

Monday, December 1, 2014

The Rev. Christopher Brown '08, Co-pastor of The Upper Room Presbyterian Church, and Church Planting Initiative Coordinator at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

## Scripture

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

<sup>1</sup>Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

<sup>2</sup>We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly <sup>3</sup>remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup>because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup>For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. <sup>9</sup>For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead - Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

## Devotional

The Apostle Paul begins his first letter to the Thessalonians with thanksgiving for the way they responded to the Gospel. After the Word of God came to them “in power and in the Holy Spirit,” the Thessalonians responded with such joy and faithfulness that they were an example to fellow believers throughout all of Greece. Particularly exemplary were their *repentance*— “turning from idols to serve a true and living God” —and their *hope*—“waiting for God’s Son from heaven . . . Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.”

This Advent, *how is the Lord inviting you to live with exemplary repentance and hope?* From what idols does he invite you to turn, so that you may set your hope fully upon the Living God, and so bear witness to Christ?

## Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us. Turn our hearts from idolatry. May our repentant and hopeful response to your Gospel bear true witness to the glory of your eternal kingdom. Amen. Come Lord Jesus!*