

November 19, 2000 by Steve Brandon



A Successful Ministry (part 4)

1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

1. Bold Speech (verse 2)
2. Pleasing-to-God speech (verses 3-6)
3. Fond Affection (verses 7-12)
 - a. His care for them (verse 7).
 - b. His sacrifice to them (verse 8-9)
 - c. His integrity with them (verse 10)
 - d. His instruction of them (verses 11-12)

I invite you once again to open in your Bibles to the second chapter of Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians. First Thessalonians, chapter 2. As I have said before, and I will say again, in an effort to ingrain it into you, in this section of Paul's letter, he is defending his ministry of the accusations that have come against him. In recent weeks we have seen him defend his ministry from accusations that he was a greedy, deceitful teacher, who was in it for his own glory. He didn't care about the Thessalonians, he only cared for himself. He was accused of teaching error in such a way as to attract people to himself as a teacher for his own gain. Others attacked both his motives and his methods.

Paul has defended himself against all of these attacks. The reason for doing so wasn't for himself, but it was for the sake of the Thessalonians. See, it was important for the Thessalonian believers to know that Paul taught the truth, that Paul loved the Thessalonians, and that Paul had the good of the Thessalonians in mind when he taught them. The bottom line is that Paul walked with integrity.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed--God is witness-- nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection 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 very dear to us. For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

I have found it interesting that of the seven accusations that we looked at a few weeks ago (from verses 3-6), ...

1. Error
2. Impurity
3. Deceit
4. Pleasing men
5. Flattering speech
6. Greedy
7. Seeking glory from men

You will find that six of them have to do with Paul's personal life and one of them has to do with the truth he taught. Additionally, I find it interesting that in verses 7-12, everything that Paul mentions in these verses - everything - all deals with Paul's life while he was among the Thessalonians. The reason for this is that the attack against Paul came primarily against him personally. It was his life that the Thessalonians were attacking.

And it is no wonder that his life was under attack. See, if you discredit the teacher, his teaching will become suspect. People will become doubtful of his character, and people will not follow his teaching. I know what that is about. I have books in my library which would be profitable to read. But, before I read them, I found out about the life of the writer. If you are anything like me, you entirely lose your appetite to learn from such an individual.

I think of a book on my shelf, that I would like to read, but the fact that the author was a pastor, who fell to immorality with the church secretary, gives me no desire to read it. I think of some tapes that I have, which were a series of sermons, preached by a well-known pastor. Tapes, which I believe would contain many edifying truths. However, this pastor, also fell to immorality. I have no desire to listen to these

tapes. I think of a preacher in England, about whom I have heard so much, and about whom I have sought to get some tapes to listen to him. About a year ago, he openly declared himself to be a homosexual. Likewise here, Paul's credit was at stake.

By way of review, one last time, we have entitled this section, "A Successful Ministry," which we derived from chapter 2, verse 1, in which Paul said, "our coming to you was not in vain." Paul said that it was "not in vain." We have sought to put a positive slant on it and have named it "A Successful Ministry" (as opposed to a "vain ministry").

I have chosen to divide it up into 3 different sections. Again, there are many different ways in which it could be divided. For the sake of structure, I have simply chosen these 3. In each of these sections, he gives a characteristic of a "successful ministry."

We first looked at Paul's ...

1. Bold speech (verse 2)

We then looked at Paul's ...

2. Pleasing-to-God speech (verses 3-6) If you remember, there were 7 negative characteristics and 1 positive characteristic in this section.

1. Not from error (verse 3)
2. Not from impurity (verse 3)
3. Not from deceit (verse 3)
4. Not as pleasing men (verse 4)
5. Not with flattering speech (verse 5)
6. Not with a pretext for greed (verse 5)
7. Not seeking glory from men (verse 6)

Two weeks ago, we began to look at Paul's

3. Fond Affection (verses 7-12) demonstrated in ...

a. His care for them (verse 7). "But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children" (1 Thess. 2:7).

