

1 Thessalonians 1:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

Analysis

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost—mimētai (μιμηταί, 'imitators') indicates intentional copying, not mere admiration. The Thessalonians imitated Paul's pattern: **receiving the word in much affliction** (dexamenoi ton logon en thlipsei pollē, δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ). Thipsis (θλῖψις) means 'pressure, crushing,' the same term used for Christ's tribulations. Yet persecution produced paradoxical **joy of the Holy Ghost** (meta charas pneumatos hagiou, μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἀγίου)—supernatural gladness impossible through human emotion.

This pattern fulfills Jesus's teaching: 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer' (John 16:33). The Holy Spirit doesn't remove affliction but produces joy within it, authenticating conversion's reality. Superficial conversions collapse under pressure; Spirit-born faith rejoices in persecution (Acts 5:41). By imitating Paul's suffering-with-joy pattern, the Thessalonians revealed themselves genuine disciples, not fair-weather followers.

Historical Context

The affliction began immediately—Jews incited a mob, attacked Jason's house, and dragged believers before city authorities with charges of treason: 'These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also' (Acts 17:6). Believers posted

bail and Paul fled by night. Yet this 'much affliction' didn't crush faith but produced joy, evidence of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. This same pattern marked the Jerusalem church (Acts 5:41) and would characterize Christianity throughout the Roman Empire.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do you explain joy coexisting with genuine suffering rather than denying either reality?
2. What evidence demonstrates that your faith could withstand 'much affliction' rather than being fair-weather Christianity?
3. How does the Holy Spirit produce joy that's qualitatively different from circumstantial happiness or psychological optimism?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου
And ye followers of us became And G3588 of the Lord
G2532 G5210 G3402 G2257 G1096 G2532 G2962

δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῆ μετὰ χαρᾶς
having received G3588 the word in affliction much with joy
G1209 G3056 G1722 G2347 G4183 G3326 G5479

πνεύματος ἀγίου
Ghost of the Holy
G4151 G40

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 11:1 (Parallel theme): Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

1 Corinthians 4:16 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

Acts 13:52 (Holy): And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Galatians 5:22 (Spirit): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

2 Thessalonians 3:9 (Parallel theme): Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Ephesians 5:1 (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

3 John 1:11 (Parallel theme): Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

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