

The Work Of The Word Against Unbelievers

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[0 : 00] 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, we are returning to the paragraph that we began last Sunday. We'll finish it today. And so let's read the whole paragraph together, though most of our focus is going to be on verses 15 and 16.

Let's read the entire paragraph, beginning at verse 13. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, 13 to 16. And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you receive 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.

For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God and Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out and displeased God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved.

So as or with the result that they are always to fill up the measure of their sins. Wrath has come upon them at last.

Well, as we said last week, there's two groups of people that are presented to us in this text. Both groups of people share an immense privilege that many people actually do not experience in their lifetime.

[1 : 32] And it's this, everyone to which and about which Paul was writing in 1 Thessalonians had at some point received the word of God.

They'd received the word of God. And in the context of the passage that we just read, received refers to hearing a particular message.

And that message, what he calls the word of God, is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ as it is revealed to us in the scriptures.

We call it the gospel, right? So everybody to which he's writing and about which he's writing has received this message, this gospel message from the word of God. However, not everyone who receives the gospel, who receives the word of God, responds in the same way.

As we discovered in our study of verse 13, some people, like the Christians in Thessalonica, upon receiving the gospel of Jesus, accept it as Paul's word.

[2 : 38] If you'll just set your eyes on verse 13 again. When you receive the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it. So this is in direct reference to the Christians in Thessalonica.

They accepted it. That is, they welcomed it. They believed it. And so Paul offers his thanksgiving to God for this because he recognized that the conversion of the Thessalonian believers ultimately was the result of God's work in them through the preaching of the gospel message.

That's what he says, isn't it? That you had accepted it not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God, the gospel, which is at work in you. And we said that this work of God through the word of God continues in each believer so that their faith that is established at their conversion then continues and perseveres even in the face of serious suffering.

So in verses 13 and 14, we find that the word of God works. It is at work to save sinners and to strengthen saints.

That was all last Sunday. But there's another group that's represented and described in these verses as well. Well, those who accept the gospel are represented in the text by the Thessalonian Christians.

[4 : 09] Those who reject the gospel are portrayed here in these verses by the unbelieving Jews who persecuted them.

That's the focus. The end of verse 14 all the way to the end of the paragraph. Just look at it with me once again. He says at the end of verse 14, you became imitators of the churches of God and Christ Jesus that are in Judea for you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews.

Countrymen here in this case is directly correlating to Jews. So that while the Thessalonian Christians certainly endured suffering at the hands of unbelieving Gentiles, the opposition against them was initiated, it was instigated, and it was continued by the Jews in their city in particular.

And in this way, their experience and their perseverance imitated the Lord Jesus. It imitated the prophets. It imitated Paul and his team. And of course, it imitated the other congregations in Judea.

Now, let me just show you from Acts 17. Once again, that's Luke's record of the beginnings of the church in Thessalonica. In Acts 17, verse 5, and then again in verse 13, it tells us this, but the Jews were jealous and taking some wicked men of the rabble.

[5 : 42] They formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And then a little bit later in verse 13, it says, But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating, stirring up the crowds there.

So Paul doesn't write to the Thessalonians, and he doesn't mean to say that all Christian persecution, that every hardship that they faced came at the hands of the Jews. He's just referencing in the beginnings of the church the historical reality of the fact that what they were experiencing in their suffering was started and continued, at least up to this point, specifically by unbelieving Jews, who in Acts 17 were said to have been jealous over the conversion of some of the Thessalonian people.

And some people have looked at passages like this, and they have used them to try to accuse Paul of being anti-Semitic. But that's a weak argument when you really begin to understand what he means here, and then of course, some of his other writings.

He wasn't putting the blame of all Christian persecution on the shoulders of the Jews. He was using their historic involvement in such things as an example of those who after hearing and receiving the Word of God even repeatedly, continue to reject it, sometimes even vehemently, violently.

Their rejection of the gospel, their harm toward God's people, led to greater and greater sin. And Paul gives us an illustration here, like a glass being continually filled with water.

[7 : 40] Their rejection of God's Word eventually spills over. And what does it spill over into? The wrath of God. So the Word of God that works to save sinners and strengthen saints in verses 13 and 14, we're told in verses 15 and 16 is the same Word of God that works to condemn rebels.

They will ultimately be held accountable to God for their rejection of His Word. So in contrast to the Thessalonians who accepted the gospel are the Jews who rejected it.

Now do you understand what I'm getting at there? Why is it that Paul is writing this? Why is he focused so much on the Jewish involvement in this persecution? Well, one, because that was the reality of the persecution.