And you remember last time how we spoke about what a mother is like. A mother has a natural attraction for her children, which causes her to sacrifice greatly for her child. In this particular text, Paul mentions 2 characteristics of a mother: she is gentle and she tenderly cares (for her own children). What is true of a mother was true of Paul. He didn't come to the Thessalonians as a harsh, taskmaster, but he came humbly and gently.

The second way in which his Fond Affection was demonstrated was in ...

b. His sacrifice to them (verse 8-9)

1 Thessalonians 2:8-9

Having thus a fond affection 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 very dear to us. For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

We looked at this section and saw that Paul had given entirely of himself to the Thessalonians. We imparted to you our own lives (verse 8). We worked night and day (verse 9). And let me remind you all again, before we go on to verse 10 tonight: this is the work of the pastor. He is to be gentle like a mother in his caring for the people. He is to work hard for the flock. As he does these things, he will demonstrate his Fond Affection for the people under his charge.

The third way that he will demonstrate his Fond Affection for the people is in ...

c. His integrity with them (verse 10)

Look at verse 10: "You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers." The focus of this verse is on how Paul lived while he was in Thessalonica. He could bring many of the Thessalonians up to the witness stand. Once again, at the beginning of this verse, he calls upon the Thessalonians to sit in judgment of him as to whether or not he was telling the truth. He said, "Of course it is so." You are witnesses to this. He mentions this on 5 other occasions. [\[1\]](#)

Dr. Mayhue, who was here last week, wrote this in his commentary on 1 Thessalonians, concerning these attacks, ...

If someone had really known the ministry of Paul, Silas, and Timothy among the Thessalonians, they would not have criticized it but rather commended it. Who could be negative about pastors who were compassionate like a selfless mother to her children (2:8), committed like a devoted servant (2:9), consistent like a faithful family member (2:10), and concerned like a caring father for the spiritual welfare of his home (2:11)? To demean or tear down this ministry meant that the accuser(s) either knew nothing about it or were lying. So in God's sight and before the Thessalonians, Paul and his friends stood innocent, easily acquitted of all the trumped-up charges. [\[2\]](#)

But, he goes further than in these other 5 occasions. In this instance, he invokes God's testimony as well. "You are witnesses and [so is] God." He also did this in verse 5 - "we never came ... with a pretext for greed - God is witness." Isn't that a bold statement? To invoke God as a witness is merely to add seriousness to the point Paul is seeking to make.

In the Old Testament, we see Samuel doing the same thing. The account is given in 1 Samuel, chapter 12, of Samuel, at a crucial junction in Israel's history, releasing his authority as a judge to give authority to Saul, the king. It is an interesting account of Samuel standing before the leaders of Israel, after they had selected a king for themselves. Samuel was seeking to insure the testimony of the Israelites that during his reign (as judge), he governed in a blameless way. And in order to do so, he invoked the witness and testimony of the LORD Himself. Samuel, stood before the people and said, ...

1 Samuel 12:1-5

"Behold, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me, and I have appointed a king over you. And now, there is the king walking before you, but I am old and gray, and behold my sons are with you. And I have walked before you from my youth even to this day. Here I am; bear witness against me before the LORD and His anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? I will restore it to you."

And they said, "You have not defrauded us, or oppressed us, or taken anything from any man's hand."

And he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day that you have found nothing in my hand.' And they said, 'He is witness.'"

This is characteristic of Paul. In another epistle, where he was defending his ministry (2 Corinthians), he also called God to witness. Your remember in 2 Corinthians 11, when Paul spoke about his ministry, how he claimed that he was "in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death (verse 23), apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches (verse 28), and The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying" (verse 31).

So, when he calls God to witness here, he is doing nothing more than bearing testimony to the Thessalonians of what is true. He is adding solemnity to his defense. And so ought we to live always as if we can call God to bear witness and testimony before us.

Then, Paul describes his behavior among them with 3 adverbs. The NASB says "devoutly, uprightly, blamelessly". Most other translations are close to this. The NIV uses "holy, righteous, blameless," KJV uses "holily, justly, unblameably," and NKJV uses "devoutly, justly, blamelessly" Let's pick apart each of these words.

