Introduction
How do we prove that our faith is real?
“Our actions prove what we really believe.” Henry Blackaby

This is the question we find in the book of James.

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith, but has no deeds? Can such a faith save him?” James 2:14, 17

That is why Paul was so grateful for the believers in Thessalonica. Their faith was genuine.

Are these same qualities true of us?

I. An acceptance of the Word of God. Verse 13

Paul thanked God for their eager response to the Word of God.

Paul used two words to describe their response.

- Receive is a technical term that was used for passing on traditions or an authoritative teaching or doctrine.
- Acceptance is a word that was used for welcoming guests into your home.

Our response to God’s Word will determine the place that it has in our life.

“Oh how I love thy law. It is my meditation all the day long.” Psalm 119:97

“Your word is more precious than gold, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.” Psalm 19:10-11

“We owe to Scripture the same reverence we owe to God, for it is his word.” John Calvin

Is preaching necessary?

Something supernatural and unique takes place when the gospel is preached.

We hear God’s voice through preaching.

II. Obedience to the Word of God. Verses 14a
They became imitators of God’s churches in Judea.
They also were imitators of Paul and of the Lord.  I Thess. 1:6

Imitation is one of the ways we learn.
The believers in Thessalonica wanted to be like Jesus and they saw Jesus’ life reflected in Paul and Silas.

Why is obedience important?
Obedience opens up Scripture more than anything else.

“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.  He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”  John 14:21

III.  Suffering for the Word of God.  Verses 14-16
They were suffering from their own countrymen.
They had come to believe that Jesus is Lord and not Caesar is Lord.
That meant they could no longer participate in the Emperor cult.
They learned how to persevere through suffering by watching the churches in Judea.

“Brother, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.”  Romans 10:1

There is no place for antisemitism among Christians.

What is God’s wrath?
God’s wrath is his settled opposition to sin.  In this case it refers to the wrath of God that will be poured out on the earth when Jesus returns to establish his kingdom on earth.

- Those who trust in Christ have been rescued from his wrath.  I Thess. 1:10
- Those who reject Christ are under God’s wrath already.  I Thess. 2:16

Now is the time of salvation.

Conclusion
How do we show that our faith is real?

- By our acceptance of the Word of God.
- By our obedience to the Word of God.
- By our suffering for the Word of God.