

Message #5

I Thessalonians 2:1-12

When we read **verse 12 of Chapter 2**, which says “walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you,” and when we read **verse 1 of Chapter 4**, which says “you ought to walk and please God,” and when we read **verse 23 of Chapter 5**, which says “may the God sanctify you entirely,” it is quite obvious that Paul wanted these Thessalonians to live their lives in a God-honoring way in view of the fact that Jesus Christ was going to return.

When we traveled through Chapter 1, Paul wanted the Thessalonians to know that they prayed for them and praised God for them. However, now, as he opens Chapter 2, he wants to specifically motivate them to live their lives in a manner worthy of the calling of God.

Now the goal of Paul and His team was to communicate the Gospel of God. In fact, we may notice that he refers to speaking and teaching the Gospel of God at least 5 times in these verses (2:2, 3, 4, 8, 9). The Gospel of God contains a message of saving grace and a message of sanctifying grace. Paul’s concept of the grace Gospel was one that contained all of the related doctrines connected to the grace Gospel. Paul desired that God’s people accurately understand these things so they could develop for God’s glory. That is why Paul went to all the trouble to write this book.

The primary point of these verses is to communicate that very point:

THE GOAL OF THE MINISTER IS TO COMMUNICATE THE WORD OF GOD TO PEOPLE SO THAT THEY WILL LIVE THEIR LIVES IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE CALLING OF GOD; BUT IN ORDER TO DO THAT THE MINISTER MUST TREAT THE PEOPLE IN A GOD-HONORING WAY AND LIVE A LIFE OF INTEGRITY.

When Paul went to these places to preach, he was up against major obstacles in both the religious and secular world. In order to effectively minister to people, he had to develop and maintain good relationships.

There is a lot to learn here about how a church should operate and how a minister or key leader should relate to people. The ministry that Paul and his team had to the Thessalonians was characterized by three relationship connections:

RELATIONSHIP CONNECTION #1 – Paul ministered to the church as a non power -crazed apostle. **2:1-6**

Now the ministry that Paul had when he first went to Thessalonica was a very productive ministry. In fact, Paul says in **verse 1** that our ministry in coming to you was “not in vain” or literally in Greek, it was not an empty ministry. Paul’s ministry had been fruitful in Thessalonica. Now his ministry was characterized by three main features:

Feature #1 - Paul's ministry was characterized by a bold communication of the Gospel of God. **2:2**

The story of Paul's problems in Philippi is recorded in Acts 16:14-40. Paul had been mistreated in Philippi. He ended up being beaten and thrown in jail. The reason for this is because he had been preaching the Gospel of the grace of God.

Paul and Silas were teaching a pure grace message which went against the works systems of religion and the traditional teachings of men. That got them in serious trouble. They were arrested, beaten with rods and put into prison with their feet locked in stocks (Acts 16:22-24). The reason for all of this was their bold communication of the Gospel of the grace of God.

When they finally got out of prison and went to Thessalonica, they started boldly proclaiming the Gospel there. Threats and intimidations and opposition did not stop Paul and Silas from boldly proclaiming the Gospel of God.

That word "bold" (*παρρησιαζομαι*) is one that not only means to be bold in the way one speaks, but also to be open and free and plain in the communication of the Gospel (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 347).

Paul did not have some ministry that used a bunch of flowery language of psychobabble that contained a bunch of hidden meanings. He went to places and boldly, openly, honestly and freely communicated the Word of God. That is what his ministry was all about.

Feature #2 - Paul's ministry was characterized by a pure communication of the Gospel of God. **2:3**

Paul's communication of the Gospel of God did not include certain negative elements:

(Negative Element #1) - Paul did not communicate in any way that promoted error. **2:3a**

The word "error" (*πλανη*) is one that means to wander astray from the truth. Paul taught the Word straight. He never wavered or wandered from what God's Word said.

(Negative Element #2) - Paul did not communicate in any way that promoted impurity. **2:3b**

The word "impure" (*ακαθαρσια*) refers to handle the Word in an unclean way. Paul handled the Word in a way that was clean, true and pure.

(Negative Element #3) - Paul did not communicate in any way that promoted deceit. **2:3c**

The word "deceit" (*δολος*) is a word that means to be crafty and deceitful in order to lead them into a snare. Paul never used the Word of God in any crafty or deceitful way. His passion was to teach the truth of the Word accurately.

Feature #3 - Paul's ministry was characterized by a communication of the Gospel to please God, not men. **2:4-6**

If you want to please men, all you have to do is preach works. Preach something men can do and they will love you. Purpose to never say anything negative about evil sin, don't preach the possibility of going to hell and that you can anger God and thousands will line up to hear what you have to say just like they do for Joel Osteen. Paul did not operate like that. He did not preach like that. He did preach and teach pure grace, but his goal was always to please God by his preaching. Now a preaching ministry that pleases God is characterized by six traits:

(Trait #1) - A God-pleasing preaching ministry realizes the Gospel is a specific entrustment to a specific approved man. **2:4a**

Paul was a man specifically approved by God, which means he had been tested and tried and proved to be faithful (*Ibid.*, p. 120). Paul was God's handpicked man for the grace Gospel. God specifically entrusted Paul with the grace package.

Understanding the Gospel and communicating the Gospel is an entrustment from God. That is the way Paul viewed it. He was the apostle who was specifically given the Gospel of the grace of God.

(Trait #2) - A God-pleasing preaching ministry realizes God examines our hearts. **2:4b**

Paul ministered with a constant awareness that God was monitoring his heart and not one time did he ever speak with the goal of pleasing men. His goal in preaching the Word of God was to please God. His goal was to rightly divide and accurately communicate the Word of God.

