



Crack of Dawn (COD) Study

1 Thessalonians

Doing Love . . . in Him

Verses 1:6 – 2:8

“ . . . we had **boldness in our God** to declare to you the **gospel of God** in the midst of much conflict.” 2:2

Different

The Thessalonian church imitated Paul and his ministry and “sounded forth” the Word throughout Achaia and Macedonia.

They began the same way as the church in Corinth but . . .
they behaved differently.

Why?

Conviction

*“ . . . in that our gospel did not come to you merely in words, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and **with deep conviction**”* 1:5

Deeply convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit?

Deeply convicted by Paul's *works of faith* and *labor of love*?

Truth of the cross of Christ

- The truth of the gospel message is the **SOURCE** of our conviction
- It is **NOT** something we only need to hear once in our lives
- It is a message we need to reacquaint ourselves with **EVERY DAY**
(and allow it to sink in).
- We need to be reminded daily of:
 - who we were without Christ
 - what our eternal prospects were
 - who we are now because of His death and resurrection
 - where our hope lies
- Since we died with Him, we now live *in Him*.

Love Does

*And you became **imitators of us** and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became an **example to all the believers** in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For not only has the **word of the Lord sounded forth from you** in Macedonia and Achaia, but **your faith in God has gone forth everywhere**, so that we need not say anything. ⁹For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and **how you turned to God** from idols to **serve** the living and true God, ¹⁰and to **wait** for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

1 Thess 1:6 - 10

Love Does

- “Paul and his companions *preached* this gospel with full conviction, and it *produced* full conviction in the Thessalonians.”
- the Thessalonian church imitated Paul’s *works of faith* and *labors of love* throughout Macedonia and Achaia
- They turned to **faith** in God, they served with labors of **love**, they waited in the sure **hope** of life everlasting.

Love Does

What motivated the Thessalonians to travel throughout the area, on their own dime, maxing out PTO, in the midst of persecution, to imitate Paul and “sound forth” the Word?

They were “doing love” !

Love Does

Bob Goff, in his book “Love Does”, describes in a variety of ways what our lives might look like if we live with an *active faith*.

- It is a win-win proposition:
 - touch the lives of other people
 - be “touched” by the people we purpose “to touch”
- Act with the conviction that **“God is in this”**

WARNING!!

God may call us to go
“outside of our comfort zone”

So what #1 ?!?

- Both groups of believers were chosen by God
- Both groups were convicted by both the HS and Paul's example
- Neither group was compelled to behave in a particular way
- Both groups were free to choose their response to being chosen
- The quality of their love was driven by their strength of conviction.

So --

We're chosen.

We're convicted.

We are free to choose.

What is the quality of our love to *all* and *everywhere*?

Paul's ministry

***For** you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not in vain**.*

*² But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had **boldness in our God** to declare to you the **gospel of God** in the midst of much conflict. ³ For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, ⁴ but just as we have been **approved by God** to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, **but to please God** who tests our hearts.* 2:1-4

Paul's ministry

⁵ For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—**God is witness**. ⁶ Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷ But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. ⁸ So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the **gospel of God** but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

2:5 - 8

Paul's ministry

*For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you
was **not in vain**.*

2:1

- What standard was used?
- Was it a dramatic difference?
- Was it the same for everyone?
- How might we apply that to:
 - listening to a sermon or a podcast?
 - attending a seminar?
- How might we measure the “effectiveness”?
- Does the impact need to be dramatic?
- Does the impact need to be immediate?
- Is “planting seeds” an adequate measure of “worthwhile” or “profitable”?

Paul's ministry

- ❖ The message he was preaching was important enough to risk his life for.
- ❖ It might have been tempting* for Paul to modify his message to be:
 - less incendiary
 - culturally acceptable
 - politically correct

Paul's ministry

Why was Paul able to move forward so boldly?

- conviction
- rhetorical skills
- education
- stamina
- funding
- nine lives

in Him

boldness in our God

gospel of God

approved by God

but to please God

God is witness

and God also

in a manner worthy of God

in Him

*But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had **boldness in our God** to declare to you the **gospel of God** in the midst of much conflict. 2:2*

in Him

“[You begin to] understand that from the moment you become a Christian you are someone who has died to sin and been raised to a newness of life. You are somebody over whose life the dominion of the power of sin has been broken. **You begin to learn to interpret your life in terms of what God says about you because you are united to Christ instead of interpreting the gospel in terms of where you are in your struggle.**”

Sinclair Ferguson
Scottish theologian

- united to Christ = intimate relationship
- “big picture” view

in Him

Faith, love, and **hope**

“Nevertheless, their **hope** for the future led to their perseverance. It is not an accident that Paul emphasizes this virtue in the context of pressure and persecution and suffering. . . .

Their **hope** is grounded in the Lord Jesus. It is not an abstract quality but a personal *living hope* involving a *living relationship* with an individual who *can and will* come and vindicate the Thessalonian Christians.”

[1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary](#)

[ref: 1 Thess 1:10]

in Him

*For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, ⁴ but just as we have been **approved by God** to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to **please God who tests our hearts.** 2:3-4*

in Him

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So what #2 ?!?

- united with Christ
- *intimate* and *living* relationship
- “big picture” view

cross of Christ . . . conviction . . . hope . . . perseverance

Where do our trials (illness, family, financial,
identity, persecution) lead us?

Paul's prayer for **strength**

*For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be **strengthened** with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have **strength** to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to **know** the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God.***

Ephesians 3:14-19