

1 Thessalonians 2:1-3 Paul's Faithful Ministry - 1

1

Introduction

The church at Thessalonica was under heavy persecution. The nonbelieving Jews wanted to destroy Paul and the church. The persecution became so violent that Paul was forced to flee for his life. However, his absence did not stop the persecution. The attacks against the church and its believers continued. One form which the persecution took was **to destroy the reputation of Paul**. Paul's purpose in writing this passage was to strengthen and build up the believers in Christ. To do so he had to answer and correct the charges against him. This passage gives us the picture of a strong minister—the kind of minister and servant of Christ that every believer should be.

2

1 Thessalonians 2:1-3

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.

3

He has a Full and Fruitful Ministry

1 Thessalonians 2.1

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

Paul was a strong and true minister with a full and fruitful ministry. It was not a vain ministry. The word “**vain**” means empty, ineffective, and fruitless. Paul reminds the believers that his ministry among them was not an empty and fruitless ministry. People had been ministered to and some had even accepted Christ and experienced a genuine conversion. They were now living for Christ and living for Him through the difficult of times of persecution. Therefore, the charge that his ministry was empty and fruitless was false. **God had His hand upon him, and God was blessing his ministry.**

4

He Preaches the Gospel Boldly

1 Thessalonians 2.2

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.

Paul and his team **preached boldly even when there is opposition.** Right before Paul had come to Thessalonica, he had been **imprisoned and beaten in Philippi.** Paul did not give up the ministry because he had been persecuted. He moved on to another city, Thessalonica. But note what he faced in Thessalonica. He again faced persecution – the same mistreatment and attacks. **Did this discourage and cause him to give up the ministry? No!** He continued to boldly preach the gospel despite the opposition and conflict.

5

He Preaches a Pure Gospel

1 Thessalonians 2.3

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

The strong and true minister preaches a pure gospel, lives a clean life, and does not deceive people. Three things are said here.

1. **The strong minister preaches a pure gospel.** Paul did not preach the gospel in error or deceit. **Paul did not add to nor take away from the Word of God.**
 - ⇒ He did not **tip-toe** around or bypass controversial subjects because of opposition.
 - ⇒ He did not **attempt to tickle the ears of people** by preaching only the subjects that they liked; he did not neglect the whole counsel of God's Word.
 - ⇒ He did not concentrate on pleasing subjects in order to win the **approval of people**; he did not neglect the subjects of sin and judgment.

6

He Preaches a Pure Gospel

1 Thessalonians 2.3

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

⇒ He did not preach in order to secure personal acceptance and support nor to **gain a personal following**.

⇒ He did not **preach for money**, nor to strengthen his position as pastor.

⇒ He did not preach his **own ideas** nor the novel ideas of others. He did not follow the latest theological fashion in order to appear up-to-date and well-read.

7

He Preaches a Pure Gospel

1 Thessalonians 2.3

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

Paul preached the pure gospel, the pure Word of God. **The message of Jesus Christ was not his creation**, it was the act of God. It is God's message which God had sent to men through His Son. Paul was not the creator of the message – God was.

⇒ Paul was only **the messenger of God** – a mere man whom God had employed to proclaim His message.

⇒ Paul was only **the ambassador of God** – a mere servant chosen to deliver the King's message to the world of men.

8

He Preaches a Pure Gospel

1 Thessalonians 2.3

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

2. **The strong minister lives a pure and clean life.** The Greek word “**uncleanness**” has to do with moral uncleanness and impurity. It appears that Paul was being charged with immorality by his adversaries. The society that Paul was ministering to was immoral society so it is not a surprise that immoral people would accuse Paul of immorality. Paul clearly says that he was not guilty. He had not used the ministry nor his position in the ministry to attract women. He had not lived in uncleanness.

9

He Preaches a Pure Gospel

1 Thessalonians 2.3

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

3. **The strong minister does not deceive people.**

Paul did not deceive people by preaching a false gospel. He was not out ...

- to secure a personal following
 - to earn a living
- to serve in a respectable profession
 - to live a comfortable life

Paul was sincere and genuine, and he preached a true gospel. He was out only to share that gospel so that men might come to know the only living and true God.

10

So What ...

All believers have been given Spiritual Gifts and therefore **have a ministry**. If one has a ministry, they are **ministers**. That does not mean that everyone is called to preach or teach, but we are all called to share the gospel.

We each have a part to play. It is important that you discover your Spiritual Gift. Look for a place to use your gifts and talents.

We will each stand before God one day in the future and give account of how we used what He entrusted to us. Let us each live as if we are going to see Him today.