He's just being honest about what was happening. There's more to it than that. This is a picture here. On one hand, we have those who receive the gospel and accept it. They believe it. They welcome it. That's the Gentile believers there in Thessalonica.

But then on the other hand, we have those who receive the gospel. They hear the Word of God preached over and over and over and over and over and over. They reject it. They're filling up their sins.

[8 : 57] It's going to spill over eventually into wrath. Paul is describing for us two groups of people. Those who accept. Those who reject. And the fact of the matter is that each of us shares in the same exact privilege as they did.

So as we come to this text again for the second week in a row, the overarching question is very simple. To which group do you belong? We already know that you share in the privilege.

You've heard the gospel. Most of us have heard it probably hundreds, maybe thousands of times in our lifetime. You've heard the gospel. Now what are you going to do with it?

Will you accept it? You believe it. You welcome it. Or will you reject it? Turn away from it. And what I want to do this morning is actually quite simple with the end of this paragraph.

I just want to look at the scriptures to show the pattern and the result of hearing the gospel and yet continuing to reject it.

[10 : 03] And then at the end I just want to draw three simple but important applications. Okay? You're going to look specifically at the pattern of the scripture with the Jews in particular. Of hearing the gospel and rejecting it again and again.

What the result of that is. And then at the very end we'll come back and we'll just make three simple and essential applications about it. Okay? So let's think about the word condemns the rebel.

The word condemns the rebel. Look with me again at verses 15 and 16. The Jews who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out and displeased God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved.

So as always to fill up the measure of their sins. That's that illustration. And when it spills over what is it? The wrath of God has come upon them.

The wrath of God has come upon them. The progression of Paul's argument is simple enough to see. First he recounts a series of hateful responses by unbelieving Jews beginning with Jesus' crucifixion.

[11 : 12] He could have gone earlier than that. Jesus goes earlier than that. And we'll get to that in just a moment. But in the case of this text Paul goes as far back as Jesus. And he says they killed the Lord Jesus.

The crucifixion of Jesus. And then he continues through a series of hateful violent responses to the gospel message and to God's people. That culminates in this context in Thessalonica.

Leading all the way up to what they were experiencing even then. That's the first thing he does in verse 15. And then after he illustrates those incidents as I said as a glass being filled up.

You know what's the illustration about? It's about anticipation. I should have brought a pitcher of water and a glass with me this morning. If you were to just slowly begin pouring water and glass or if you're ever watching your waiter refill your drink at the table and they get distracted while they're pouring your drink.

And you're just anticipating that any moment now is going to get to the top and it's going to spill over. That's the point of the illustration. That they are filling up in their rejection of the gospel.

[12 : 16] In their sin. They are filling up like a pitcher that's just pouring water in a glass. It's getting fuller and fuller and fuller and fuller and eventually what's going to happen, the final thing, is it's going to spill over.

So he declares that the filling up of Israel's sins results in the pouring out of God's wrath against them. And that final statement there in verse 16 when he says that God's wrath has come upon them at last.

It's a bit tricky, isn't it? Until you remember that Paul is speaking prophetically. There's a type of statement that can be unveiled in the original languages here.

We would call it a prophetic perfect, which essentially means Paul's speaking prophetically here. Essentially what he means here is that the condemnation of the Jews as a people, right, for the rejection of the Messiah has already been inaugurated.

And it is going to be fulfilled ultimately at the final judgment. That's what he means when he says the wrath has come upon them at last. It's been inaugurated now as the gospel is going throughout the world.

[13 : 24] God has turned his focus away from Israel and he's focused now on the world and the salvation of the world. And this judgment from God will be made final. It will come to its completion at the return of Christ.

So when Paul says this at the end of the passage, what he means is it's been inaugurated, but it's certain. There's no question they will be condemned for their rejection. So Israel in this illustration receives the word, rejects the word, and is ultimately judged by God according to the word that they have rejected.

Okay, you follow me? With me. That's the flow of argument here in verses 15 and 16. Now let's think about the scandal of it. The scandal of Israel's rejection of the gospel is magnified by the fact that no group in history, in the history of humanity, no group was more privileged and prepared to rejoice in God's Messiah than Israel.

Nobody was better prepared for it. Nobody was more privileged to be ready for it, to receive it, to accept it than they were. It was Israel that God called out to be the people through which he would display his glory in the fallen world, beginning with Abraham and continuing on through the patriarchs to David and ultimately to Jesus.

It was to Israel that God gave his law and his very presence. It was Israel that God preserved as a people over and over and over in spite of their sin and rebellion.

