

## Daily Devotional, October 7, 2021 Having Been Picked, Picking the Right Fruit

***You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 1 Thess. 2:1-4 (NIV)***

Whoever said that following God's direction would be easy? About twenty years ago, I felt the undeniable call of God to make a career change. I was stepping from a business that we had built from the ground up, into something I didn't fully understand. But, I followed God's pull into uncharted territory, and I trusted that He had prepared me for the challenge and had opened the door that I was about to walk through. But I must tell you, once I was through that door, there was no turning back, and though it was at times difficult, I have had no regrets. Still, there were many times when I asked myself, *"What have I gotten myself into?"*

Paul's first letter to the church at Thessalonica is full of reassuring and encouraging direction to this young church. Keep in mind, these were very difficult times for these new believers. This fledgling little church faced enormous pressure from both the government and from existing religious institutions. You can be sure there were *many* times when those new Christians would ask themselves, *"What have I gotten myself into?"*

Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica, after having just come from Philippi. He had been unfairly arrested, thrown in jail, and roughed up by the prison guards. Though raised as a Jew, the Jewish hierarchy most certainly did not come to his defense. Tired of what they perceived to be his trouble making, they wanted him run out of town. In effect, they spread rumors about him, assailed his motives, and accused him of all types of theological errors. You have to believe there were probably many times when Paul stopped to ask himself, *"What have I gotten myself into?"*

Vision provides clarity, but that's no guarantee of certainty—and surely no guarantee that things will work out like we plan. Even in the midst of our serving God and in our working to fulfill the vision God has given you, there will be those *"What have I gotten myself into?"* moments.

Therefore, it is important that we cling to the encouragement Paul gave to the Christians in Thessalonica: success in worldly terms is not your measure of success. We serve to please God with what's in our hearts. We must see every moment, every situation, every crisis as an opportunity for our faith to shine forth. When God examines my heart, I hope He sees the fruit of His Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control, displayed in my every action, as well as in yours. (Galatians 5:22-23).

***Prayer: Oh Lord, allow me to display these attributes of Your Holy Spirit, so that Your people would see You within me and in doing so, will want to know You more. I know that if they seek You, they will definitely find You. Lead me, Oh Lord, in a plain and sure path, and may Your fruits allow me to withstand the works of the evil one. In Jesus' Mighty Name I pray, Amen!***