

## HOW DO WE RECEIVE IT?

Carl McMurray

*And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.*

1 Thessalonians 2:13

This very short passage holds three very important messages for us to consider in light of gospel preaching.

First – Paul thanked God that the Thessalonians had been willing to “receive” God’s message. That tells me that our heavenly Father does indeed have a message for us. He wants to tell people something. Would my level of attendance tell Him that I was interested in His message? If they attended to the preaching of God’s message in Thessalonica like I attend to it in Anderson, what kind of church would have been established there?

Second – The apostle commends them for hearing His words, not as HIS words, but as God’s words. Far too often we can see attendance to preaching fall off or rise on the entertainment level of the preacher. How funny is the preacher? How exciting? How short or long does he preach? Thankfully, in Thessalonica and here today also, the above questions are not the important ones asked. Better to be heard are...How clear is the message? How scriptural? How true to the text? Never let your opinion of the messenger interfere with your grasp of the message that is God’s word.

Third and lastly – Paul states that it is that message from God that performs its work in believers. If you aren’t present God’s word does nothing for you because you aren’t there to receive it. You can’t learn from it, appreciate the Savior’s love in it, or correct anything lacking that is addressed by it. It is not “going to church” that will change our lives. It is hearing, believing, and acting upon God’s word that does that.

If gospel preaching means so much to you that you are present at every opportunity, taking notes, looking for changes in self, and encouraging brethren to do likewise, then God bless you. Your Father beams from heaven and you are to be commended for your efforts to raise the level of your spiritual maturity. If you don’t feel this way, read 1 Thessalonians 2:13 again and mediate on God’s opinion of gospel preaching. May He bless you toward bringing your attitude into conformity with His and may He give as all time to improve and do better at our next opportunity.