

# 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?

### Verse 7

1. After Paul says in verse 6 that they were not burdensome and weighty as the apostles of Christ, he contrasts that thought with, *"But..."*
2. Paul then uses the analogy of a nursing mother. She has the most tender concern for her child. She holds that child tight in her arms, protects it with vigilance, feeds it, cares for it, sacrifices sleep for it, and performs nasty duties with joy.
  - She does all of this with absolutely no thoughts of self-interest or "getting something back" from the baby.
3. This is how Paul describes his ministry among the Thessalonians. He considered them his spiritual children and cared for them accordingly.
4. When a person gets saved, that is wonderful, but then he desperately need the tender loving care of someone who will assume the role of a spiritual parent for him.
  - **Illustration:** A mother in the hospital: giving birth is only the starting point. This is a small part of what is expected and needed.
5. Paul said, *"...we were gentle among you..."* Gentleness is something that doesn't come easily for many Christians (especially pastors and leaders), but it is so needed.  
**2 Timothy 2:24**

### Verse 8

1. This is one of the greatest verses in the Bible that teaches us how to impact lives.
2. You must share the gospel with people, there is no doubt about that (vs. 2, 4). But there is no substitute for a genuine, heartfelt love for people.
3. Paul told them the gospel, but Paul genuinely loved and cared for these people. He was willing to open up his heart and impart his soul to them.
4. Many people have a hard outer shell and façade that cannot be penetrated. They will not allow anybody to get into their hearts. There is no way to truly impact another person's life unless you are willing to open up your heart to love and be loved.
  - Your wife, your children, your friends, etc., need more than just your physical presence; they need your heart and soul.
5. When you open up your heart to somebody, there is vulnerability in this. There is the potential of having your heart broken. But the dividends are well worth the risk. The other option is to close off your heart and never impact a soul for Christ.
6. You **impress** lives from a distance; you **impact** lives up close and personal.

### Verse 9

1. This verse gives us insight into how Paul paid the bills while he was in Thessalonica. Paul worked day and night. He burned the candles at both ends.
2. When Paul says "...because we would not be chargeable unto any of you...", he simply means that he did not want to be any kind of a financial burden upon the people.
3. We know that Paul also received a love gift from the church at Philippi on at least two different occasions (**Philippians 4:15-16**) while at Thessalonica.
  - This verse (along with the passage in Philippians 4) seems to substantiate the idea that Paul was in Thessalonica for more than three weeks, as some teach.
4. Paul must have been in Thessalonica for several months, working day and night, so he could preach the gospel. This was common for Paul. **Acts 18:3, 20:34**
5. Paul did whatever was necessary to be able to preach the gospel. He had a burning fire and passion for the ministry of the gospel, and he would not be deterred. Too many young ministers today view the ministry as a business. What a shame!
  - Too many are looking for a **position** instead of a place to serve.

### Verses 10-11

1. Verse 10 teaches that we have a two-fold testimony:
  - We have a testimony before God.
  - We have a testimony before people.
2. Both are very important and should be consistent with each other.
3. Paul and his co-laborers provided godly examples for these believers. They were spiritual parents to these Thessalonians. vs. 11
  - How do babies learn how to walk, talk, feed themselves, clean themselves, brush their teeth, comb their hair, put on clothes, etc.? By watching mom and dad.

- How do you think baby Christians learn to be faithful to church, read and study their Bibles, live holy lives, serve God, treat their spouses kindly, etc.? By watching their spiritual parents model this behavior before them.
4. Mature believers should be exhorting, comforting, and charging younger believers, but it is equally important that their lives back up what they are saying. This is the balance we see in these two verses.

