

1 Thessalonians

Chapter 2

Introduction:

1. In chapter one, we learned how that the gospel had come to these Thessalonians and how it had radically saved them and changed their lives.
2. But chapter two reveals to us how Paul ministered to these new converts **after** their salvation. We could say that this chapter contains Paul's discipleship ministry.
3. When a person gets saved, he is a babe in Christ. What characteristic is true of all babies? They need someone to care for their needs. If not, they don't stand a chance of survival. This, of course, is usually the parent that cares for the baby's needs.
4. All baby Christians need a spiritual parent who will come alongside them and care for them in their spiritual infancy. This is what Paul and Timothy had done for the Thessalonians. They cherished them as their own children. vs. 7, 11
5. This chapter is very insightful in helping the church to see why it is important to care for and teach new converts, as well as showing us how to accomplish this.

Verse 1

1. Paul reminds this church that when he came to Thessalonica, his visit to them was not "*in vain*."
 - The word "vain" means "empty and worthless."
2. What does Paul mean when he says that his visit was not in vain? When you read this in light of verse two you get your answer.
3. Paul and his co-laborers did not come into town spouting a bunch of empty, worthless, religious rhetoric. They came in preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.
4. The gospel is the power of God. Any time you share the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, it is never in vain.
5. Had Paul gone to Thessalonica to simply sightsee or have a little vacation, his visit could have been said to be in vain (spiritually empty and worthless), but he came preaching the gospel of Christ.

Verse 2

1. This verse gives us a glimpse into the total resolve of the apostle Paul. It reveals to us Paul's dedication and faithfulness to the gospel.
2. Before Paul came to Thessalonica, he had visited the city of Philippi. Paul says that they suffered and were "*shamefully entreated*" (to exercise violence, abuse).
 - This certainly was true. If you read Acts 16, you will find that Paul was mocked (vs. 17-18), falsely accused (vs. 21), beaten (vs. 22), cast into jail (vs. 23), and then kicked out of town (vs. 39).
3. Did this make Paul a little "gun shy?" Did he get discouraged by this or blame God or doubt God's care?
4. In this verse, Paul basically says, "Even though all those terrible things happened to us at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God."

5. Paul arrived in Thessalonica, went right into the synagogue, and began teaching people about Christ once again. **Acts 17:1-3**
6. What resolve! Paul would not be deterred. He was like a tenacious bulldog. No matter what circumstances life threw at him, he would not quit telling people about Jesus.
7. In Thessalonica, he again shared the gospel, but once again it was with much contention. **Acts 17:5-10**
8. Christian, you might as well accept the fact that when you boldly stand on the true gospel of Christ and refuse to water it down, there will be opposition.
9. But it is the gospel that has the power to change lives. **1 Corinthians 1:18**

Verse 3

1. When Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to accept and believe the gospel, he reminded them of the manner in which he did it.
2. Paul notes three things that his exhortation was not.
 - It was not of deceit (in error, fraudulence).
 - Paul simply gave them the Word of God, not his self-conceived ideas and opinions.
 - It was not of uncleanness.
 - Paul's motives were clean and pure.
 - It was not done in guile (bait).
 - Paul didn't use the gospel as a decoy so he could get in their pocketbook or trick them out of something.
3. Paul's exhortation was in contrast to the false prophets that Peter describes in **2 Peter 2:3**, "*And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you...*"
4. Jeremiah declared that the prophets in his day committed adultery, walked in lies, and strengthened the hands of evildoers. **Jeremiah 23:14**
5. Paul had no thought of trying to use the Thessalonians for his own personal gain.

Verse 4

1. I love Paul's attitude towards the gospel of Christ. He said that it had been put in his trust. This carries the idea of taking something that is yours and committing it to another person's watch-care.
2. Paul preached the gospel according to the revelation of the mystery which had been kept secret since the world began. Many times Paul would call it "*my gospel.*" **Romans 16:25**
3. In due season, this special gospel message was committed to Paul from God and he was to preach to the Gentiles. **1 Corinthians 9:17; Galatians 2:7; 1 Timothy 1:11; Titus 1:3**
4. Paul was faithful in his stewardship of this gospel message and boldly proclaimed it, "*...not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.*" cf. **Galatians 1:10**
5. It is God which trieth (tests) men's hearts. Paul knew he would stand accountable to God one day for his stewardship of the gospel.
6. If you know Christ as your Savior, the gospel has been committed to your trust, too. What kind of steward have you been? **2 Timothy 2:2**

Verse 5

1. Unfortunately, for many people, religion is a big money business. They use religion as a covering (a cloak) to extort money and other things from people. This has been true for millenniums. **Acts 19:23-28; Micah 3:11**
2. Religious charlatans use "flattering words" in order to get what they want. They will say whatever people want to hear. **Titus 1:10-11; Psalm 12:2; Proverbs 7:21**
3. Many people purport to be in the Lord's work, but they serve their own bellies and *"...by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."*
Romans 16:18
4. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that this was not the case with him. Paul had no interest in their "stuff." Paul wasn't there to sell religion, sell books, or sell himself in any way. He was there to **give** them the gospel. vs. 9

Verse 6

1. Paul did not come to town touting himself as an apostle and demanding special privileges.
2. As an apostle of Christ, he certainly could have used his position to bring himself fame and to gain special favors from people.
3. In this verse, Paul is simply saying, "You know from our example that our motives were pure."
4. Paul conducted his ministry *"in simplicity and godly sincerity."*
2 Corinthians 1:12
5. What an example Paul set for ministers of Jesus Christ. So many young ministers today are all too consumed with their pay package, benefits, and vacation time. As we said earlier, Christianity has become a business. I wonder what Paul would think?