1. Devoutly

This describes a religiously righteous and pure man. And I use "religious" in the most pure and proper sense of the word. There is a sense here of the man's purity before God. This word speaks of one's duty toward God. In the Old Testament, it is often used to describe those who are inwardly and outwardly religious.

2. Uprightly

This describes a morally righteous and upright man. And again, I use "religious" in the purest sense. There is a sense here of the man's integrity before man. This word speaks of one's duty toward man. In the Old Testament, it is the most common word used in the Proverbs to describe the righteous (as opposed to the wicked) - the one who isn't seeking his own, nor seeking to harm another.

3. Blamelessly

This describes a man, who has no spot or blemish. Unlike the other two words, it really encompasses both ideas of "before God and before man." The other two words focus on the positive aspect of one's behavior, where this would focus on the negative. The KJV is good at trying to get a sense of the Greek text, when it translates this word, "unblameably," but is difficult English, which is probably why other translations often simply use "blameless".

To sum it all up? He said, "Hey, while I was with you, I lived a righteous and holy life." He said, "I was seeking to serve God." He said, "I was seeking to treat others in a way that God would be pleased with." By his devoutness, righteousness, and blamelessness, he demonstrated his affection for the Thessalonians -- to those who initially were unbelievers, but who came to believe in his message and are now the recipients of his letter.

Perhaps this isn't something that you think about often, but an upright and holy life before God, in which you act properly before others, is a testimony to others that you have an affection for them. See, it is precisely at this point here where false teachers are exposed. Peter said, "False prophets will arise among you ... "and many will follow their sensuality" (2 Pe 2:2). "In their greed they will exploit you with false words" (2 Pe 2:3). "They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you" (2 Pe 2:13). "Having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children ..." (2 Pe 2:14).

"...promising freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption..." (2 Pe 2:19). "It would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them" (2 Pe 2:21).

Notice how in their evil, false teachers will sin against others and will exploit them? (2 Pe 2:3). But the righteous man will not exploit others. The key is to the understanding of the presence of God. The man of God will always understand himself to be in the presence of God. The man of God will be able to call God to the witness stand to testify of his righteousness before others. Paul sought always so to live, as seeing the bigger reality.

As he said in 2 Corinthians 4:2, we aren't "walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Acts 23:1 says, "When before the Sanhedrin, spoke, 'I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.'" And in Acts 24:16, he says before Felix, "I do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men."

Was this not the fundamental problem with the Pharisees? Jesus spoke against their hypocrisy in Matthew 23, but listen to their problem. They are outwardly religious, but have no "Fond Affection for others." In their consciences, they didn't seek to live always before God. Let me give you a taste of them.

Matthew 23:2-4

The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them. They tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

Matthew 23:25

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.

Matthew 23:27

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

The Pharisees professed a righteousness, but weren't truly righteous. As a result, they had no "Fond Affection" for their people. People could see that it was a sham.

But not so of Paul. And let me say by way of application that this is ever as much true of you as it is of the pastor. As you walk in a devout, upright, and blameless way before people, they will take heed of your life.

You all remember when Jim and Shay, unbelievers, for whom we have prayed, had medical difficulties with their newborn child. Who did they call? Gordy and Ruthie, because, as you heard Gordy testify in past months, "I knew you would pray." I have had many opportunities at work in which I have seen this be the case. People (believers and non-believers alike) have faced a difficult situation, and they have told me about it and said, "please pray about this." Even this past week.

Look at the testimony of Steve. He used to work with Todd, for whom we have prayed. When Todd became a Christian, who did he call? Steve. Who do people turn to when life gets difficult? They find righteous people. Tony and Julianna came to faith, simply due to the testimony of Frank and Suzanne.

