

1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

Role models can sometimes be hard to come by. You hear about athletes, movie stars, or politicians who have lived seemingly good lives and then all of a sudden you learn something horrible about them. This fact tarnishes them and sometimes we stop following them or even paying attention to what kind of activity they are doing. The simple fact is no one is 100% perfect. Everyone has some sort of flaw. The hero works to overcome their flaws. They often learn from their weaknesses and sometimes those imperfections become strengths.

There is one who is perfect and that is Jesus the Lord. We should all follow him. We should all be imitators of him and all he did in his short life on earth. We should think about what he taught and how he treated people. We should marvel at the great love he had for us even to the point of dying on the cross for our sins.

St. Paul wants the Christians of Thessalonica to imitate the missionaries that had been and even more so Jesus who is their redeemer. He not only wants them to be imitators, but he wants them to evangelize to the communities around them. He wants them to bring more people into the fold, so that the Church can grow. Paul wants more people to embrace the sacrificial love Jesus has for all of us. Jesus is our protector and Paul wants the Thessalonians to know that Jesus is their deliverer.

We know about Jesus based on the Word given by God and expressed by St. Paul and the other witnesses. They give us a portrait of who Jesus is. Our life's goal is to imitate this likeness of Jesus made visible through scripture and deep prayer. Just as the Thessalonians accepted the testimony of Paul whose heart was changed by the presence of Jesus he experienced in his conversion, may we hope for conversion of heart. May we imitate how Jesus lived and loved. I pray that these actions may inspire us to be an example to the world.