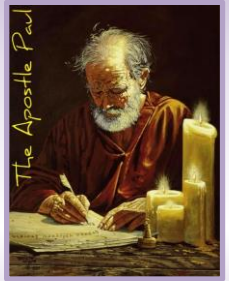


THESSALONIANS

There Is Hope!



Lesson 03: Working Hope: Part I ... [1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12]

PREVIEW

Paul reminds the Thessalonian believers that when he first arrived in their city after being maliciously treated at Philippi, he had preached the gospel of God with boldness under great persecution, with pure intentions, with the gentleness of a nursing mother, and with hard labor and toil.

BOLDNESS IN SUFFERING: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-2

Paul addresses the Thessalonian believers as “brethren”, brothers and sisters in the LORD. He initiates his discourse with something the Thessalonians were well aware of, namely that the coming of his missionary team (Paul, Silas and Timothy) to their city was not in vain. His rationale for this conclusion is their true conversion that was reported throughout the region (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).

INCIDENT AT PHILIPPI: ACTS 16:11-40

Before arriving at Thessalonica, Paul and Silas were in the city of Philippi (Acts 16) where Paul cast out a spirit that possessed a certain slave girl whose masters were making much profit by her fortune-telling. Paul and Silas were brought before the magistrates and accused of making trouble and teaching unlawful customs (serving a king other than the emperor). Based on these charges, the magistrates ordered Paul and Silas to be stripped naked, beaten with rods and thrown into prison. Paul and Silas’ response while in prison was to pray and sing hymns to God, as a witness to the other prisoners.

While in prison there was a great earthquake that shook the foundations of the prison causing all the prison doors and prisoner chains to open. The jailer was about to kill himself before Paul cries out and instructs him to “not harm himself - no one has escaped”. As a result of the miraculous intervention of God, the jailer receives Christ and his whole family is saved.

The next day the magistrates realize their mistake - *the beating of Roman citizens* - and pleaded with Paul and Silas to secretly leave their city. They feared the loss of their “free-city” status if Rome were ever to get wind of the beating of a Roman citizen in their city.

Paul and Silas then meet with Lydia and the brethren to encourage them and agree to depart Philippi.

So Paul and Silas leave Philippi and enter Thessalonica, the beatings still fresh. Paul, in verse 2, reminds the Thessalonians that although they had suffered at Philippi, they still “*were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict*”. Paul is emphasizing that even after their assault in Philippi, they did not back down or “water-down” the gospel of God, even when encountering opposition again in Thessalonica and subsequently in Berea (Acts 17).

PAUL IS WRITING THIS JUST A SHORT TIME AFTER THE EVENTS HAD TRANSPIRED — FROM THE CITY OF CORINTH.

We need the **boldness** of the **Holy Spirit** to **proclaim** the **gospel** of **God** even in great **conflict**!
--Prayer for Boldness ... Acts 4:23-31.

PREACHING THE PURE WORD: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:3-6

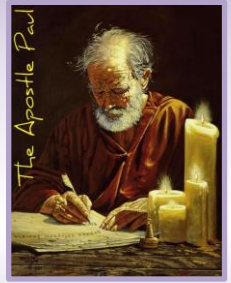
In verses 3 to 6, Paul makes his case that, with God as his witness, his missionary team ministered to the cherished Thessalonian brethren with sincerity and only the purest of motives.

In verse 3 Paul emphatically denies that his missionary team (Paul, Silas and Timothy) had participated in any preaching practices based on error (false opinion), uncleanness (impurity), or deceit (fraud).

Why would Paul feel the need to distance his team from the atrocious preaching practices outlined in this verse? Scholar F.F. Bruce provides some insight.

THESSALONIANS

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Lesson 03: Working Hope: Part I ... [1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12]

"So many wandering charlatans ... made their way about the Greek world, peddling their religious or philosophical nostrums, and living at the expense of their devotees ... that it was necessary for Paul and his friends to emphasize the purity of their motives and actions by contrast with these." ... F. F. Bruce

In verse 4, Paul states the real basis for his team's ministry by emphasizing two main points. The first is the **stewardship** of the gospel of God, namely that his team was entrusted with the gospel of God, by God Himself. The second point is the **motivation** for their ministry which was rooted in the desire to please God and not man.

In verses 5 and 6, Paul stresses the actions and motives his team were never guilty of; (1) never used flattering words, (2) never used a cloak for covetousness (greed), (3) never sought the glory from men (recognition), and finally (4) never did they make demands as apostles of Christ (assert their authority over the believers). Sadly, much of the apostate church today harbor pastors and leaders whose actions and motives align with Paul's list.

LOVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-12

Verses 7-12 gives a profile of leadership, a description of the actions and motives of a righteous spiritual leader. God expects our spiritual leaders to be role models of righteousness, and so should we. When we select our spiritual leaders we are to examine the qualities that exhibit Christ-like behavior.

For example, the qualifications for elders are outlined in scripture (1 Timothy 3) and are a refinement of the fruit of the Holy Spirit identified in Galatians 5:22-26.

DO YOUR SPIRITUAL LEADERS EXHIBIT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?



**Servant
Leaders**

In verses 7-12, Paul describes three role-models for a spiritual leader to patiently pursue; (1) a **mother** role-model (verses 7-8), (2) a **worker** role-model (verse 9) and (3) a **father** role-model (verses 10-12).

In verse 7 Paul presents the **mother** role-model. He emphasizes a mother's (1) gentle demeanor, (2) godly nurturing, (3) genuine affection and (4) unconditional giving - *committed love*.

In verse 8 Paul states that his team is **committed** (*imparted their own lives*) and not just **involved** (*imparted the gospel of God*) with the Thessalonians.

ARE YOU COMMITTED TO GOD'S WORK OR JUST INVOLVED?

(JOHN 15:12-14; 1 JOHN 3:16)

Paul always supported himself financially, and verse 9 he reminds the Thessalonians that he labored night and day so that he would not be a burden to them. Paul is demonstrating the **worker** role-model in this verse.

In verse 10 Paul expresses how his team conducted themselves while among the Thessalonian believers. He highlights three positive behavioral qualities, (1) they behaved **devoutly**, (2) they behaved **justly** and (3) they behaved **blamelessly**. Can you claim the same?

In verses 11 and 12 Paul displays the **father** role-model by underscoring his team's fatherly relationship; how they (1) **exhorted**, (2) **comforted**, and (3) **charged** the Thessalonian believers, as a caring father would lovingly comfort and correct his own child.

Paul concludes verse 12 with his goal for the Thessalonian believers, namely, to "*walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory*".

IT IS GOD'S KINGDOM; WE GET TO LIVE IN IT!

³³ But **seek first** the **kingdom** of **God** and **His righteousness**, and all these things shall be added to **you**. --- Matthew 6:33 ... NKJV