

“YE WERE ENSAMPLES TO ALL THAT BELIEVE”

Every member of the Knox County Church of Christ is to be commended. Each Christian which comprises this congregation is “fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16). For this reason, you serve as a good example to all. When the apostle Paul gave thanks to God for the congregation which met in Thessalonica, he mentioned their “work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 The. 1:3). The Knox County congregation is made up of faithful Christians who are “zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14). The inspired James writes, “even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (Jam. 2:17-18). Being a faithful Christian or congregation of the Lord’s Church means more than just making the claim, it requires obedience. This congregation’s faith is easily observed and so is its “labour of love.” The good works that this congregation is doing for those in need, both physically and Spiritually, is produced and actuated by love. Each member here loves his neighbor as he loves himself (Mat. 19:19) and has an unsatiable desire “to seek and to save” those who are lost (Luke 19:10). No matter what trial or affliction may come, the faith and love of this congregation will continue to serve God with patience until Jesus returns.

Additionally, the Knox County congregation serves as a good example because you continue to receive the Word of God (1 The. 1:6). The word, “receive,” means much more than just listening; it means to fully embrace and to make one’s own (Thayer’s). Jesus says that the seed, God’s Word (Luke 8:11), which falls upon “the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). Moses stated to the children of Israel, “know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations...Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which He sware unto thy fathers” (Deu. 7:9, 11-12).

After receiving God’s Word, it is in the heart of every member here as “a burning fire” (Jer. 20:9), which cannot be contained and must be shared with others. Paul explains, “for from you **sounded out the word of the Lord** not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad” (1 The. 1:8, emphasis B.G.). The good news of Christ and salvation in His name (Acts 4:12) has been “sounded out” from the Knox County congregation since its very beginning. Using every means afforded to us, which is authorized by God, this congregation has not ceased to exclaim the Truth of God’s Word. Whether it be by newspaper ad, bulletin article, “Welcome” brochure, or archived sermon videos on-line, no one can deny the love and respect which you have and exhibit for the Word of God and your desire to “preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:16).

As long as the Knox County Church of Christ continues to faithfully follow the pattern provided by God in the New Testament, you will remain, “ensamples to all that believe” (1 The. 1:7). Let us remember the admonition of Paul, “be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).

- *Brad Green*

