

## FWS Chairman's Letter

### 1 Thessalonians 1:5

By [Simon Vibert](#)

The Thessalonian Church was a cause of great rejoicing for the Apostle Paul. In the opening of 1 Thessalonians he shows great affection for them and thankfulness for their common relationship in Christ.

Of course, Jonathan Edwards was right. The relationship in ministry is the relationship with God. If our chief affection is not for him, we shall not preach with any effect! He spoke of the need "to be much in seeking the influences of his Spirit", not least when preparing to preach:

*I longed for a Spirit of preaching to descend and rest on ministers, that they might address the consciences of men with closeness and power...*

The theme of the second edition of the The Edge is expository preaching. The authors will remind us, of course, that the ministry of the Word and the ministry of the Spirit should not, and in fact cannot, be separated. 1 Thessalonians says the same thing.

*... our Gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. (v5)*

### **Word**

The Gospel is a Word (*logos* can be translated message or word). But it is not Word only.

A generation that chides "that's only words" needs to remember that Paul used reasoned appeal, logic and oratory. He preached a message among them. But as every preacher has subsequently endorsed, just because the words are true doesn't mean to say that they will hit home; not without the work of the Holy Spirit. Only then will the audience receive the message, not as the words of men, but as the words of God (2:13).

### **Power**

The principle point behind the word "power" is not "dynamite" – blasting in and blowing everything up! Rather the sense is "the ability to get the job done". The power of God achieves what God intends it to achieve. Indeed Paul can say that this is the reason he is unashamed of the Gospel, for it is indeed powerful enough to save Jews and Gentiles (Romans 1:16).

God worked in power in Thessalonica then the Apostle Paul *reasoned, explained, proved and proclaimed* Jesus the Christ (Acts 17:2f.). But as Nygren rightly said: *The Gospel is not the presentation of an idea, but the operation of a power.*

### **The Holy Spirit and Deep conviction**

The objective task of preaching the word was internally attested and applied by the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.

That which is preached with conviction invariably brings conviction in the hearts of the hearers. Jonathan Edwards encouraged “heat and light” in preaching: illumination and persuasion balanced with unction and conviction.

The perspiration of the preacher combines with the inspiration of Scripture and the illumination of the Spirit to produce “deep change” in the hearers. Such that they “...turn from idols to serve the living and true God” (v9).

Such is the power of expository preaching. I hope that this edition of The Edge will better equip you for the task.

Yours in Christ

*Simon Vibert*

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