

## From Inspiration to Life Աստուածաշունչը Կեանքի Մէջ

### 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14a, 17-20

We all know that “all scripture is inspired by God” or “God-breathed” (1 Tim. 3:16) but only in the Armenian language, we have made a compound word for the Bible: Asdvadzashounch (God’s breath). And how appropriate is this topic on the Sunday of Pentecost. Today all over the world churches remember how God’s Spirit came over the disciples in the Upper Room like burning tongues and empowered them.

Paul loved the Thessalonians. He said: **“Like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. <sup>8</sup>So, being affectionately desirous of you...”**(1 Thessalonians 2:7b, 8a ESV). This is a letter of encouragement, exhortation and affirmation.

Moving on with chapter two, we arrived to verse 13:

**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 Thess 2:13 ESV)

Paul is continuing to thank God for this church that embraced the Gospel.

#### 1. Paul is thankful God that they Received the word of God.

**And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us...**

In Greek word for receiving is *paralambanō*. We receive many things every single day. We receive messages on our phone, we receive mail, we receive national and world news, we receive all kinds of information. We are living in information overload, and if you ask me, much more than we need.

We also receive Biblical information. I was born into the Armenian Evangelical church. My mother was Armenian Apostolic. So sometimes I did go to the

Armenian Apostolic church where the Sunday service (*badarak*) was based on chants (*sharagan*), scripture readings, and a very short homily. On the other hand, the Armenian Evangelical church's worship service gave much more time to the sermon which was based on Scripture. I was thinking how many sermons I have heard in my life (definitely thousands). Let me ask you, how many sermons were preached at this church? If I disregard the former worship places, just in this current building, which was built in 48 years ago, in 1970, 2496 sermons were preached from this pulpit. We have received 2496 sermons from the Word of God.

Paul says, **you received the word of God, which you heard from us.** Paul in Romans says: <sup>17</sup> **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."** (Romans 10:17 ESV)

What kind of hearing?

## **2. Paul is thankful because they Accepted the Word of God.**

**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.**

Receiving is one thing, and accepting it is another. The Greek word for accepting is *dechomai*. It means: to receive favorably, give ear to, embrace, make one's own, to learn.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the Word of God, my mother had a saying: "*Deghas, mechet ar.*" "My Son, take it in (like a sponge)." For the Thessalonians, accepting or hearing meant to obey and live the Word as their norm.

They did not just intellectually hear it, but THE WORD of God became reality in their lives.

## **3. Paul is thankful that the believers received his word as God's word.**

**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.**

People argue that the Bible is a book written by a bunch for men. Where is God in it? I take God's Word very seriously. God used different authors to write those 66 books. I believe **God inspired these authors** to write those words. God's spirit was over them.

On this Pentecost Sunday, I would love to remind you what Christ said to his disciples:

**"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."** (John 16:13 ESV)

Words are not just words; the words of God are inspired by the Spirit of God who guided them to the Truth and gave them the authority to write the Scriptures.

We say: "This is Word of God." We reply: "Thanks be to God."

Paul mentions to the Corinthians:

**"We impart this (God's truth) in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual."** (1 Cor 2:13 ESV)

I wonder if I am convincing you how important is the Word of God, that this is not just any book; this is the Word of God. I cannot. I don't have external proof to tell you this is the Word of God; all of my quotes are from the Word of God. I am quoting from the book itself. **"All the scripture inspired by God."** (1 Tim 3:16 ESV)

The reason I cannot convince you is that the issue is not external, it is in each of us how we approach to God, and to His Word. Paul tells us why not everyone will receive and embrace the Word of God as the Word of God. It is because our mind has not been set to the spiritual truths.

**The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.** (1 Corinthians 2:14 ESV)

My prayer is that PACC will tune their ears to God and receive and accept His message.

#### **4. Paul is thankful that the Word of God is at work within their lives**

**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.**

The Greek word is *energeo*: to be operative, be at work, put forth power, to be effective.

What a nice word, energy. The Word of God works in us like dynamo, energy. It will transform our lives. It did to them. Let us read from the first chapter...

**for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,<sup>7</sup> so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.<sup>8</sup> 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. (1 Thessalonians 1:6b-8 ESV)**

When I became Christian many years ago, I learned to take the Word of God as God's Word. I had a friend who was trained by the Navigators, an international Christian ministry that emphasizes discipleship. One of the important things she taught us was how to read the Word of God, how to memorize the Word of God, (storing the Word of God in our memory), how to meditate on the Word of God (blessed is the man ...who delights in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. Psalm 1:2), and how to put the Word into practice.

God gave me the ministry of Nor Yerik. Singing songs from the Word of God. I learned so much about God from that ministry.

Illustration: Dr. Knell Tourian was on a trip to the Soviet Armenia. Those days it was very difficult to smuggle Bibles into Armenia. He had with him his personal Bible. After preaching in the underground church, he gave his Bible to this the believers. They took it and tore it to 66 books. Then they gave each book to a

person so that the Bible will be distributed to all. Then they asked to rotate between them so that they could read the entire Bible.

These kinds of stories astonish me. Now I have tens of Bibles with many translations. I have Bible apps in my phone. I pray that God will give me the same hunger that these men and women had toward God's Word.

My dad used to tell me there was a time in Aleppo, Syria that when a Protestant person went to court, the judge did not need to ask the person to make an oath. They believed that those people lived the life of the gospel. I heard that there was a similar thing in the USA, which was called The Protestant Work Ethic, which emphasized hard work and discipline. How far we were gone?

If Paul writes to PACC, will he be thankful to God that we received, heard, embraced, and got transformed by the Word? Each should answer on their own. Please take the Word of God seriously and practice it.

1 <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>