

Church Office

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Meeting location

Marshall Middle School  
25 S. Pontiac, Janesville

Pastor:

John Swanson

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*Declaring the greatness of God and serving  
others for joy and His honor (II Cor. 4:5)*

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November 3, 1999

Dear

I Thessalonians 1:4-10 describes the impact that God's word, empowered by God's Spirit, had on a group of people. Paul makes an astonishing statement in v. 3, he says that he knows that God has chosen them. The rest of the paragraph then highlights what Paul has seen in them that has convinced him that they are a part of God's chosen people. Notice these evidences of God's choice of them:

- The gospel came to them not simply with words, but with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. In other words, their lives were radically changed as a result of simply hearing the gospel.
- They imitated Paul, his companions and the Lord Jesus
- They welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit, in spite of severe suffering (They were happy even though their conversion to Christ and their growth as Christians resulted in persecution and other hardships.)
- They became a model of Christian living to other churches
- The message of Jesus rang out from them to many other places
- People in other cities, not to mention their own, knew about the radical turn their lives took as a result of their faith in Jesus. They no longer worshipped idols, they actively served the living and true God and they looked forward to the return of Jesus, i.e. their hope for happiness was not on this earth but in Christ and his coming kingdom.

This is a description of the power that God's word is to have in our lives as we read it, study it and hear it taught. Here is a list of things for us to ask God to do in our lives personally, in our families, in our church and in the church of Jesus all over the world. This is what we are to pray for and expect to happen in our lives when we come to church, when we get up each day and read God's word, when we read his word in our families, and when we go to our small groups. We must plead with God to do this work, to make his word come alive in our lives so that we can say that his word is not coming to us "simply with words but with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction."

On November 15<sup>th</sup> we are going to give special attention as a church to ask God to do this work among our brothers and sisters who are in the persecuted church around the world. Let me invite you to join in as much as you are able on that day. In addition, let me encourage you to daily ask God to cause his word to "spread rapidly and be honored" (II Thess. 3:1) in our church and city, just like it was among the Thessalonians. The blessing of God on us will not be seen in anything but the transformation of our lives, families and community.

Praying with you,