People will seek you out if you live a devout, upright, and blameless life. Not if you live like the Pharisees of old, who were hypocrites. Not by telling the world how righteous you are, but by living a life of genuine holiness and integrity, trusting in Christ and His righteousness, looking to God alone for strength, and seeking ever to be conformed to His image. You live like that, and you will have an affection for others, which others will notice.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne has said, "It is not so much great gifts that God blesses as it is great likeness to Christ." And, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, ...

...he knows full well that there is nothing that so thoroughly recommends the gospel of Jesus Christ as a practical demonstration of Christian living. That was true in the early days, and it is still true today. There can be no doubt at all but that it was the behaviour and the life lived by individual Christians that was most responsible for the spread of Christianity in the first centuries.

We get accounts of that in the book of Acts. We are told, there, that as a result of certain persecutions Christian people were scattered abroad, and that wherever they went, they spread the good news of the gospel by their lives and testimony. And even secular and pagan historians bear eloquent testimony to the fact that nothing more influenced the ancient world than the quality of life which was being lived by these people. [\[3\]](#)

Well, not only was Paul's Fond Affection (verses 7-12) demonstrated in His integrity with them (verse 10), but it was also demonstrated in ...

d. His instruction of them (verses 11-12)

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Again, Paul is appealing to the Thessalonians. He says, "You know that this is true." In this verse, now, Paul reminds the Thessalonians what his teaching of them was like. He compared himself to a father: "you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children."

You all know of the Father's duty to instruct his children: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). You know of the Father's call to his son as expressed in the book of Proverbs: "Hear, my son, your father's instruction" (Prov. 1:8). "My son, do not forget my teaching" (Prov. 3:1). "Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father" (Prov. 4:1). In this case, Paul was their spiritual father. He had come to Thessalonica and the people received the word through his ministry. Elsewhere, he called the Corinthians, "my beloved children." (1 Cor. 4:16). In Timothy, he calls the people, "my true child" (2 Tim 2:1, 1 Tim 1:2). Likewise, 3 John 4 speaks of no greater joy than hearing of "my children walking in the truth."

Paul describes the instruction of a father with 3 participles. Let's do what we did last time to get a sense of these words. NAS says: exhorting, encouraging, imploring. KJV: exhorted, comforted, charged. NIV: encouraging, comforting, and urging. And NKJV: exhorted, comforted, charged.

1. Exhorting

This is a very common word, with a broad range of meanings: to exhort, comfort, encourage. Often times the context dictates what exactly it means. 1 Thess. 4:1 - "I exhort you"; 1 Thess. 5:14 - "We urge you." The best way to look at this word is to imagine the coach instructing his athlete. He needs to be pushed to achieve. This action is addressed to the will.

2. Encouraging

This word isn't as common. It is best translated "comfort." This is what you are to do with the fainthearted (5:14). Admonish the unruly; encourage/comfort the fainthearted, and help the weak. The best way to look at this word is to imagine the father comforting a distressed child. He helps with assurance; he tells of God's love. This action is addressed to the feelings.

3. Imploring

This word, at its heart, means, "to appeal in the sight of witnesses." In this context, it is probably best to understand this as meaning "to charge, or command." The best way to look at this word is to imagine a police officer directing you to do something. This action is addressed to the sense of duty.

Notice that in each of these ways in which Paul instructed the Thessalonians, there is authority. The coach has authority and will seek motivate his players as the situation dictates. The players need to submit and obey. The comforting father has authority. There are times when a child simply needs comforting from his or her father. This isn't pampering, but it is helping in a time of weakness. The police officer has authority. He often will dictate a command that needs to be obeyed quickly and efficiently and willingly.

Notice, furthermore, that in each of these ways in which Paul instructed the Thessalonians, each of them instruct with their own good in mind. The coach may tell a player something that the player doesn't want to do (like running another wind-sprint), but the player knows that it is for his ultimate good. The comforting father is helping in time of weakness, that he might be able to encourage the child to face his or her challenges again. The police officer is commanding for the need of the moment. Fathers, learn from these pictures; discern your child.

Notice how personal this instruction is....

