

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12
“The Message, The Motives, and The Methods”

Introduction

Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus reached Thessalonica on Paul’s 2nd missionary journey. They were there a very short time because of Persecution; 3 weekends, maybe at the most 4 weeks.

After they left, Acts 17-18 tells us they went to Athens, Berea, Greece, and then on to Corinth, and during this time he heard about their struggles and wanted to write a letter to help them.

Today we will start into Ch. 2:

1 Thes 2:1-12

1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain.

2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

3 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.

4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness-- God is witness.

6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;

11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,

12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

2:1-2 “The Message”, “The Motives”, and “The Methods”

1 Thes 2:1-2

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

2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, **as you know**, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

A. We find 3 things that Paul explains in these first 12 Verses: (Andy Woods)

1. Vs. 3-5 - **“The Message”**
2. Vs. 6-8 - **“The Motives”**
3. Vs. 9-12 - **“The Methods”**

B. that our coming to you was not in vain

- Although it was evident to everyone, Paul’s ministry was a success while there.

- But it is better to see it as a **reference to the *character*** of Paul's ministry.
- His coming was **not empty or hollow**, as if he were a mere **salesman or marketer**. (Guzik)

C. even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know

Remember that they saw firsthand, Paul and Silas's wounds, that were still very fresh. Reference (Acts 16-17).

D. we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict
Despite what some of Paul's accusers said, he did not only preach the Gospel when it was easy or convenient. He knew what it was like to speak boldly for the Lord even in **much conflict**. (Guzik)

But more than the physical wounds was the constant and **emotional wounds from accusations and lies** about Paul and his motives.

Barclay saw the following false charges against Paul evident from the way Paul explained and defended himself in this chapter 2:

- "Paul has a police record and is therefore **untrustworthy**" (1 Thes 2:2, probably referring to his imprisonment).
- "Paul is **delusional**" (1 Thes 2:3, Because he was in error).
- "Paul's ministry is based on **impure motives**" (1 Thes 2:3, His uncleanness).
- "Paul deliberately **deceives others**" (1 Thes 2:3, His deceitful ways).
- "Paul **preaches to please others, not God**" (1 Thes 2:4, not as pleasing men).
- "Paul is in the ministry for money, **doing ministry to enrich himself**" (1 Thes 2:5;2:9, nor a cloak for covetousness).
- "Paul only wants **personal glory**" (1 Thes 2:6, nor did we seek glory from men).
- "Paul is **something of a dictator**" (1 Thes 2:7 we were gentle among you).

I am amazed how the slightest "negative words" can affect us greatly.

Personal note: I will not listen to movie critics because one negative word, I won't go watch it. Same about anything, restaurants, things, people, etc.

Paul situation:

If these enemies of Paul, could discredit Paul with lies (i.e. about his character, his methods of manipulation, and trying to get money out of people), they can discredit his "Message" as well.

Do we understand this principle?

- Our words are powerful.
- As Christians, we of all people, need to understand how powerful words can be.

Matt 12:36-37

36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

James 3:2-10

2 For we all stumble in many things. **If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man**, able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Indeed, we put bits in **horses'** mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. 4 Look also at **ships**: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a **forest a little fire kindles!** 6 And **the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity**. The tongue is so set among our members that **it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell**. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 **But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison**. 9 **With it we bless our God and Father**, and **with it we curse men**, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 **Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so**.

Psalms 141:3

3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;
Keep watch over the door of my lips.

E. you yourselves know... as you know..

Vs. 9 **For you remember, brethren**, ..

Vs. 10 **You are witnesses**, ...

Vs. 11 **as you know..**

Many more times.

Understand how affected they were:

The Thessalonica church was affected by what people said, as much as any of us would be. So, Paul has to try to undo their words and influence. How does Paul do this, by simply saying “this is not true”, and then reminds them to reflect back on those 3 to 4 weeks and remember that none of those things were true, and they personally knew first-hand how things really were. Also, Paul’s character was not as they were saying, but it was an example of a genuine loving Christian.

2:3-5 1st we look at “The Message”**1 Thes 2:3-5**

3 For our exhortation did not come from **error (KJV – guile)** or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.

4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness--God is witness.

A. For our exhortation did not come from error (KJV – guile) or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit:

The purity of Paul’s message made it apparent that there was no:

- **Guile**,
- **Uncleanness**,

- or **Deceit** in his ministry.

Uncleanness:

Commentators divide as to if the **uncleanness** Paul defended himself against in vs. 3 was uncleanness of spirit or uncleanness of the flesh.