### Verse 12

1. Notice, that as their spiritual parents, they didn't berate them, condemn them, guilt-trip them, and give them a list of "dos" and "don'ts."
2. They taught these believers the high calling and position they had been given in Christ.
  - They had been called into the heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ.  
**2 Timothy 4:18**
  - They had been called to share in the glory of Jesus Christ in the ages to come.  
**Ephesians 2:6-7; Colossians 3:4; Romans 8:17-18**
3. They encouraged them to walk in a way that was fitting (worthy) for the high and holy calling that they had been given. **Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10-13**
4. Discipleship is not telling new converts all the things they can't do anymore and trying to guilt-trip them into conforming to our standards and convictions.
5. It is telling them who they are in Christ and all that God has done for them in Christ, and encouraging them to live in a way that is worthy of this awesome calling.
  - A side-note: This is a great philosophy for child-rearing too. Constantly criticizing your child and finding fault is a sure way to insure an angry and rebellious child.

### Verse 13

1. This verse is an extremely important and insightful verse. God did some amazing things in the lives of these former pagans. They grew spiritually at an extremely rapid pace and were spreading their faith to others in a relatively short period of time.
2. This verse reveals the key as to how this happened. It had to do with the Thessalonians' attitude towards God's Word.
3. They simply believed the teaching from Paul to be God's Word. They did not receive it as the word of men, but as the Word of God.
4. Paul initially explained to the Thessalonians who Jesus Christ was, and the fact that He died, was buried, but rose from the dead. Paul did this from the Old Testament Scriptures. The facts are all there.
5. But what exactly was accomplished on the cross? What does His resurrection mean to us? What must a person do in response to these truths to be saved? Was Christ's atoning sacrifice for Israel only? What about pagan Gentiles that had been cut off from God?
6. God gave to Paul special revelations concerning all these questions and more.  
**Acts 26:16; Galatians 1:11-12; Ephesians 3:1-4; Colossians 1:25-26**

7. Paul preached the good news of Christ according to the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began (**Romans 16:25**). God has progressively revealed truth throughout the ages. To Paul was revealed the gospel of grace that we proclaim today.
8. Paul could boldly say to the body of Christ:
  - *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."*

**1 Corinthians 14:37**
9. The Thessalonians took God's truth (the Old Testament Scriptures and new revelation given to Paul), and simply believed it by faith to be God's Word.
10. What was the result? It was effectually (actively, efficiently) working in their inner beings to produce spiritual growth and maturity.
11. This thrilled Paul's heart and he couldn't quit thanking God for it. True growth only comes as we take God's Word into our inner man and believe it by faith.
12. God has no plan B! **1 Peter 2:2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 5:13-14**

#### **Verse 14**

1. The Thessalonians had experienced some rough waters since they trusted Christ as their Savior. 1:6, 3:3-4
2. They had endured some persecution from their own countrymen, just as the Jews were experiencing in Israel. It possibly came from native Greeks who were proselytes into Judaism. They were angry when these people trusted Christ and left the synagogue.
3. Paul had warned these new believers that it was coming (3:4), and probably told them of the great persecution that had taken place in Judea (Paul had been the persecutor). This is why Paul says that they became followers (imitators) of these believers in Judea.
4. The stories of the persecuted Jewish believers in Israel served as an inspiration to these believers in Macedonia to stand firm.
5. Satan hates baby Christians and actively seeks to discourage them right after salvation. What the Thessalonians experienced is not at all unusual. If you are a new believer, do not be surprised if you endure some suffering and persecution.
6. This is why every new believer needs a spiritual parent who has been there and can reassure him when problems come.
7. One sidenote: Some people teach that the Jewish flock in the early church was not part of the body of Christ, but this verse dispels that thought. Paul says that the Jewish brethren were **in Christ**, just like these Gentile believers. They may not have understood all the teaching concerning Christ's body, but they were still in Christ.

