

**Lighthouse Bible Church**  
**March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2: 7 – 12**  
**‘A Loving Leader’**

**Stand – Read – Pray**

We looked last week at the beginning of Chapter 2 and we saw that Paul had to defend his ministry to the people in the church at Thessalonica. After Paul had left Thessalonica by night because of an angry mob stirred up against him, **savage wolves began to come in not sparing the flock** as he said in **Acts 20: 29** to the church at Ephesus.

These savage wolves, these false prophets and false teachers and spiritual leaders began to try to influence the Thessalonian believers against Paul by attacking his ministry and his character. They were claiming that Paul was teaching error and living in immorality and being deceitful in his ministry.

They were accused of being men pleasers and using flattering words to gain people for their exploitation. They were accused of using the ministry to cover up, like a cloak, their covetousness and greediness and trying to take advantage of people and accused of self-glorification and praise from men.

So Paul had to set the record straight, which he did quite well in verses 1 – 6, by telling the Thessalonian church the truth. He told them that they taught the truth and lived the truth and were motivated by the truth of God and His word. He told them that their ministry was approved, tested and found good, by God and that they shared the gospel with pure hearts.

Now, after defending his life and ministry, which the church obviously believed and affirmed, Paul wants to affirm his love to them and share with them how that love played out in his ministry to them. This is an incredible passage of Scripture showing the intimate love that Paul had for the believers at Thessalonica, so let's look at it starting in Verse 7.

**Verse 7: but we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children...**

We don't know how long Paul was with the people at the church of Thessalonica, but we do know that during that time he had with them, they developed a very strong, intimate relationship together. And I think that anything that Paul could give to that church above and beyond his teaching and preaching of doctrinal truth, would be to affirm to them his love for them. I think that is one of the greatest gifts a Pastor can give to his people and that they could give to him. And we see that in this church to whom Paul is writing.

Paul says **we were gentle among you** and then he gives them an example of this gentleness by saying **just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children**. He says we cared for you as a mother does for her infant child. There were several times when Paul used the analogy of himself as a parent to other believers.

In **Galatians 4: 19** he says **my little children for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you**. In **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4: 14** he calls them **my beloved children ... and father ...** and says **I have begotten you through the gospel**. Paul sees himself as the human instrument that God used to bring people to Christ. He led them and loved them like a mother and father do their children.

By the way, that word **gentle** means to be kind and is used only one other time and is used of what a spiritual leader is to be.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2: 23 a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be GENTLE to all...** Paul used one of the most tender, intimate, compassionate examples that he could to show his love for them. *You can compare a nursing mother's sacrifices.*

That is how he describes his ministry and it is quite a contrast from being called untruthful, immoral, deceitful, self-centered, man pleasing, flattering, covetous man. He loved the people of the church at Thessalonica as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. Paul adds to that in Verse 8.

**Verse 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.**

Affectionately longing is one word in the original language and it is a strong yearning for someone, like a mother has for her baby that only a mother can know and feel when that baby is born and she sees it for the first time.

Paul says 'we have that kind of affection for you', to the point that **we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives.**

Like a nursing mothers wants to give her child the best nutrition possible for the baby's growth, so does Paul want to give the best spiritual food possible, the **Gospel of God**. But not only that, he says **but also our own lives**. We wanted to give all of ourselves to you, everything that we have to minister to you and we were **well pleased** to do it.

Paul says it wasn't a burden, it wasn't an obligation we had, it was a joy, we were well pleased to sacrifice for you, to give all for you, unselfishly, just like a mother sets aside her own life for her infant child. Paul said in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12: 15 **I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls...**

Paul says 'the reason we are willing to give our own lives for you is **because you had become dear to us**'. That word **dear** is *agapatos* and means beloved. In Chapter 1 verse 4 the same word 'beloved' is used there of God's love for them. So Paul says 'because you are beloved by God, you are **beloved to us**'. Then Paul calls to their remembrance how they served them.

**Verse 9: For your 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.**

Paul says 'we **labored and toiled day and night that we may not be a burden to any of you**'. When Paul and the others came into a pagan city, they **preached the gospel** but they also worked to earn a living so that they would not be **a burden to anyone**.

Some false teachers would come in and make demands on those they were teaching by demanding money and food and housing that, many times, created a burden on the people. Paul says we labored and toiled so that we wouldn't be a burden to you. Look at 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3: 7 – 9 *Read*.

As a matter of fact, according to Philippians 4: 16 the church at Philippi sent financially to meet Paul's needs. That is really a principle we use today when it comes to missions; we send out missionaries and support them, until they're established, so that they are not a burden to those they are ministering to.

One other side note, Paul is advocating that all Pastors have second jobs and labor and toil at their jobs to earn a living. Because if you look at 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5: 17 – 18 it says **let the Elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says you shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain'. The laborer is worthy of his wages.** Paul says a similar thing in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9: 6 – 12. Paul says we are not going to be a burden to you.

Then Paul continues to appeal to them as witnesses of their lives while they were with them, but this time it is not as a nursing mother, it is as a father to his children, look at Verses 10 – 11

**Verses 10 – 11: you are witnesses and God also how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe, as you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children.**

Paul leaves his analogy of a mother caring for her small child, as his way of showing her cares for them, to the analogy of a father caring for his children as his way of showing his spiritual care over them as a spiritual father. A father leads by example and sets the standard of integrity for the family to follow. So Paul is about to show them the standard he and the others have set.

Paul, again appeals to them by saying **you are witnesses** and then he adds **and God also**. He is calling on them and God also to bear witness to how they lived and how they treated the believers at Thessalonica. He already said earlier in Verse 4 that they were approved by God and in Verse 5 'God is witness' and now again here he tells them God also is our witness.

