

THL101 Translation Exercise: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-7

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Translation

² We always give thanks to God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers, unceasingly ³ remembering your work of faith, [and] labour of love, and endurance of hope in our Lord, Jesus Christ, before God and our Father. ⁴ Loved brothers, knowing your election is by God, ⁵ because our gospel has come to you not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in *total** measure, even as you know what we were among you, for your sakes. ⁶ And you imitate us and the Lord, receiving the Word in great affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became a *moral* pattern for all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

* full and much

Parsing

	TENSE	VOICE	MOOD	PERSON	NUMBER	LEXICAL FORM	INFLECTED MEANING
Εὐχαριστοῦμεν	Present	Active	Indicative	1st	Plural	Εὐχαριστέω	We give thanks

	CASE	NUMBER	GENDER	LEXICAL FORM	INFLECTED MEANING	COMMENTS
θεῷ	Dative	Singular	Masculine	Θεός	to / in / with God	directed thanks
πίστεως	Genitive	Singular	Feminine	πίστις	of faith / belief	faith's / beliefs
ἐλπίδος	Genitive	Singular	Feminine	ἐλπίς	of hope / expectation	
ἀδελφοὶ	Vocative	Plural	Masculine	ἀδελφός	brothers	Directly addressing brothers
εὐαγγέλιον	Nominative	Singular	Neuter	εὐαγγέλιον	gospel	Glad tidings/ good news*
ἡμῶν	Genitive	Plural	-	ἐγώ	our	Personal Pronoun
θλίψει	Dative	Singular	Feminine	θλίψις	to pressure / distress / afflict	Trial and tribulation connotation
μιμηταὶ	Nominative	Plural	Masculine	μιμητής	imitators	
πνεύματος	Genitive	Singular	Neuter	πνεῦμα	of the Spirit	Identified as the <i>Holy Spirit</i> in passage, hence capitalised

* refer to following *Word Summary* for more information on εὐαγγέλιον.

Word Study

Εὐαγγέλιον is derived from the Koine portmanteau for *good* [Εὖ] *message* [αγγέλιον].

The phrase “good tidings” is not exclusive to the New Testament, as it is found in the *Tanakh* (eg. 2 Ki. 4:10 כְּמַבְשֹׂר [~900BC], Is. 40:9 מְבַשֵּׂר , 52:7 מְבַשֵּׂר [~650BC], etc.)¹ and other ancient authors (eg. Homer ~700BC?, Xenophon ~400BC, Cicero ~20BC, et al.)². Paul’s Pharisaic and philosophical training would have made him familiar with these works (cf. Rom.10:15).

It was translated historically from Latin into Old English (Anglo-Saxon to 1066AD) as *gōdspel* being *good* [gōd] *tidings* [spel]. This word was continued into the Middle and most Modern English Bibles as the current diminution (Brake, 2008)³. The *1560 Geneva Bible*, for instance, includes a preface in the Gospel of Matthew; “This worde [GOSPEL] ſignifieth good tidings, and is taken here for the ſtorie which continueth the joyful meſſage of the coming of the Sonne of God promiſed from the beginning.”⁴

In the Apostolic and Patristic periods, the *euangellion* was mostly referenced as a proposition and a person. The proposition that Christ’s obedient life, death, burial and resurrection encompasses this term gospel (1 Cor. 15:3,4). It also embraces the person of Christ as the gospel (Mk 1:1). There is a curse from God for altering it (Gal. 1:8,9) and incorporates an acceptance of Christ by faith as our saviour (Rev. 3:20) by His vicarious, atoning work (Rom. 10:9,10) (Hindson, 2013)⁵.

¹ Burrows, 1925. 21. Green, 2015. 563, 572. Strong, 1995. #1319.

² Thayer, 1981. 257. Burrows, 1925. 21.

³ Brake, 2008. 37-43.

⁴ Berry & Whittingham, 2011. 480.

⁵ Hindson, 2013. 1717.

Exegesis Summary

There are a couple of anomalies in the exegesis of this passage. In verses 2 and 3:

A. Do the *always* [πάντοτε] and *all of you* [πάντων ὑμῶν] relate to *we give thanks* [εὐχαριστοῦμεν] or *making mention* [μνησίαν ποιοῦμενοι] (v.2)?

B. Does the *unceasingly* [ἀδιαλείπτως] pertain to *making mention* [μνησίαν ποιοῦμενοι] (v.2) or *remembering* [μνημονεύοντες] (v.3), irrespective of the position of the comma placed between *our, unceasingly* [ἡμῶν, ἀδιαλείπτως]? The limited early manuscripts of the passage don't resolve this⁶, and further investigation exceeds the scope of this work.

Fee (2002) mentions despite the differences, these discrepancies don't overtly affect interpretation. In such cases, examining Paul's other writings may be used to clarify translation⁷. Most Reformed theologians translate it *unceasingly remembering*⁸, which this reviewer concurs. Modern English versions are divided between either translations⁹.

C. Does the term *before God* [ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ] (v.3) describe the *Apostle and friends* (v.1), the ascended *Christ* or the *Thessalonians*?

The reviewer is uncertain of this question, but suspects context places the emphasis on Paul (with Silas and Timothy makes *We*) [from 1 Thes. 1:1] as the group who *give thanks* [εὐχαριστοῦμεν] *before God* [ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ]. This is the consensus with many commentators. Fee also bases this on a comparison of 1 Thes. 3:9¹⁰.

The reviewer transliterates the passage as follows¹¹:

2 Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν μνησίαν
We give thanks to God always about all [of] you mention

ποιοῦμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν, ἀδιαλείπτως
making at/in the prayers our , unceasingly

3 Μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου
Remembering your the work the of faith and labour

τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν
The love and the endurance of hope the Lord our

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν,
Jesus Christ before the God and father our ,

4 εἰδότες, ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ [τοῦ] θεοῦ, τὴν ἐκλογὴν
knowing, brothers *loved* by God, the election

⁶ BibleQuery.org, 2017. <<https://www.biblequery.org/1ThessMss.html>>

⁷ Fee, 2002. 52.

⁸ Calvin, 2009. 238. Poole, 2008. 732.

⁹ Biblehub.com, 2020. <https://biblehub.com/1_thessalonians/1-3.htm>

¹⁰ Fee, 2002. 53.

¹¹ Mounce, 1993, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*.

Strong, 1995. *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

Thayer, 1981. *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

ὑμῶν,
your,

5 ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ
because the gospel our not come to you in word

μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν]
only but also in power and in spirit holy and in

πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ, καθὼς οἴδατε οἳ ἐγενήθημεν [ἐν] ὑμῖν
full measure much, even as you know what we were in you

δι' ὑμᾶς.
For [your] you.

6 Καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου,
and you imitate of us you became and the of Lord

δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος
receiving the word in affliction much with joy of the Spirit

ἁγίου,
holy,

7 ὥστε γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς τύπον πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐν τῇ
So that became you moral pattern to all the believers in the

Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ.
Macedonia and in the Achaia

Soli Deo gloria

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