

1 Thessalonians (ch 2)

For the Sake of Others

In chapter 1

- The Thessalonian church was birthed under great opposition
- Paul was only there a short time -- a seemingly insufficient time to build stability --
- Yet, we find it was a vibrant and flourishing church.
- We looked at some of the things Paul did and some of the ways the Thessalonians responded that contributed to the development of deep roots ... [ala parable of the seed on rocky soil]

You know how we lived among you for your sake

*1Th 1:4-7 NIV For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, (5) because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. **You know how we lived among you for your sake.** (6) You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. (7) And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.*

- **You know how we lived among you for your sake** [benefit, advantage, good, well-being, welfare, interest, profit]

In Chapter 2

We get a glimpse into the heart of the apostle Paul. We begin to see “what made Paul tick”; his approach to ministry, his character, and his motivations.

- 13 times he uses the word **OUR**
- 23 times he uses the word **WE**

These are important, because **these are the things Paul contributed** to the establishment of this church... These same motivations are important for all of us -- for God desires that each of us be involved in serving the needs of others...

He Relied on the Help of God - for the sake of others

*1Th 2:1-2 NIV You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. 2 We **had previously suffered** and been **treated outrageously** in Philippi, as you know, **but with the help of our God we DARED to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition.***

- **The gospel to the Thessalonians would not have happened at all were it not for this**
- They **PREVIOUSLY suffered** - They had been treated outrageously
- But with **the HELP OF GOD** - Paul had boldness to share with them - even as the threat of further violence was over them [strong opposition]

Our past does not have to define our future -- Our future can be different with the **HELP OF GOD** -- With the help of God we can do **WHATEVER** it is he calls us to do...

Maybe Paul was familiar with Isa 41:10-14

Isa 41:10-13 NIV So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you **and help you**; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. 11 "All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. 12 Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. 13 For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, **Do not fear; I will help you.**

He Lived with a Sense of Stewardship

3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. 4 On the contrary, we speak as those **approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.**

- **Entrusted = Stewardship** - someone who acts on behalf of another [*Joseph was a steward in Potiphar's house*]

Stewardship moved him to HONOR TRUTH

- Not with **Error** - like an imposter to lead them astray

Stewardship moved him to HONOR INTEGRITY

- Not with **Impure Motives** (Not for fame, or fortune or anything else but their welfare)
- Not with **Tricks** - guile or deceitful language

Stewardship moves us to commitment

- 1Co 9:16 NIV For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since **I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!**
- 1Co 4:1-2 NIV This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. (2) **Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.**

Faithful Stewardship is for the glory and praise of God

- 1Pe 4:10-11 NIV **Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.** (11) If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

He Was Motivated by a Desire to Please God

4 (b) We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.

- Jesus said...Joh 8:29 (b) NIV "I always do what pleases him [my Father]."
- Gal 1:10 NIV Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

He Did not Seek Personal Gain - He did not do it for financial gain

5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness.

- 2Co 12:14-15 NIV Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. (15) **So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well.** If I love you more, will you love me less?

He Did Not Seek Praise of Men - He did not do it for personal glory

6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.

- unlike the Pharisees who sought this above all

These Three Things Motivated His Actions “For The Sake of Others”

- Seeking the Help of God
- Understanding He is a Steward of God
- Desire To Please God

Sacrificial Love - Like the Love of a Mother

- 7 Instead, we were like young children among you. **Just as a nursing mother cares for her children,** 8 so we cared for you. **Because we loved you so much,** we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God **but our lives as well.**

They worked so as not to be a burden to any

- 9 Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order **not to be a burden to anyone** while we preached the gospel of God to you.

They lived godly lives among them

- 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.

Leadership - Like a Father Gives His Children

- 11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

With All Our Personal Motivation - People Must still respond...

13 And we also thank God continually because, **when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.**

- They RECEIVED the word of God as it actually IS the word of God
- It became OPERATIVE in their lives
- They Became Imitators of God’s Churches in Judea - enduring suffering

14 **For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God’s churches** in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews 15 who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and

are hostile to everyone 16 in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

He did not forget these relationships - Satan will always look to block our way

17 But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. 18 For we wanted to come to you--certainly I, Paul, did, again and again--but Satan blocked our way.

Paul's Reward Was Souls In Heaven

19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? 20 Indeed, you are our glory and joy.