He may have mentioned both them and God as witnesses because both the Old and New Testament state that in order to have a matter established it must be done by two or three witnesses as *Deuteronomy 17: 6, 19: 15 – 21, Matthew 18: 16, John 8: 17 – 18*. Paul says by your firsthand knowledge of our behavior and by God's knowing our hearts, you are witnesses of how we acted; and this is how we acted.

**How devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe.** Paul says 'as a father, we have set the example by the way we live for you to follow; you and God are our witnesses. He says first of all we **behaved ourselves**, inwardly before you and God, '**devoutly**' or with holiness, is what that word means. We lived before you and God in holiness.

He says, 'not only did we live inwardly in holiness but we lived outwardly, as you and God know, **justly**, or uprightly or righteously, according to God's standard. He moves from the inward holiness to the outward evidence of that in a righteous behavior. Paul says 'listen, God knows my heart of holiness and you have seen the fruit of that in my living uprightly.

Then Paul sums the two of those character qualities up by saying we have behaved ourselves **blamelessly**, which means there is no accusation or charge that can be legitimately brought against them. It doesn't mean they are sinless, it means they are above reproach and exemplary spiritual fathers to follow.

Notice first of all in Verse 10 that Paul reminds them that he **lived** the life of being their spiritual father and now in Verse 11 he is going to remind them that he also **instructed** them as their spiritual father. It is the same for any father, it is never enough to live and not instruct and it is never enough to instruct and not live what you say. They are both important, and that is what Paul says to them in Verse 11.

**Verse 11: as you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children.**

Again, Paul says **as you know** because they did know that he was like a loving mother and spiritual father to them. Notice that no one was left out of the exhorting, comforting and charging, much like a father and mother have no favorites but ministers to all their children equally. So too, Paul said that the entire church benefited from their ministering to them through exhortation, comforting and charging.

Paul says we **exhorted** you, *parakaleo* which means to come along side you. Paul say we came along side you to instruct you and help you and lead you as a father does his child. He says we **comforted** you, it is a word that means to console or to admonish positively or to encourage. It was used in **John 11: 19, 31** of the people comforting Martha and Mary at the loss of their brother Lazarus. It is the tender, compassionate consoling of a heartbroken child by his father, much like Paul did with the Thessalonians.

He also said that we **charged** you, *martureo* or implored you or testified to you, or urged you, depending on your version, which means to testify or urge them to do something. What was that something they were charged or urged to do that a father should do for his children? Look at Verse 12.

**Verse 12: that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.**

Paul says I want our spiritual children, the church at Thessalonica, as their spiritual mother and father, to walk in a manner worthy of God.

That is the desire of any spiritual leader and that is how Paul viewed his ministry; on one hand as a caring, loving mother and on the other as the spiritual leader and teacher to them, just like parents should be to their own children. And within that, you have the needed discipline from time to time that shows you love them and know that it will help to grow them and mature them.

Unfortunately, in our society today you have the erosion of the two parent, mother and father, family and lack of discipline within the family unit. Paul loved his spiritual children

Paul's desire was for them to **walk worthy of God**. What is that manner we are to walk worthy of? Well, that word 'walk' means how you conduct yourself, how you live your life in a way that is worthy of God.

In **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4: 1** we are to walk to please God

In **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4: 12** we are to walk properly or decently or honestly

In **Galatians 5: 16** we are to walk in the Spirit

In **Ephesians 4: 1** walk worthy of the calling with which you were called

In **Ephesians 5: 2** you are to walk in love

In **Ephesians 5: 8** we are to walk as children of light

In **Philippians 1: 27** let your conduct be worthy of the gospel

In **Colossians 1: 10** it says **walk worthy of the Lord** and then he explains how to do that **fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God..**

In **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1: 15 – 16** we are to be holy in all our conduct

In **1<sup>st</sup> John 1: 7** we are to walk in the light and not in darkness

The bottom line is what **1<sup>st</sup> John 2: 6** says **He who says he abides in Christ ought himself to walk just as Jesus walked**. And that was Paul's desire for the church at Thessalonica and that is my our desire for you as well.



And we can live that way because the end of Verse 12 says **He called us into His own kingdom and glory.** God effectually called you, if you are a born again believer here today, to salvation and into his kingdom. And we will experience the fullness of that kingdom when Christ comes back to set up His millennial kingdom here on earth and then the eternal kingdom of heaven forever. And in that we will see and experience the fullness of the glory of God.

I'll close by reading what one writer said “the parental pictures of spiritual leadership ... in the church must be balanced. It is not enough for leaders just to be compassionate, tender and caring as spiritual mothers. They also need to live uncompromising, pure, and exemplary lives as spiritual fathers, lives that, in their motives and actions, set the standard for all to follow...”

*MacArthur commentary on 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians page 53.*

Closing Prayer

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Introduction and Review:  
Acts 20: 29

Verse 7:  
Galatians 4: 19, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4: 14  
2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2: 23

Verse 8:  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12: 15

Verse 9:  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3: 7 – 9, Philippians 4: 16  
1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5: 17 – 18, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9: 6 – 12

Verses 10 – 11:  
*Deuteronomy 17: 6, 19: 15 – 21, Matthew 18: 16*  
*John 8: 17 – 18, John 11: 19, 31*

Verse 12:  
1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4: 1, 12, Galatians 5: 16  
Ephesians 4: 1, 5: 2, 16, Philippians 1: 27  
Colossians 1: 10, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1: 15 – 16  
1<sup>st</sup> John 1: 7, 2: 6

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1<sup>st</sup> John 1: 7, 2: 6