

Living in Light of His Coming

Counting the Cost (1 Thessalonians 2:1-16)

Introduction:

Paul reminds the Thessalonians of his ministry among them, highlighting the opposition and suffering he faced. Despite these challenges, Paul's message was pure and sincere, aimed at pleasing God rather than people. This sets the stage for us to consider the call to join in Christ's sufferings, live sacrificially, and encourage one another as we await Christ's return.

I. Paul's Example of Ministry (1 Thessalonians 2:1-6)

- Paul's reminder of his ministry in Thessalonica despite opposition and suffering.
 - Verses 1-2: Suffering and mistreatment in Philippi before coming to Thessalonica.
 - Reference to 2 Corinthians 11:24-25, Paul's recount of his sufferings.
- Verses 3-6: The purity of Paul's message and motives.
 - Paul and his companions sought to please God, not people.

II. The Call to Join in Christ's Sufferings (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12)

- Authentic ministry involves selflessness and sacrifice.
 - Verses 7-8: Paul's affection for the Thessalonians compared to a nursing mother's care.
 - Philippians 3:10-11: Desire to know Christ and participate in His sufferings.
- Verses 9-12: Paul and his companions worked tirelessly to avoid being a burden.
 - Exhorting and encouraging the Thessalonians to live lives worthy of God.

III. Sacrificial Giving and Imitation of Christ

- Living a life worthy of God involves sacrificially giving to Him and imitating Christ.
 - 2 Corinthians 11: Paul's sacrificial life and sufferings for the gospel.
 - Philippians 2:5-8: Having the same mindset as Christ Jesus, living humbly and serving others.

IV. Practical Application of Sacrificial Living:

- Give Generously: Support the work of the church and help those in need.
- Serve Selflessly: Look for opportunities to serve others without expecting anything in return.
- Live Humbly: Embrace humility and use your resources to glorify God and serve others.
- Endure Suffering with Faith: Trust in God's purpose and remain steadfast in faith during hardships.

V. The Importance of Encouraging Each Other (1 Thessalonians 2:13-16)

- Verses 13-14: Thessalonians' reception of the gospel and endurance in suffering.
 - Their faith and endurance serve as an example.
- Philippians 3:12-14: Pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us.
- Hebrews 10:24-25: The importance of meeting together to spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Conclusion:

As Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to join with him in Christ's sufferings, we too are called to embrace the hardships that come with following Jesus. Reflect on the words of Jesus in Luke 14:27-28: "And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?" Following Christ is a journey that requires us to count the cost and embrace the cross, knowing that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).