[15 : 19] And supremely it was to Israel that God gave his very son, the Messiah, the Christ, the serpent crusher from Genesis 3, 15, the perfect lamb, spotless lamb pictured for Israel in the sacrifices that they would make at the temple and the tabernacle all throughout their history.

The one that the prophets continually preached to them was coming, all the promises, the covenants, everything God had promised. He was sending this Messiah to and through Israel in order that he might bring salvation to the world.

And yet despite this immense privilege on the whole as a group, they routinely rejected God, rejected his covenants, and ultimately rejected his Messiah.

Isn't that what John means in John chapter 1 in that great prologue? What is it that he says? He came into his own, his own in the Jews.

He came to his own, and his own did not receive him. They would not receive him. Now, I want to read just a few verses from Romans chapter 9.

[16 : 40] They're on the screen for you. Notice what Paul says about it here. And this is another thing that works against this claim that Paul was anti-Semitic. He says, I'm speaking the truth in Christ.

I'm not lying. My conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites.

And notice what he says. To them belong the adoption. God made them his own people. The glory. He gave them his presence.

The covenants. He spoke to them his promises. The giving of the law. The worship. The promises. To them belongs the patriarchs. From their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever.

[17 : 39] That's their privilege. Over and over and over. Israel heard the word of God. Over and over and over. They heard the promises of the Messiah.

And then they saw the Messiah. And they killed him. Then he rose from the dead. And they rejected him still.

Because of Israel's privilege, yet hardness of heart, Jesus routinely warned them of the future wrath of God if they would not repent and believe.

Even a cursory reading of the Gospels will show that much of Jesus' interaction with his own people, especially in the days leading up to his crucifixion and resurrection, was on this very topic.

And I want to show you just one example that I think Paul is drawing from when he writes this in 1 Thessalonians 2. In fact, why don't you turn with me there to Matthew 23.

[18 : 39] Matthew 23, verses 29 to 36. Matthew 23, verse 29.

Jesus said, this is Jesus speaking, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying this, If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.

So they recognized that their forefathers killed the men that God sent to warn them. And Jesus says, You build these tombs for them and you decorate them and you make these festivals around them and you acknowledge them, special days.

And then you say pridefully that if we had lived at the time that our fathers did, we would have never done what they did. And notice what Jesus says next. Thus you witness against yourselves that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets.

Now notice what he says. This is what Paul's drawing from. Fill up then, he says, the measure of your fathers. You serpents, brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

[20 : 02] Now notice what Jesus says. Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes.

And here's what you're gonna do. Some of them you will kill and crucify. Some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town so that on you may come all the righteous bloodshed on earth from the blood of the righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. So what is it that Jesus does? First he looks back and he says, look, this is what your forefathers did.

This is what Israel has always done, he says. He says, God sends you his people. He sends you his messengers. They preach the gospel to you. They preach the word to you and they killed them. And now today you say that you would never do that.

So let me tell you what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna send to you prophets and wise men and scribes and you're gonna do to them the same thing that your forefathers did to the ones that God sent to them.

[21 : 11] That's what he says. He is going to, they are going to fill up to the brim the measure of their father's sins. These wise men and prophets and scribes verse 34, they're the apostles.

The prophets, the churches that Christ would use to spread his gospel around the world and Jesus prophesied that the Jews of his day would continue filling up the sins of their fathers who killed the prophets God sent to them and they will do it by crucifixion, by flogging, by persecuting those he sins.

And what did Jesus say would be the result of this continued rejection of his gospel and of his people? They will not, quote, escape being sentenced to hell.

This is what I think Paul is drawing from. They receive the word, Christ sends it to them. They reject the word, they reject the prophets, wrath.

And the end is, the result, is hell. Eternal hell. Wrath. Now it's not very long after this that there was a man in Jerusalem named Stephen who preached this very gospel in Jerusalem after Jesus rose from the den and he was using the same themes as Jesus did.

[22 : 33] And at the very end of his sermon, notice what Stephen says in Acts chapter 7. You stiff-necked people. He didn't mince words, did he?

Now he's not just being a jerk. That's Old Testament language that God used to condemn Israel when they rebelled against them. And what Stephen's doing here is he's not just, not just trying to be a jerk to them.

What he's doing is he's drawing on the parallels from the Old Testament from the sins of their fathers. And he says, you stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears. You always resist the Holy Spirit.

You keep doing it. As your fathers did, so do you. And which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one whom you have now betrayed and murdered.

Now notice what he says. You who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it. Now notice that last part again.

[23 : 30] They received the law, the word of God, but they did not keep it. Or in the language of 1 Thessalonians 2, they did not accept it. That sermon itself by Stephen, it was another gracious opportunity for the Jews present to turn from their sin and unbelief to trust Christ.

