word

"The word of God, which you heard from us."

Paul's message was simple and powerful:

- *He reasoned from the Scriptures*

- *He explained and proved that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead*
- *He proclaimed: "This Jesus is the Christ!"*

Romans 10:17 – "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."

You can't believe what you've never heard—and God's Word must be *spoken, shared, proclaimed*.

B. They Received the Word

The word *receive* in Greek means "to take hold of closely" — to *receive near*.

- It means to bring the Word alongside your own life and say:
"If this is true, how does it illuminate and impact me?"

Hebrews 4:12 – "The Word of God is alive and active..."

They didn't just *hear* it—they *owned* it.

C. They Accepted the Word

The word *accepted* means "to welcome warmly."

- It's an act of hospitality toward truth.
- It moves from *hearing* to *receiving* to *embracing* the Word as God's authority in your life.

James 1:22–23 – "Do not merely listen to the word... Do what it says."

They heard it - received it as truth - accepted it as authority - lived it out in obedience.

D. They Became Imitators

"You became imitators of God's churches in Judea..."

The proof that the Word was *working* in them was seen in how they lived—and how they suffered.

- They *endured persecution* just like the believers in Judea.
- They understood the message of a *suffering Christ* and found purpose in their own suffering.

In their suffering they became imitators of Christ:

1. We are united with Christ in suffering – 1 Peter 4:13
2. We are comforted through suffering – 2 Corinthians 1:5
3. We are called to suffer with Him – Philippians 1:29
4. We follow His example – 1 Peter 2:21

“Because of the Gospel, there is power and purpose even in our suffering.”

III. The Word at Work in You Who Believe

“The Word is indeed at work in you who believe.”

How do we allow the Word of God to work powerfully in us today? (**Rom 12:1**)

1. With the Perspective of the Gospel

“In view of God’s mercy...”

We hear the Word through the lens of the Gospel.

Every page points us back to Jesus—His grace, His mercy, His finished work.

2. With the Posture of Worship

“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice...”

We receive the Word not as a checklist but as worship—
with obedience, surrender, and submission.

When we approach the Word with humility, the Spirit has room to move.

3. With the Progression of Transformation

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

The Word works in us *progressively*.

- Not as a one-time download of information
- But as a daily rhythm of renewal
- The Spirit shapes us over time into the image of Christ

The Word of God doesn’t just *inform* us—it *transforms* us.

When the Word is at work in us:

- Our minds are renewed

- Our lives are reshaped
- Our hearts begin to discern and delight in God's will

"Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will."

LIFEgroup Discussion Questions: 1 Thessalonians 2:13–16

1. When you think about a time when God's Word really *hit home*—when it convicted, comforted, or changed you—what was that moment like?
2. In Acts 17, Paul *reasoned from the Scriptures* and *proclaimed Jesus as the Christ*.
 - What are some ways we can create rhythms in our week to *hear* God's Word regularly?
 - How does hearing the Gospel often shape the way we see our daily lives?
3. Paul says the Thessalonians "*received*" the Word—meaning they brought it close and made it personal.
 - What helps us move from simply hearing Scripture to really *receiving* it?
 - Is there a recent truth from God's Word that you've wrestled with or had to personally apply?
4. They *accepted* the Word as God's truth, not just human advice.
 - What does it look like to "welcome" the Word with a heart of obedience?
 - In what ways do you sometimes resist what God's Word says?

5. Paul says the Word was “*at work*” in those who believed.

- What are some signs that God’s Word is at work in someone’s life?
- Where do we see evidence of transformation in our own journey with Christ?

6. Romans 12:1–2 reminds us that transformation happens as our minds are renewed.

- How can we approach Scripture this week with the *perspective* of the Gospel, a *posture* of worship, and a desire for *progress* in transformation?
- What’s one step we can take this week to let God’s Word work more deeply in us?