The context seems to suggest more of an uncleanness of motive or spirit, while the word itself more indicates moral and especially sexual uncleanness (it often appears in lists with the term *fornication*).

Note:

As it still is today, the first century world Paul lived in, had many competing religions, and many ministers of those religions were motivated by greed and gain.

So, to accuse Paul of that, would have been easily believed, and very damaging to his ministry, and against his character.

Paul had an uphill battle to fight to prove that he was not one of those type of charlatans.

Quote: (Guzik)

“The city of Thessalonica sat on the Egnatian Way, the famous highway that went east to west through Macedonia. Thessalonica was also an important port and a melting pot city with cultures from all over the world.

There were a staggering variety of religions and religious professionals in Thessalonica. In this city, you would find the worship of the gods of the Olympian pantheon, especially Apollo, Athena, and Hercules. There were the native Greek mystery religions, celebrating Dionysis and the sex and drinking cult. The Greek intellectual and philosophical traditions were also represented. There were shrines to many Egyptian gods: Isis, Sarapis, Anubis. Also present were the Roman State cults that deified the political heroes of Rome.

There were also the Jewish people and the God-fearing Gentiles.

Most of these religions were missionary minded and sought to spread their faith using itinerant evangelists and preachers. Most of these missionaries were opportunists, who took everything they could from their listeners, and then moved on to find someone else to support them.”

B. As we have been approved by God:

Approved:

Greek word (dokimazo) – To test, to prove, or to be approved, to allow

Paul used a word here that was associated with approving someone as being fit for public service. (Guzik)

Quote: (Hiebert)

“Just as Athenians were tested for **their fitness before they were allowed to assume public office**, so the missionaries were tested before they were commissioned as God’s messengers.”

C. Even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts:

Paul knew his Gospel wouldn’t always please men, but he knew that it was pleasing to God. (Guzik)

Gal 1:10

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? **Or do I seek to please men?** For **if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.**

Paul says of himself and those with him:

2 Cor 2:17

17 For **we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God;** **but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.**

D. For neither at any time did we use flattering words:

- But Paul did not use **flattering words**.

Note:

- Although Paul would have tried to appeal to man with the truth of the Gospel, and to persuade them to believe.
- Paul never would have lied to them to sell them, or compromise on any doctrine to be more appealing to his hearers.

Paul soon after this went to Corinth, and this is what he said to them:

1 Cor 2:1-5

1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, **did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.** 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 **And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom,** but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 **that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men** but in the power of God.

E. nor a cloak for covetousness:

- Paul understood that **covetousness** always has a **cloak**.
- It is always concealed by a noble sounding goal.

Peter warns on this very point:

1 Peter 5:2-4

2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, **not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;** 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 **and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.**

2:6-8 2nd we look at “The Motives”
1 Thes 2:6-8

6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

A. Nor did we seek glory from men:

When Paul ministered among the Thessalonians, he was unconcerned for his personal glory.

His satisfaction came from his relationship with Jesus, not from the praise of people.

- Paul didn't **seek glory from men** because his needs for security and acceptance were met primarily in Jesus.
- This meant that he didn't spend his life trying to seek and earn the acceptance of man.
- He ministered from an understanding of his identity in Jesus. (Guzik)

Paul says to the church of Corinth, ... "proving the **very opposite** of what they say **is true**"

1 Cor 4:9-14

9 For **I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.**
 10 **We are fools for Christ's sake**, but you are wise in Christ! **We are weak**, but you are strong! You are distinguished, **but we are dishonored!** 11 **To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.** 12 And **we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.**

14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.

B. When we might have made demands as apostles of Christ:

Paul was among the Thessalonians to *give* something to them, not to *take* something from them. He did not come making demands as an apostle.

Paul explains this in 2 Corinthians:

1 Cor 9:6-12

6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? **7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?**

8 Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about?

10 **Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.**

11 **If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?**

12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? **Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.**

Note:

Paul might have been in one location, for a week and another location of 6 months, and another location for 3 years, but he did not want it to be thought or said, that Paul left quickly or stayed longer because of the amount of money he was getting.

So Paul purposely made tents and never received money from the church he was ministered to at the time. Although scripturally it would have been perfectly in God's plan and will for him to do. But for Paul, he did not want anyone to be able to slur his name or motives about money.

