

1 Thessalonians 2 Heart Tests

In chapter 2 Paul recalls his ministry at Thessalonica. He had been treated badly at Philippi, but his suffering did not deter him from moving on to Thessalonica and declaring the gospel there.

His willingness to suffer in order to share the gospel showed he wasn't motivated by money or self-glory. God had entrusted him with the gospel, and he had been true to that trust.

His message was truly from God.

His motives for preaching the gospel were pure. And his ministry was genuine. He testifies that the Thessalonian Christians had become dear to him in V8.

SO... He thanks God for the Thessalonians because they had responded so well to the Word of God, and the Word had produced fruit in their lives.

They had become like the Judean believers by withstanding persecution.

Paul assures his readers that those who oppose the gospel are objects of God's wrath. He explains that he wanted to return to Thessalonica, but Satan hindered him from doing so. He calls the Christians at Thessalonica his glory and joy...
Listen...

1 Thessalonians 2:1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain.

- Paul admitted that ministering in their neck of the woods was a pain in the neck... NO DOUBT.
- But it was worth it because of their receiving the Gospel with joy!
- Some of you... some of us are working through some tough and discouraging circumstances and I encourage you to stick with it... Keep on praying and YES, keep on suffering... It WILL be worth it when that source of your worry gets saved!

2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, **(remember the Philippian Jailor?)** as you know, we were **bold in our God** to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

- Acts 16-18 tells the stories of Paul's harassment, arrest, torture and miraculous release in Philippi.
- How did Paul retaliate? By praying for and leading to Christ many of his captors and even torturers. BUT even still, he was accused of being in the ministry for the money... He continues...

PAUL: HERE'S HOW TO DO IT...

3 For our exhortation *did not come* from error or uncleanness, **(Immorality)** nor was *it* in deceit. **IE, we had no hidden agenda...**

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.**

- **NLT** - For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts.

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

- We didn't say things to get you to like and enrich us.
- When is the last time you heard of a slick TV preacher get in trouble for what he was preaching? Why do you suppose that is? Because they avoid the many verses about sin? That is impossible when you preach verse by verse! There are about 300 verses about sin... We'll get to one soon 😊

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

- IE, we asked for nothing from you, we just wanted to bless you

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.

- There are few illustrations of gentile affection as obvious as a mom's care for her baby.
- Do you remember how gently you held your newborn baby? **(Yes, you say... but that was before they learned how to sass!)**

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.

- Again, Paul uses a mothering term, "Labor" in describing his love for his church. Listen, sometimes the things you do for the Lord get hard...But, if you are doing it out of love, the labor pains will be worth it!
- Not a few of us have had to go home and put ice on ourselves after working for the Lord...
- "His yoke is easy... His burden is light..." Matthew 11:30. But ministering still hurts sometimes.
- **Paul had witnesses...**

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.

- When any person moves to a different country They are expected to live under THAT country's laws... IF they refuse, what happens?
- This world is not our home... "We're just a passin' through..."
- I NEED to walk worthy of my heavenly home...

EVERY PASTOR'S WISH

13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because

when you received the word of God which you heard from us, (**Acts 17**) you welcomed *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also **effectively** works in you who believe.

- Please read the first eight verses of Acts 17 to see the short history of Paul and Silas in Thessalonica. What name did he say that was SO offensive?
- It is sad that you and I can share about Jesus in prison... BUT... Not in school. (Except for at Christian Club!)
- Be "bold in our God... v2" and share with people that Jesus is real, loving, forgiving and present! IF you are willing God will open doors for you...

DON'T WASTE TIME ON GOD'S ENEMIES – HE HAS PLANS FOR THEM

14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea (**Israel**) in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, (**Believers**) 16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure* of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

- It is sad that this world has chosen to attack people who choose morality. We Fundamental bible believers are being lied about today- Just as in Paul's day – we are accused of being dangerous haters. We are neither!
- One of the current mantras among organizations attempting to convince our children to experiment with perversion is this: "Innocence is overrated."
- Well, let me say two things about that: #1 – Innocence is VERY UNDER-rated! Stay innocent young people – I have never heard of a Christian who was sorry that they stayed pure until they got married – NEVER!
 - #2 – God is preparing a hot place for people who teach kids to live unholy lives. Jesus said of those people, "It would have been better for them if they had never been born."
 - PLEASE remember this when you vote this November.

PAUL'S LONGING TO SEE THEM AGAIN

17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. 18 Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

- I get this... When I get asked, “How's the church going?” I say “It's going great... Our teachers are planning the next round of lessons... The Ladies are meeting to study and pray... We have new families in the church and some visitors checking us out... We are going through First Thessalonians again... The youth group is excited about Winter Camp... The men are looking forward to getting together soon... Our worship community is teaching us new songs all the time... They are even adding the young people into the band...
 - AND THEN I might give them a building report...
 - Why?

EVERY PASTOR'S BRAG...

20 For you are our glory and joy.