But do you know what they did? They murdered Stephen instead. Doing just as Jesus prophesied they would do. He said, I'm going to send you prophets.

You're going to have more opportunities to respond to the gospel message. And God sends them and they hear the message and they remain hardened in their heart to the message.

And they kill God's prophet. But just as an aside here, if you need a ray of hope, there was another present who is said to have been consenting to Stephen's murder in that moment.

later he would repent and believe. His name was Saul. We know him as Paul, the author of 1 Thessalonians.

[24 : 40] Now can we just say, if you were to look at that crowd, based on what we understand the scriptures to say, if you were to look at that crowd that day, of the people that were stoning Stephen and consenting to this murder, and you were to point out one and say there's no way that person will ever turn to Christ, Saul's probably the one you'd point to.

He was a murderer. He thought on behalf of God he was doing God a favor by actually putting to death and imprisoning Christians who believed like Stephen believed.

And all of us probably would look at him and say there's no way. There's no way he'd ever turn. And yet he's the one who turns. And here in 1 Thessalonians 2 he's reflecting on all of this. But of course being underscored by the gospel.

And so maybe there's somebody in your life and you've proclaimed to the gospel to them hundreds of times maybe. And they keep rejecting and they keep rejecting and they keep rejecting. Don't stop proclaiming.

Don't stop. If Paul will turn, if God can transform him, surely he can transform your kids and your parents and your co-workers and your friends and the people that you love that are so hardened to the gospel now, just keep giving them the word.

[25 : 52] Isn't that what we learned last week in 13 and 14? That God works through the word. So what is it that is our responsibility? Give the word. Give the word. Give the gospel.

That's what God uses. Just keep doing it. Just keep praying. Perhaps what you have is a song and God is prepared to transform them soon enough.

Now back to 1 Thessalonians 2. What's Paul's point in saying all of this to the Thessalonians? What's the point in us taking so much time to think about it now?

Again, it's to show Israel as the supreme example of receiving the gospel, the word of God, yet continually rejecting that truth through willful hardness of heart.

it's a warning for us not to be like them. Now give me your attention. If you don't listen to anything else, listen to this.

[26 : 55] Give me your eyes. Old and young, teenagers, listen to what I'm telling you. This is a warning not to be like Israel. Some of you are dangerously close to being like Israel.

Israel isn't the only privileged people in this sense. Every Sunday, there are people who sit in worship services like this one where the gospel of Jesus is proclaimed through preaching, it's praised through song, it's displayed through ordinances, ordinances, yet they continue to reject what they've been so privileged to receive so many times.

And it's real easy to look at the Bible and say, how could Israel be so stupid after all of that and over and over, after all that privilege to still reject it and yet there's people who sit in churches like this every Sunday and they hear the gospel every Sunday over and over and over and over and they continue to reject it.

They will not respond in repentance and faith. And here's the question. Is that you? Is it you? Because if it is, you can appropriately read yourself into this text here.

You are filling up the measure of your sins and unbelief which will eventually spill over resulting in the eternal wrath of the Almighty God.

[28 : 35] The Word of God that you now reject that can save your soul is the same Word that will condemn you in the end.

And what a shame it will have been to have heard the gospel message so often and still be condemned in the end. But it's a faith that you don't have to accept.

There is hope for you now. Can I just read to you Romans 3? In fact, why don't you turn with me there? Turn with me to Romans chapter 3. Romans 3.

Maybe you know this passage well. Romans chapter 3 verse 19.

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

[29 : 51] Now what's Paul saying? He's saying nobody's without excuse. He's saying if you're a Jew or you have received the law or you've had opportunity you'll be condemned by that very law. It's the point that we're making from 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 as well.

That you will be held by it. You'll be held accountable to it. And every mouth will be stopped. Every mouth will be accountable to God. Verse 20. He acknowledges by works of the law no human being will be justified since it's through the law that comes the knowledge of sin.

In other words if Israel couldn't do it through the law what hope do we have? What hope do we have? And the answer is before you get to verse 20 you don't have any hope.

You don't have any. On your own you have no hope. Oh but verse 20 or 21 it comes into play for us so helpfully doesn't it?

But now the righteousness of God has been revealed apart from the law. Even though the law and the prophets testify to it it's the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

[30 : 59] For there's no distinction. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and all are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness because in His divine forbearance He passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at this present time so that He might be just in that He has condemned sin through Christ and He might be the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ.

Now this is where your hope comes in. This is the gospel message that we're all broken we're all sinners we're all rebels that deserve to be condemned by the very word that we have rejected and yet Christ in the fullness of time as we're thinking about all month Christ in the fullness of time was sent by the Father born under the law to redeem those of us who are under the law.

