

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 23RD - 24TH, 2021 // BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS

EXAMPLE (1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-6)

THE TRUE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Paul's first trip to Thessalonica was met with hostility and being run out of town. He makes it clear that though it involved suffering, it was a success because the gospel took root (Acts).

- Christians need to live by **the biblical definition of success: living a life that honors God by obeying His commands. This produces lasting fruit.**

A DELICATE BALANCE

Paul was beaten and imprisoned all around Greece and Asia Minor (Turkey), and in several occasions Paul used his Roman citizenship as a means to hold this injustice into account.

- **It is a delicate balance to exercise our freedoms but also knowing we will sacrifice those at times for the sake of advancing the gospel.**

"IN SPITE OF GREAT OPPOSITION"

Though Paul and company faced beatings, mockery, and imprisonment, they did not relent on sharing the gospel. **We're called to follow the law but to also have wisdom to know when God's laws usurp it (the Bible).**

- **We must also beware to not give in to social pressure to teach a culturally acceptable "gospel."**

"NOT TO PLEASE PEOPLE, BUT RATHER GOD"

The message Paul delivered "didn't come from error" (people) but from God. Not only did the Word come from God, it is God (Jn. 1). So, to **warp the Bible to please man is to be so arrogant as to try and change God.**

- **Though we're to live well amongst all people, we cannot compromise our faith because ultimately we answer to Him.**

THE WORD MUST BE DELIVERED CORRECTLY

Communicating the Word is commanded and we're held accountable for how it is presented.

Approved in V4 comes from the Greek *dokimazo*, meaning *to purify or test like in a fire*.

- We're saved, changed, and tested in order to be able to present God to others. God "examines our hearts" to make sure our motives are correct.

NOT FOR US, BUT FOR GOD'S GLORY (V5-6)

Paul didn't use flattery or manipulation for personal gain when doing ministry.

- **We must be diligent to model the teachings of the Word while checking our motives on a regular basis. We must also pray that our selfishness and insecurities be kept in check as we live for God, not ourselves.**

WALKING TOGETHER (1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-12)

GENTLE AND NURTURING LIKE A MOTHER

Paul says that they "could have been a burden," they were instead "gentle...as a nurse nurtures her own children."

- **Christians are called to gently love and nurture people into a relationship with Jesus. This means we must feed and be patient and kind with people as they mature in their faith.**

TO EVEN "SHARE OUR LIVES"

Not only did Paul tell the Thessalonians the truth, he offered his time and personal life. This is **true discipleship: teaching truth via the Word and living out life with others.**

- **The gospel is manifested in teaching and modeling but also in serving, helping, counseling, accountability, and loving friendships.**

MODELS OF GOOD CONDUCT

To be a Christian is to follow Christ's example in word and deed. Paul said they acted "devoutly, righteously, and blamelessly" in their conduct around the Thessalonians.

- **How we act matters.** We're not going to be perfect, but **if we will walk in humility not only will God give us grace, others will as well.**

FIRM AND ENCOURAGING LIKE A FATHER

We are to balance our gentle and nurturing approach (a good mom) to making disciples with the firm and encouraging approach (a good dad).

- **Sometimes love has to be firm and challenging in order for us to not only walk in obedience, but to live in excellence.**

RECEPTION (1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-20)

THANKS FOR NOT GOING TO HELL!

Paul says he constantly thanks God because the Thessalonians "received the Word...as it truly is" and that it "works effectively" in their lives.

- **Our biggest hope and joy should be the salvation of others.** The proof of salvation is evident in the application of the Word in that it produces change and "effectiveness" in people's lives.

YOU SUFFERED FOR YOUR FAITH

Paul honored the Thessalonians because they suffered for their faith. **In suffering for our faith, we connect on a deeper level with Jesus because He suffered for us.**

- This makes little sense to a world that is obsessed with comfort, ease, and the pursuit of happiness. But, the Christian should know that **suffering for our Savior is an honor.**

"FILLING UP THEIR SINS TO THE LIMIT"

As people defy the teachings of God and oppress or mislead others from pursuing God they set themselves up for God's wrath to eventually overtake them.

- **God will forgive and show mercy to anyone who asks, but unrepentant and oppressive people will face the full measure of God's judgement.**

WANTING TO SEE HIS CHURCH FAMILY AGAIN

Paul loved people and longed to be with the Christian communities all over the Mediterranean. He even concludes this chapter by calling them his "glory and joy."

- Do we feel comradery and love for other believers from other church bodies? Or, have we become territorial and siloed from other Christians?

WAIT, SATAN STOPPED THEM?

Paul alludes to the idea that anything that stops the spread of the gospel is spiritual warfare. We must be balanced in this.

- We can become **too mechanical** and not rely on the leading of the Spirit, or we can **hyper-spiritualize** things that are just normal hurdles of life. **We must pray for discernment and seek balance from the Word.**

SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

Paul understood this life in relation to our eternity to come. God is interested in us and wants to be with us forever, and Paul adopted this love for others and desire to help them reach an eternity with Jesus.

- We end again with another reminder that **our lives affect our eternities**, but this time it's one of joy and excitement, not wrath.

WHO AND WHAT ARE WE LIVING FOR?

- **How do we gauge success in our lives?** Is it a biblical success?
- Though we should have a good reputation amongst all people, have we become too concerned with impressing others? **Do we realize we ultimately answer to God?**
- We will be blessed if we live a life dedicated to God's glory over ours.

WALKING TOGETHER

- Are we walking out our faith with others?
- Though we will not be perfect, how is our conduct (attitude, words, actions) around others?
- When it comes to our relationships, are we nurturing and gentle while also being firm, challenging, and encouraging?
- **Is our greatest joy the salvation of others?**

HAVE WE COMPLETELY RECEIVED JESUS?

- **Honestly, what is the state of our relationship with Jesus?**
- Would we suffer for His name's sake? Do we understand this would be an honor?
- Do we know that if we follow Christ He will give us what we need when we need it? **Do we trust that He truly knows our needs?** What if it doesn't make sense to us?

HAVE WE COMPLETELY RECEIVED JESUS?

- Do we meditate on God?
- Do we follow His commands because we not only love Him, but we understand that they will lead to a better existence here and eventually eternal life?
- **Have we found rest, peace, and joy in God?** If not, are we willing to dig in and find it? He loves us, and we're His joy.