1 Thessalonians 2:11

just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,

The instruction of the father is often personal, and suited for the particular child. I know at times, I have taken a particular child on my lap and warned them of particular things which they need to observe. For instance, you notice that SR and I are sporting new haircuts. Well, SR often has a difficult time sitting still and not complaining during his haircuts. So, yesterday, I looked him in the eye and said, "SR, mommy is going to give you a haircut tonight. You need to make sure that you sit still and don't complain while she is cutting your hair. OK?" He did wonderful. I have done the same with Carissa.

This is personal instruction. I have been challenged by Richard Baxter's example. He used to go into every home of every family in his church on a regular basis (perhaps yearly), and instruct each family. He would seek to discern their understanding of the gospel and fulfill what was lacking. Furthermore, he would encourage the family in their catechism process. God used him greatly. He is an example of "exhorting, encouraging, and imploring each one of you." The church is not to be led corporately like a herd of cattle.

I love what one commentator said about this verse. He said that Paul was, "going from house to house; not in a stern and domineering way, but with the greatest tenderness, and yet faithfulness." Calvin said, "Unquestionably, no one will ever be a good pastor, unless he shows himself to be a father to the Church that is committed to him. Nor does he merely declare himself to be such to the entire body, but even to the individual members. For it is not enough that a pastor in the pulpit teach all in common, if he does not add also particular instruction, according as necessity requires, or occasion offers."

In Acts 20, Paul told the Ephesian elders that he was "innocent from the blood of all men (verse 26). ... [because] I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house (verse 20), solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 21).

I have had thoughts of doing whatever I can do with ALL of the families in this church to know some level of giving personal attention to each of you. My time is limited now, but it will be freed up soon. And when that day comes, I want to do all that I can to see each of you and each of your families, "walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory." (2:12). Indeed, that was Paul's ultimate goal for the Thessalonians in all of his exhorting, in all of his encouraging, in all of his imploring. His goal was clear. Look at verse 12.

1 Thessalonians 2:12

so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

"So that" - these words express his final purpose or goal. This phrase of Paul, "that you may walk in a manner worthy ..." is used by Paul in several other passages. Before we look at them, I do want to comment on this Greek word here translated "so that" - literally means "having the weight of another thing."

1 Thes. 2:12 can be read as: [we were exhorting you as a father would his own children,] "so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."

Ephesians 4:1-3

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

These verses come in light of 3 chapters simply expounding the glorious salvation that has come to us in Christ. The emphasis is so much upon the graciousness of God to effect His glorious salvation for us.

Philippians 1:27

... conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Paul has just finished a discussion of his imprisonment and how it worked for the progress of the gospel.

Colossians 1:10-12

[we pray for you...] that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 2:12 more closely. "Walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory." The best way to understand the weight of this is to work backwards.

We see God's glory in Psalm 99:1-5 and Psalm 99:93. Psalm 115 calls "to Thy name be glory." We also see God's glory in Isaiah 6:1-4.

We may say that God's Kingdom is the theme of the Bible. "God establishing His Kingdom." Jesus tells us that the Kingdom of God is at hand. The culmination of history brings God's destruction of His enemies and God's establishment of His Kingdom. We see this in Psalm 110, Psalm 2:6ff, and Revelation 21 and 22.

Who has called you? Look at Revelation 19:9: "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Your experience is to stand up to your standing in grace. That is my goal for you. That is the way I can best demonstrate my fond affection for you.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on November 19, 2000 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] The 5 other occasions are:

1 Thessalonians 2:1

For **you yourselves know**, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain

1 Thessalonians 2:2

but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, **as you know**, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.

1 Thessalonians 2:5

For we never came with flattering speech, **as you know**, nor with a pretext for greed--God is witness--

1 Thessalonians 2:9

For **you recall**, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:11

just **as you know** how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,

[2] *First and Second Thessalonians: Triumphs and Trials of a Consecrated Church*, Richard Mayhue, p. 76

[3] Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Life of Joy: An Exposition of Philippians 1 and 2*, p. 111.