



1 Thessalonians

(For access to all available commentaries and written sermons of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

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 Thessalonians 2:4

Paul, on several occasions, completely disregards the opinions of others concerning his doctrine. For example, in 1 Corinthians 4:3,4, he says –

“But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.”

Again in Galatians 1:10, he says –

“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”

This is his same train of thought here in 1 Thessalonians 2:4. He begins with “But.” That is given as a contrast to the thought of the previous verse. He, and those with him, did not proclaim the gospel from error or uncleanness, nor did they proclaim it in deceit. Instead, he says, “But we have been approved by God.” The words of verse 2 were given to show how fallen man conducts his affairs. But Paul shows the contrast in how he and those with him conducted theirs. They were approved by God, being led by the Spirit and having been examined and found faithful in their proclamation, as the Greek word translated as “approved” implies. They had passed the necessary test of God by holding fast to His message, and thus they were “entrusted with the gospel.”

The gospel is God’s message of redemption to the people of the world. Its source is from God, and the message which Paul proclaimed was fully in line with that divine source. He did not deviate as others were prone to do. He makes this evident by saying, “even so we speak, not

τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων

as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.” While others had fallen, human reasons for proclaiming salvation messages, Paul and those with him completely rejected such things. Pleasing men was of no value to them when they knew that it is “God who tests our hearts.” In these words, he repeats the same word which was just translated as “approved.” God had tested them, and they had passed His most stringent examination.

Life application: Time and time again, the Bible says that God searches the hearts and minds of humanity. As He is omnipresent, this is an obvious truth. Do you consider this as you conduct your life’s affairs? There is nothing unknown to Him; even your darkest secrets are fully exposed to Him. Remember this as you go about your life. Consider your ways, and align them with what is pleasing to God. That alone is a mark of faith worthy of rewards.

For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. 1 Thessalonians 2:5

Paul has been defending his presentation of the gospel message, and the sincerity of himself and those with him as well. He continues with this by saying, “For.” He had just said that they spoke, not as pleasing men, but as tested by God. The word “For” builds upon this by saying, “For neither at any time did we use flattering words.” The word translated as “flattering,” *kolakeias*, is not found anywhere else in Scripture.

There was no flattering, or buttering up, of the those they talked to. They didn’t tell them how smart they were, or note anyone who lived a lavish lifestyle, as if fawning over them. Instead, they came without any pretense at all, and they simply presented the gospel. It was probably a presentation similar to that made in Acts 17 when Paul spoke to those in Athens. While there at the Areopagus, he told them their state, he told them of their need for Jesus, and he explained to them in their common language how they could be saved. At the end of his discourse, it says that many rejected him, but some believed.

He continues on in this verse by saying, “as you know.” They were fully aware of how he dealt with them, and so his words in the letter are to remind them of this, not to convince them of something they were previously unaware of. After this, he says, “nor a cloak for covetousness.”

The word he uses for “cloak” gives the idea of that which is evident to anyone who sees. In other words, if they had a cloak for covetousness, their true state would be hidden under a false covering of piousness, but underneath would be greedy hearts of covetousness. Rather than this, their outward appearance matched what lay below in their hearts.

He then finishes up the verse with “God is witness.” He can only expect those in Thessalonica to accept his testimony at face value in matters which concerned them. Any other places they went to evangelize, and their attitude towards those people, would be unknown to the Thessalonians. Therefore, Paul calls God as his witness to confirm that what he says is true. His words are reliable, and his testimony is sound.

Life application: It should be that our lives are lived in such a way that we are always the epitome of integrity. We should never have a false cloak which covers up hearts which are covetous or deceitful. Let us remember that we live in the Lord’s presence at all times, and that we are accountable to Him for how we live out our lives.