#### **Verse 15-16**

1. These two verses give us a vivid description of the nation of Israel during the book of Acts. It can be summed up with the words, "...they please not God."
2. They killed Jesus, Peter called on them to repent in early Acts, yet they were still violent, abusive, and antagonistic towards the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. Here is what is ironic. Not only did **they** want nothing to do with the good news of Christ, but they didn't want the **Gentiles** to have an opportunity to hear and receive it either. **Acts 13:16-52, 14:1-19, 17:1-14**
4. Their guilt had continually increased until Paul says that they had filled up their sins.
  - They rejected the prophet, John the Baptist, and **allowed** him to be murdered.
  - They rejected their Messiah, Jesus Christ, and **demand**ed His murder.
  - They rejected the Holy Spirit speaking through Stephen and **committed** a brutal murder.
5. Their sin and guilt had increased until it was filled up (complete). God's heart was to bless Israel and give them their long-awaited kingdom (**Acts 3:19-26**), but instead they deserved the wrath of God.
6. The phrase "*come upon*" denotes anticipation. Paul was anticipating the full wrath of God to be unleashed upon Israel. The wrath of God has been temporarily withheld from this earth, but when this dispensation of grace is over, Daniel's 70th week will commence.
7. After seven years of wrath, Christ will return and give the kingdom to the believing flock of Israel. God will ultimately keep His covenant promises to them.  
**Romans 11:25-27**

#### **Verses 17-18**

1. Paul expresses his regret that he had to leave so abruptly (**Acts 17:10**), but lets them know that his heart is ever with them.
2. Paul wanted so much to see these dear friends again. In fact, Paul had started to return to Thessalonica many times, but it never worked out.
3. Paul had endeavored to see them. This word "endeavored" means "to use speed, to make effort, to be prompt or earnest."
  - It wasn't a light-hearted effort. Paul had diligently tried with great desire (longing) to see these folks.
4. Why couldn't Paul get there? Verse 18 states, "*...but Satan hindered us.*"
  - The word "*hindered*" means "to impede, to detain."
5. Satan is not a make-believe cartoon character. He is a real, living, spirit being that is actively seeking to hinder the cause of Christ on this earth.
  - Paul speaks of Satan deceiving (**2 Corinthians 11:14**), buffeting (**2 Corinthians 12:7**), tempting us (**1 Corinthians 7:5**), getting an advantage on us (**2 Corinthians 2:11**), hindering us (**1 Thessalonians 2:18**), turning people aside (**1 Timothy 5:15**), ensnaring people (**1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Timothy 2:26**), and using wiles against us (**Ephesians 6:11**).
6. While we should recognize the reality of Satan, we need not fear him (**2 Timothy 1:7**). We can stand against the wiles of Satan and we can quench the fiery darts of the wicked, but it will only happen as we walk by faith in God's Word and pray diligently (3:10, **Ephesians 6:16-18**).

#### **Verses 19-20**

1. Like chapter one, this chapter ends with a reference to Christ's coming. In fact, every chapter in this book ends with a reference to Christ's coming.

2. Paul had lovingly and patiently ministered to these people as his own children.
3. As Paul anticipated and looked forward to the coming of Jesus, Paul states that these people would be his joy and crown of rejoicing in heaven.
4. Here is the clear teaching: at the coming of Jesus, our joy will be the souls that we have led to Christ and impacted for Christ. The fleshly accomplishments and material possessions gained on earth will mean nothing in heaven.
5. How sad that many believers will stand before Christ empty-handed, with no precious souls that they have impacted for Christ while on earth!
6. Christian, make sure that you are investing your time, talents, and abilities in things that really matter eternally. What really matters eternally? People!!



# Rapture of the church

## Christ's return to earth

Rejection  
of Christ



Rejection of  
Spirit-filled  
apostles  
(Acts 2-7)

Dispensation  
of the  
Grace of God

God's counter-  
declaration  
of war

Kingdom  
on earth  
established

*MANKIND'S DECLARATION  
OF WAR ON GOD*

*AN OFFER OF  
PEACE EXTENDED  
TO EVERY PERSON*

*TRIBULATION -  
7 YEARS  
OF WRATH*

*1000 YEARS*