



An Example to Follow


1 Thessalonians 1:6-8

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You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

Main Point

The Thessalonians received the gospel with joy despite great tribulation and became an example to many by standing firm in their faith and by faithfully taking up their mission.

The background is a faded map of Europe. Overlaid on the map are several text elements: 'An Example to Follow' in large bold black font, 'They received the gospel with joy.' in large black font, 'Národní technické muzeum' on the left, 'VÚGTH, v. v. i.' in the center, and 'Národní technické' on the right.

An Example to Follow
They received the gospel with joy.

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They received the gospel with joy.

It had come to them
in great tribulation.

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having received the word in much tribulation
with the joy of the Holy Spirit...

Just as Paul and Jesus were both persecuted,
so too the Thessalonians were persecuted;
and we must be prepared for persecution too
since this is the pattern of this age.

The Pattern of the Age

Matthew 5:10-12

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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The Pattern of the Age

Acts 14:19-22

But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe. After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

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continue in the faith, and saying, **“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”**

The Pattern of the Age

1 Thessalonians 3:2-4

We sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.

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The Pattern of the Age

James 1:12 and 5:7-8

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial;
for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown
of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.

The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil,
being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

You too be patient; strengthen your hearts,
for the coming of the Lord is near.

The Pattern of the Age

1 Peter 4:12-13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

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The Pattern of the Age

1 John 3:13

Do not be surprised, brethren,
if the world hates you.



They received the gospel with joy.

It had come to them in great tribulation.

**They had imitated Paul and Jesus
by their response.**

1 Thessalonians 1:6

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and of the Lord,**

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having received the word in much tribulation

with the joy of the Holy Spirit...

With the joy that comes *from* the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 1:6

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord,
having received the word in much tribulation

with the joy of the Holy Spirit...

Their imitation was not in respect
to their reception of the gospel
but in respect to their joy.

Note the joy of Jesus

Hebrews 12:1-2

And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Note the joy of the Apostles

Acts 5:41

So they went on their way from the presence of the Council,
rejoicing that they had been considered worthy
to suffer shame for His name.

Acts 16:25

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying
and singing hymns of praise to God,
and the prisoners were listening to them.

Note the joy of other believers

Hebrews 10:34

For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and is grounded in the goodness of God and in our relationship to Him.

The gospel produces an unshakable joy to us as its recipients, even when it leads to persecution, because it reveals our eternal hope in Christ.

An Example to Follow

They received the gospel with joy.

They stood firm in their faith.



They stood firm in their faith.

They *kept* their faith
amid the opposition.

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

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An example of what?

Paul's concern

1 Thessalonians 3:2-3

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We sent Timothy...to strengthen and encourage

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disturbed by these afflictions...

Their steadfast response of faith

1 Thessalonians 3:6-8

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.

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affliction **we were comforted about you
through your faith;**

for now we really live, **if you stand firm in the Lord.**

Paul was comforted to hear that they had listened to his instruction and had been standing firm in their faith, not giving in to the pressures applied by their own countrymen.

This was example setting!



They stood firm in their faith.

They kept their faith amid the opposition.

**They *walked* their faith
amid the opposition.**

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having received the word in much tribulation with
the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that **you became an example**
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Paul's Instruction about Walking

1 Thessalonians 4:1

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.

Paul's Instruction about Walking

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They were walking out the instructions
Paul had given them concerning
gospel-shaped conduct.

And they were doing this amid
the various pressures they faced
from their peers.

1 Thessalonians 2:14

For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen.

Standing firm in your faith is more than simply maintaining a belief amid opposition; it is living out that belief where it cuts against the grain and causes friction.

An Example to Follow

They received the gospel with joy.

They stood firm in their faith.

They took up their mission faithfully.

1 Thessalonians 1:7-8

...you became an example to all the believers
in Macedonia and in Achaia.

For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you,
not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also
in every place your faith toward God has gone forth,
so that we have no need to say anything.

A faded, sepia-toned map of a region, likely in the Balkans or Eastern Europe, showing rivers, lakes, and numerous place names. The map is oriented with North at the top. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the map.

They faithfully took up the mission.
They went out with the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 1:8

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**For the word of the Lord has sounded
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not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also
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The gospel had sounded forth
from them as they went forth
in the normal affairs of life.
In their going they went out
with the gospel.

But the gospel also sounded forth
from them as they commissioned
missionaries to go forth with it.

Acts 20:4

And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea,
the son of Pyrrhus, and by **Aristarchus and Secundus
of the Thessalonians**, and Gaius of Derbe,
and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.



They faithfully took up the mission.

They went out with the gospel.

***They lived out* with the gospel.**

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not only in Macedonia and Achaia, **but also**

in every place **your faith toward God has gone forth,**
so that we have no need to say anything.

What was this faith *toward* God
that had gone forth?

1 Thessalonians 1:9

...how you turned to God from idols
to serve a living and true God.

They had been converted, and their
conversion became known as they lived
out the gospel with their lives.

The Thessalonians had come to understand that their mission involved both the *declaration* of the gospel with their mouths but also the *display* of the gospel with their lives.

Conclusion

Are you preparing to endure persecution
with the joy of the Holy Spirit?

Are you standing firm in your faith now?

Are you on mission, seeking to declare
and display the gospel together
with your gospel community?