

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 17TH, 2021 // BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS

PURE MOTIVES (1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-6) FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

Paul defends his character and his ministry to the Thessalonians because there were people who tried to ruin his reputation after his departure (Acts 17:5-6; 17:13).

- Defending the Gospel message was more important than the defense of himself, because he did not want to be a distraction to the Gospel message.

Paul calls the church to look at the results of his labor in Thessalonica to testify that his motives and methods of proclaiming the Gospel were pure.

- He wants them to see that he had no selfish gain from proclaiming the Gospel, but that he endured persecution so that they could benefit.

INSPIRATION

Paul reminds them about his treatment in Philippi, but the Gospel was still received there and now brought to the Thessalonians despite severe persecution.

- Paul and Silas were illegally beaten and thrown into jail (Acts 16:16-34), however this allowed the jailer to be saved and the Gospel to be brought to Thessalonica.

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL AT ALL TIMES

Paul says they were "emboldened by our God to speak the Gospel of God to you in spite of great opposition."

- This means that despite what Paul's accusers were saying, he spoke the Gospel when it was not easy, convenient, or popular. **Can the same be said for us?**

COMPETING THOUGHTS

In Thessalonica there were many competing religions in which ministers of those religions, who were motivated by selfish greed and gain, were introduced.

- Paul ensures them that their exhortation (encouragement, comfort) was not in error or a way to deceive them, but of pure intentions.

AIM TO PLEASE GOD, NOT MEN!

Paul knew that the Gospel would not always be pleasing to men, but that it was pleasing to God.

- We too should strive to please God and not men. Just like Paul, we must present the Gospel in a way that is "worthy of God" without compromising Biblical integrity for the sake of pleasing men.

SECURE IN CHRIST

Paul did not seek the praise of men nor was he looking for security and acceptance from men. He knew that only the praise and acceptance of God mattered, and he was secure in his identity in Jesus.

- A true understanding of who we are in Christ will free us from the pursuit of being accepted and praised by men.

NOT BURDENING (1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-12)

NOT HARMING THE BODY

Paul shows that he was not in Thessalonica to make requests and take from them but was there to give something to them.

- He uses the example of a nursing mother to show they were there to nurture and give to this young group of believers. What does a dependent infant have to offer that it could be taken advantage of?

Paul was not willing that the neither the church nor the Gospel should suffer for his own gain. He reminds them that he labored and endured hardships while there, so as not to burden them.

- He was not trying to guilt them but shared that they were willing to sacrifice because the Thessalonians were "dear to them."

"REMEMBER OUR LABOR AND HARDSHIP"

Paul recognized his right to be supported by those he ministered to (1Cor:9:14), but he willingly gave up that right to not burden the church and hinder the Gospel message.

- Paul denied his rights and took a higher standard upon himself, and voluntarily **set aside his Christian liberties for the advancement of the Gospel.**

WALK IN A WORTHY MANNER

Paul tells them, "like a father with his own children," he has instructed them on how to "walk worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."

- We should live a life that is worthy of the price that it was bought with. The cross was a costly exchange that should cause us to walk in a worthy manner.

IMITATORS (1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-16)

RECEIVING THE WORD

Paul is thankful that the people in Thessalonica received the Gospel as God's word and not the word of man.

- The reception of the Gospel being the Word of God meant that it was authoritative in the lives of the hearer. Simply put, God spoke, and the people obeyed.

OPPOSITION TO THE WORD

"That you have not perceived spiritual things is true; but it is no proof that there are none to perceive. The whole case is like that of the Irishman who tried to upset evidence by non-evidence. Four witnesses saw him commit a murder. He pleaded that he was not guilty, and wished to establish his innocence by producing forty persons who did not see him do it of what use would that have been? So, if forty people declare that there is no power of the Holy Ghost going with the word, this only proves that the forty people do not know what others do know." (Spurgeon)

THE EFFECTS ARE EVIDENT

Receiving the Gospel as the Word of God was evident in the lives of those who accepted it.

- They were distinguished from the unbelievers around them because they were bearing fruit that they had been gifted with the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

IMITATORS OF CHRIST

When the Thessalonian church responded to the Gospel, they became targets of persecution.

- They were not alone in their suffering but were united with all of those that previously suffered for the sake of the Gospel. We all are united in "sharing in the suffering of Christ."

"Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you. Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed." (1 Peter 4:12-13).

"WRATH HAS OVERTAKEN THEM"

There were Jews who were hostile to the idea of Gentiles being saved without first becoming Jews and their exclusivity was filling up the measure of their sins.

- Paul comforts the Thessalonians (and us) by assuring the Church that God is just and will deal with sin.

GLORY AND JOY (1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-20)

AN EXPLANATION

Paul explains the reason for his absence from the church and his strong desire to see them again.

- He assured the church in Thessalonica that the reason he was not there in person was not because of a lack of love or desire on his part.

Paul mentions that Satan had hindered his return to Thessalonica, showing that he taught the Thessalonians much about Satan and spiritual warfare in the short time he was with them.

- We cannot ignore the reality of spiritual warfare, but we must be wise and not give the enemy undue worship.

Paul ends his explanation by sharing his love for the Thessalonians by claiming that he has not forgotten them because they are his glory and joy.

- We get to experience this type of glory and joy as believers every time we bring someone to Christ and disciple them.

INVENTORY

- **Do we speak the Gospel only when it's easy, convenient, or popular?**
- **Do we seek to please men or God?**
- **If we seek to please God, are our motives pure?**
- **Whose glory are we seeking?**
- **Are we a burden or a blessing to the body?**