

1 Thessalonians 2:4-12 Paul's Faithful Ministry - 2

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

Review

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.*

Last week we saw that:

Paul had a Full and Fruitful Ministry (vs. 1)

He preached the Gospel Boldly (vs. 2)

That He Preached the Pure Gospel (vs. 3)

3

1 Thessalonians 2:4-12

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.

4

He Pleases God, not Men

1 Thessalonians 2:4

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.

The true minister preaches and ministers to please God, not men. Most men do not want to hear ...

- about sin and judgment.
- man's inability to save himself and the necessity to depend upon the death of Christ in order to be saved.
- about the demand that a person commit all he is and has to Christ in order to meet the needs of a desperate world.

5

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The preaching of the truth is not popular with a carnal and unbelieving people. When a person is in the midst of a people who are worldly, he can be tempted to tone down his message to please the people. The temptation can be especially strong if his livelihood is at risk.

However, note what Paul says: **he sought only to please God, not men.** There were two strong reasons why.

6

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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.

1. First, God was the Person who had trusted him with the gospel, not men. God called Paul to proclaim the gospel. God was the one who chose Paul and called him to preach. Therefore, Paul was able to trust God to watch over him as he faithfully served.

2. Second, God alone would try his heart and judge him. He was to stand and give an account for his ministry some day, and he was to stand before God, not before men.

7

He Does Not Seek His Own

1 Thessalonians 2:5

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

A true minister does not preach and minister for what he can get out of it. The word “flattery” always implies the kind of compliments that are given in order to get something out of people. Paul did not flatter people in order to secure their friendship, following, or support. When Paul commended people he did it truthfully, always covering the weak areas that people needed to strengthen as well as their strong and commendable areas.

8

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The word “covetousness” shows that Paul was accused of being in the ministry out of greed. Some were saying that Paul used the Gospel for his own personal gain. Paul emphatically denies this and says that his lifestyle proves it. He declares that the church knows this fact and that God is witness to the truth.

9

He Does Not Seek His Own

1 Thessalonians 2:6

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

A true minister does not preach or minister for glory nor for the prestige and authority of a position. Note two things.

1. Paul says that he did not seek the glory, prestige, honor, or recognition of people. He was not out to be recognized as a great preacher or good minister. He was not seeking to be recognized as a leader or as a man of position and authority.

10

He Does Not Seek His Own

1 Thessalonians 2:6

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

2. Paul says that he had the right to assert his authority as an apostle of Christ. Being a minister of God is a great honor, and men should respect and appreciate the call. But the minister of God must not exalt his authority, for he has been called by God Himself, called to serve the Creator of the universe. He must not be demanding and ordering people around. God has not called the minister to hold a position of honor and authority, but to minister to others and preach the gospel.

11

He Ministers Gently and Lovingly

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

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 true minister preaches and ministers gently and lovingly. What Paul says is descriptive and it shows the deep love he held for the church and its believers at Thessalonica.

1. Paul was as gentle toward them as a mother who nurses her children. The idea is that the minister must minister to his people with tenderness, warmth, affection, care, and love.

He must treat them as precious, as his most beloved people, holding them ever so closely to his heart.

12

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2. Paul's affection for his people was so strong that he preached the gospel to them in the midst of adversity and opposition. **He was willing to pour out his soul for them**; to sacrifice his very life to make sure that they came to know Christ and the eternal salvation that was in Jesus. Note that Paul says he was willing to sacrifice his life for one simple reason: they were dear to him. The word dear means beloved. They were his beloved people.

13

He Ministers Night and Day

1 Thessalonians 2:9

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.

A true minister preaches and ministers, laboring night and day. Paul did not have a five day nor a forty-hour week. He did not work until four or five o'clock nor until dark and then have the rest of the day for himself.

Paul not only labored in spreading the Gospel to everyone he could, but he also **worked to provide for his own needs**. For those who were accusing Paul of using the ministry for greed, he reminded them that he worked (making tents) so he would not be a burden to church.

14

He Ministers with a Clean Life

1 Thessalonians 2:10

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

A true minister preaches and ministers with a clean life.

Paul says ...

- that he lived a **devout life before God**. He live a life separated from the world and set apart totally to God.
- that he **lived a just and righteous life before men**. Paul loved and treated men just as God said and just as he wanted them to treat him.

15

He Ministers as a Father

1 Thessalonians 2:11

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

A true minister preaches as a father, tenderly giving direction. The minister is not only like a mother (1 Th. 2:7–8), but he is also like a father. Three fatherly functions are listed.

- ⇒ The minister **exhorts** just like a father – directs, guides, and teaches.
- ⇒ The minister **comforts** just like a father – encourages, consoles, supports, sustains, holds up, lifts up, relieves and eases pain.
- ⇒ The minister **charges** just like a father – testifies, witnesses, protects, and warns.

16

He Ministers with One Objective

1 Thessalonians 2:12

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

A true minister preaches and ministers with one objective

– to lead his people to walk worthy of the Lord. God has

given us the most glorious promise imaginable: the wonderful privilege of **living forever in His kingdom and glory.** Therefore, we must walk worthy of that promise. We must live excellent lives—walk day by day just as we should walk—honoring and building up the name of God.

17

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 serve and 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 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.

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