1 Cor 9:13-18

13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

14 **Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.**

15 **But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.**

16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. 18 **What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge,** that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

1 Tim 5:17-18

17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 **For the Scripture says,** "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

Note:

It appears that Timothy who was now pastoring the church of Ephesus wanted to follow Paul's example of receiving no finances from the church he was at. But, Paul says, as a Pastor for a long time at the church, who needs to?

C. But we were gentle among you...like a nursing mother:

- Paul was like a **nursing mother**, who only looks to *give* to her child.
- Though some among the Thessalonians had accused Paul of ministering out of self-interest. (Guzik)

Paul says, "Remember church how it actually was when I was with you?"

- But Paul simply asks the Christians in Thessalonica to remember the **gentle** character of his ministry **among** them.
- It was a pure and beautiful time that we had, and there is absolutely no truth in what they are saying. So, don't let these smears and lies affect you.

Jesus explained this in advance, that men will speak lies and evil about you who minister:

Matt 5:10-11

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

John 15:18-20a

18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, **the world would love its own**. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20a "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' **If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you**.

Note: (What did they say about Jesus?)

- Glutton
- Drunkard
- And was demon possessed

John 16:1-2

1 "**These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble**.
2 "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

D. We were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives:

Lives

The Greek word (psyche) – soul, life, heart, the very breath of life

It cannot be explained in words deep enough, that Paul gave his entirety to those who would believe. He sacrificed his health, time, finances, etc., holding nothing back.

Much like parents for their kids.

- Paul's preaching was effective because he gave not only the Gospel, **but himself as well**
- and **he gave because of love** (you had become dear to us).

Phil 2:17-18

17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering **on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all**. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

What sacrifices Paul endured for the sake of ministry, but all with Joy!

E. Affectionately longing for you:

Affectionately

The Greek word (homeiromai) – to desire, long for, **especially in longing for a love**

- It is from an **extremely rare verb** of obscure origin.
- Wohlenberg conjectured, **that it was 'a term of endearment derived from the language of the nursery.'** (Guzik)

Quote: (Hiebert)

Whatever its origin, it denotes the warm affection and tender yearning that the missionaries felt for their spiritual babes at Thessalonica.”

Paul says it this way in 2 Corinthians:

2 Cor 3:2 You are our epistle **written in our hearts**, known and read by all men;

- It has been said that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- Paul gave both **his care**; **his knowledge** and yes, his very life to the Thessalonians. (Guzik)

2:9-12 3rd we look at “The Methods”

1 Thes 2:9-12

9 **For you remember, brethren**, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

10 **You are witnesses**, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;

11 **as you know** how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,

12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

A. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil:

Paul recognized his right to be supported by those he ministered:

1 Cor 9:14

14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

- But he voluntarily gave up that right to set himself apart, stating that he was not in it for the money.
- Paul denied his rights and took a higher standard upon himself.

Note:

Later, people saw Paul in a lesser degree, because his ministry was free to them. The Church in Corinth devalued Paul for this very reason, and disrespected him.

2 Cor 11:7-9

7 Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, **because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge**? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. 9 And **when I was present with you**, and in need, **I was a burden to no one**, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. **And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.**

2 Cor 12:15

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

Our human nature is often twisted and weird.

B. You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe:

- It is impressive that Paul could freely appeal to his own life as an example.
- Paul didn't have to say, "Please don't look at my life. Look to Jesus."
- Paul wanted people to look to Jesus, but he could also tell them to look at *his* life, because the power of Jesus was real in his life. (Guzik)

Paul was comfortable in the idea of other Christians following his example.

Remember:

1 Thes 1:5c ...as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

Paul repeated the same idea in other passages like this:

1 Cor 11:1 **Imitate me**, just as I also imitate Christ.

Phil 3:17

17 Brethren, **join in following my example**, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

Phil 4:9

9 The things which you **learned** and **received** and **heard** and **saw in me, these do**, and **the God of peace will be with you.**

Gal 6:16a And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them,

Quote: (Guzik)

This is a worthy goal for any Christian today; to live a life that declares **how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among** others. This is the kind of life that draws others to follow Jesus for themselves.

C. How we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you... that you would walk worthy of God:

- Paul himself lived justly and blamelessly, but he also told the Thessalonians they should live the same way.
- He could tell them that they should walk worthy of God because his life and message were consistent. (Guzik)

Conclusion

What we learned today:

1. We need to be bold in our ministry, even if battered, bruised, and attacked because of it.
2. Not to forget, that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.
3. Our motive to service must be to please God and not men.

4. We need to live godly lives; to be examples for others. "To walk worthy of God".
5. We need to give our "lives" to each other in our ministry.