(Trait #3) - A God-pleasing preaching ministry does not use flattering speech. **2:5a**

The word "flatter" is interesting. It sits in a word family in Greek that would seem to describe never saying something that would be negative such as say something that is designed to bring about some sort of correction (*Ibid.*, p. 252). Flattering speech tells people positive things. It tells them what they want to hear, not what they need to hear. Paul did not use flowery speech or flattering speech.

(Trait #4) - A God-pleasing preaching ministry is not prompted by greed. **2:5b**

The driving force for Paul and his team was not money. He was not in ministry because it was a good lucrative career move. He had no ulterior motive except to preach and teach the Word of God.

(Trait #5) - A God-pleasing preaching ministry does not seek glory from men. **2:6a**

Paul did not go from place to place so that men would honor him.

He was not out to seek glory from the Thessalonians or “others.” That pronoun “others” (ἄλλων) means another of the same kind. So this primarily has to do with other believers in other churches.

Paul did not try to come up with a marketing strategy so he could get all the churches to applaud him. He did not shy away from teaching certain things so he wouldn’t ruffle feathers in the Christian community so everyone would think he was a great guy. Frankly, that is the goal of some preachers. They want glory from all people in all denominations and so they present things that will win awards. Paul did not ever operate like that.

(Trait #6) - A God-pleasing preaching ministry does not assert leadership authority. **2:6b**

Paul was an authoritative apostle and he had tremendous power. He could perform apostolic signs and wonders. But he did not go into a city as some authoritative, power-crazed man. He could have asserted his authority had he wanted because he had every right to do it. But he never did.

Now the word “assert” means they had every right to weigh the people down with the power that he and his team had, but they did not do that. They did not put a bunch of demands on people. These were the traits that characterized Paul’s God-pleasing ministry.

RELATIONSHIP CONNECTION #2 – Paul ministered to the church as a gentle mother.
2:7-8

The way Paul ministered to the Thessalonians is touching. He demonstrated five motherly traits:

(Motherly Trait #1) - Paul’s ministry was a gentle ministry. **2:7a**

In contrast to an assertive and dominant ministry, Paul was a very gentle man. The gentle concept is seen in the simple way that a mother cares for an infant.

(Motherly Trait #2) - Paul’s ministry was a nurturing ministry. **2:7b**

The word “nursing” (τροφός) describes a mother who functions as a nurse, who cares for her children when they need a nurse’s care.

(Motherly Trait #3) - Paul’s ministry was a tenderly caring ministry. **2:7c**

This means that a mother tenderly cares for her child in a very warm and cherishing way.

(Motherly Trait #4) - Paul’s ministry was an affectionate ministry. **2:8a**

This means that a mother has an emotional yearning for her children.

(Motherly Trait #5) - Paul's ministry was a life investment ministry. **2:8b**

A mother invests more than just time in a child, she invests herself.

Paul says we came to you like a mother who invests herself in her children.

RELATIONSHIP CONNECTION #3 – Paul ministered to the church as a caring father.
2:9-11

There are three fatherly traits that Paul manifested to the Thessalonians that every father should manifest to their children:

(Fatherly Trait #1) - Paul's ministry was a hard- working, non- burdening ministry. **2:9**

Fathers work hard for their families. They are not a burden to their children, but they provide for their children. Good fathers do not ever want to be a burden to their children and that is the way Paul ministered to the Thessalonians.

(Fatherly Trait #2) - Paul's ministry was a fatherly integrity ministry. **2:10**

Fatherly behavior is characterized by three ideals. Paul uses three adverbs to describe the kind of behavior he had toward the Thessalonians:

Ideal #1 - Fatherly behavior is devout behavior. **2:10a**

Paul was a man who had a devoutness and holy piety to him. Fathers should demonstrate that to their children.

Ideal #2 - Fatherly behavior is upright behavior. **2:10b**

Paul lived his life in an upright, straight way. He taught biblical righteousness, he pursued biblical righteousness and he lived biblical righteousness.

Ideal #3 - Fatherly behavior is blameless behavior. **2:10c**

Paul was not a sinless man, but he did live his life in a way that was free from any consistent fault that would make one blameworthy before God.

When the Thessalonians looked at Paul, they looked at a man who lived and functioned like a good, godly father should live and function.

(Fatherly Trait #3) - Paul's ministry was a fatherly communication ministry. **2:11**

A fatherly type of ministry communicates with the children.

Communication Way #1 - It communicates by exhortation . **2:11a**

Paul came along side these Thessalonians to cheer them, comfort them and communicate with them. He did this in a way designed to beseech them to do what is right before God.

Communication Way #2 - It communicates by encouragement . **2:11b**

This is an interesting Greek word because it describes persuading someone by encouragement.

Communication Way #3 - It communicates by imploring . **2:11c**

This is a stronger Greek word because it presents the idea of being a solemn witness and beseeching someone to do something in a context of protest. So this term suggests there are times when a father needs to say, “Son, daughter, you need to move this direction because you are not moving in the right way.”

Now what exactly was all of this motherly and fatherly care all about? We get the answer in **verse 12**; to get the people of God to walk in a manner worthy of God who called them into a relationship with Him.

It is possible to have a relationship with God and not walk worthy of it. But it is also possible to have a relationship with God and walk worthy of it. That is what Paul was after.

This is why Paul taught what he did, live the way he lived and related the way he related.

Now we ask one question in view of this text. Are you walking and living in a way that is worthy of the Gospel? Jesus Christ is going to come get us, so are you walking in a way that is worthy of that reality?