Why? So that He might make us adopted so that we might receive the adoption and how do we receive that? Well it's not because you go to church it's not because you give it's not because you do the charitable work that you do it's not because you go Friday to Operation Christmas Child and fill out fill out Christmas boxes it's not that it's all about faith in Christ.

Christ has done it He's done it for you this is the message that the Jews rejected this is the message that you must accept you must accept it and why wouldn't you?

[32 : 40] Why wouldn't you? Come to Christ trust in Him what He's done for us on the cross Romans 3 is said to be a propitiation it has appeased the wrath of God that 1 Thessalonians 2 says has come upon the Jews who continue to reject the Christ but in Romans 3 whether you're a Jew or not it has appeased the wrath of God if you will just come to Christ and believe it isn't that amazing?

if you're alive and breathing right now it's not too late to repent and accept the good news of Jesus it's not too late how long you've rejected Him or even harmed His people or prevented others from hearing the gospel doesn't matter doesn't matter if you come to Him in faith at this moment now you will receive nothing but mercy mercy through Christ this is why we call it a gospel because it really is good news it's the best news oh don't reject it come to Him for it now let's just finish with three essential applications from 1 Thessalonians 2 it's really just a summary of what we've already said first thing is this the opportunity to respond to the gospel is now it's now we live in a time of God's patience and grace don't we the fact that you're here today is a testament of God's gracious merciful work in your life you're here you hear the gospel again oh that's His goodness at work in your life now is the opportunity to respond don't be like Israel don't refuse every opportunity to be saved the time of judgment has not yet come now is the time to receive mercy and grace that's what Paul writes to the church in Corinth behold now is the favorable time now is the day of salvation don't wait second there is an end to God's patience toward those who reject His word there's an end it's a determined end decisive end you may feel at ease in the moment but judgment really is coming the glass just keeps filling up eventually it will spill over and all who refuse the gospel will face God's wrath and no one who's in this room this morning will be able to stand before God and say well nobody told me you'll be held accountable to the very word that you hear now so now's the time to respond don't wait because judgment does eventually come now for those of you who are Christians let's not forget that this whole section in this paragraph that flows out of the Thessalonians suffering for the gospel that's the context isn't it

Paul goes on this little digression here as he's presenting to us the differences between the two groups we have those who accept the word and those who reject it so let's return to that first thought for those who accept it what was their experience suffering suffering hardship which is a reminder to us that to be a Christian what it means is to see the supreme value of Christ over everything else even your very life isn't that the testimony of the Thessalonians they willingly endured the suffering why because they saw Christ and his gospel as far more valuable than even their own lives and their own comfort isn't this what Jesus says in the parables of the kingdom when he says that the kingdom is like a man who's walking through the field and he finds a treasure that's of incalculable value and he goes and he sells everything that he has to buy that land in order that he can have that treasure

Jesus says that's what I'm like I'm the treasure in the field I'm more valuable than anything else what I offer you is more valuable than anything you might try to hold on to in this life we understand that as believers don't we that's the work of the word at work in us not only at conversion but that's why we keep coming back to the gospel isn't it because when things are hard whether it be through persecution and suffering at the hands of unbelievers or maybe it's just the result of life in a fallen world we get sick and we have pain and we lose people we love death awaits all of us this life is hard every day is hard in some way and some of you know that even more than than others you experience it every day why do we keep coming back to the gospel as God's people because in the pain and in the suffering and in the persecution we're reminded that Christ is far more valuable than any comfort I might receive now he's just better and I can endure it because he's good and he's gracious and he's gonna bring me home and when it brings me home

I'll never have this pain again I'm never gonna have the sorrow again I'll never have to face death again I'll never be broken again he really is better Christians know that which is why when we do face suffering the word of God keeps working in us to do what?

[38 : 36] Causes us to persevere isn't that the point for the Thessalonians? Isn't that why Paul's thanking God? I thank God that you've done this work in the Thessalonian Christians God through your word what work?

Persevering work that is based on the gospel so what do we learn from that as Christians? Oh Christian we need the gospel every day every day you need the gospel can you just close with reading a section from Romans 8 take this as an encouragement Christian that those whom he predestined he also called those whom he called he also justified those whom he justified he also glorified and what then shall we say to these things?

if God is for us who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It's God who justifies who is to condemn us? Christ Jesus is the one who died more than that who was raised who is at the right hand of God who indeed is interceding for us and who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

[40 : 20] No in all of these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us for I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation none of it will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord into that we say Amen Amen