

Series: 1 Thess

Title: Paul's Motive and Manner

Text: 1 Thess 2: 1-12

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1 Thessalonians 2: 10: Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: 11: As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father *doth* his children, 12: That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

In the verses before this, Paul calls the brethren to witness of his motive and manner among them at Thessalonica. In the first chapter, he wrote,

1 Thessalonians 1: 4: Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5: For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

The gospel came in the power of God and they believed and began following the Lord Jesus. In every place their faith spread abroad.

1 Thessalonians 1: 9: For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

1 Thessalonians 2: 1: For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

Paul writes this because the unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica greatly opposed he and Silas. The unbelieving Jews even followed them to Berea and opposed them there. Scripture says, "they moved with envy." They "stirred up the people" (Acts 17: 5). We get an idea of their charges from what Paul wrote here.

1 Thessalonians 2: 2: But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

Many times the unbelieving Jews accused Paul of being lawless. So they were likely telling the people of Paul's imprisonment, declaring that Paul had a police record, that Paul was untrustworthy.

1 Thessalonians 2: 3: For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.

The unbelieving Jews were accusing Paul of being deceitful, of preaching from impure motives, with an impure end in mind.

1 Thessalonians 2: 4: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. 5: For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know...

Several times the unbelieving Jews accused Paul of preaching against the law. They would have considered this as pleasing men and flattering men.

1 Thessalonians 2: 5:...nor a cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness: 6: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

The unbelieving Jews obviously accused Paul of being a mercenary, preaching for financial gain. They accused him wanting personal glory. The unbelieving Jews certainly accused Paul of being a dictator and lording over men.

Now, understand, Paul is not writing to defend himself. He is writing for the sake of Christ and the gospel. This was an attack on Christ and the gospel. They discredited Paul and Silas to discredit the gospel and the work of the Lord in his people at Thessalonica. That is why Paul writes these things.

Divisions: 1) Paul's motive 2) Paul's Manner

PAUL'S MOTIVE

1 Thessalonians 2: 1: For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain; 2: But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. 3: For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: 4: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men but God which trieth the hearts.

Paul's motive for preaching the gospel to them was holy and just and unblameable. The Lord proved it by making the preaching of God's word effectual at Thessalonica.

When God sends his messenger, preaching the gospel of Christ God's word never returns unto him void. God always accomplishes. God's purpose in sending the gospel is the glorification of God our Father and his Son Christ Jesus; God always accomplishes this through the preaching of the gospel. God's purpose is the *conversion* of his lost sheep, as well as the sanctification and edification of his saints. Our sovereign Redeemer always accomplishes this through the preaching of the gospel that Christ sends. And God's purpose in sending the gospel is the condemnation of those who believe not. God always accomplishes this through the preaching of the gospel. The preaching of the gospel was not in vain in Thessalonica. God worked these very things.

Also, it was not in vain as respected the motive of Paul and Silas. The unbelieving Jews stirred up the people by questioning Paul's motives. Paul was accused as preaching from a motive of deceit, uncleanness, guile for selfish, filthy gain.

Be sure to get this. Motive is of utmost importance. If a man is accused of a crime for which he stands to personally profit then he is likely guilty of the charge. But if he stands to lose all that he loves, lose all that he has given his life for, lose all his possessions, if he stands to personally suffer, even lose his own life, it is not very likely he is guilty of what he is accused of.

That is why Paul reminds them of Philippi. At Philip Paul's character was slandered. He suffered beatings. They imprisoned him. He said, *"But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."* If Paul's motive was for selfish gain then he would not have come to Thessalonica preaching the same gospel when it had already proven harmful to him at Philippi. As he wrote to the Corinthians, "why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" (1 Cor 15: 30).

Paul's motive was of God. We see that in that Paul gives all the glory to God. He wrote, *"we were bold IN OUR GOD to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."* It is easy to preach boldly when there is no opposition. The test comes when suffering comes. Those who oppose us give their ultimatums. They reject and forsake us. Usually, they stir up the people against you. If our boldness is not of God then it will prove to be presumptive, baseless, bravado. But Christ told Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12: 9).

Therefore, Paul declares the strength of Silas and himself to preach boldly was of God, not of themselves. In the face of contention, the power of God, by the sufficiency of God's grace, makes us remember that Christ bore far more on behalf of his people. He was despised and rejected and forsaken of all. Our Substitute bore the wrath of God in place of his people. But Christ is risen. He is the strength of his people. Whatever we suffer is light affliction compared to Christ's suffering. Everything we suffer is light compared to the eternal weight of glory Christ works for us by teaching us more of him. In all our suffering, Christ is teaching us our weakness and that our sovereign Savior is our strength. That is the purpose of afflictions.

Paul writes, "*For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.*" In relation to God it was "*not of deceit.*" Paul was saved by the same gospel, the same Lord Jesus Christ that he preached. His only righteousness and hope was Christ. So he preached the gospel of Christ according to the scriptures. In relation to himself his exhortation was not "*of uncleanness.*" He did not preach for selfish, filthy lucre. Paul preached from the pure motive of love for Christ and his people. In relation to others the motive of Paul's newly created inward man was "*Not in guile.*" Paul had no ulterior motive. He only wanted to see his brethren believe on Christ and follow Christ.

What was Paul's chief motive? "*But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men but God which trieth the hearts.*" This is the highest motive that excludes every fleshly motive, "*we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel.*" God not only saved us by the gospel, but God also allowed us to preach the gospel. Allowed means to be tried and approved of God. God makes his messenger faithful to preach only Christ by saving us with the same gospel in the face of much opposition. Then having approved us in the heart with trials--having assayed the heart that God himself gave and upholds--then God entrusts us to preach the gospel of his dear Son!

Think of a loved one putting you in trust with their child while they are out of town. What a great responsibility! Well, God has entrusted his messengers (and each of us he has called) with the gospel of his dear Son. The preaching of the gospel of Christ is the most important thing in this world. By God saving us through the preaching of the gospel, and continuing to save us by the preaching of the gospel, he makes us know it. He gives his messenger a heart to let nothing take precedent over the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

PAUL'S MANNER

1 Thessalonians 2: 4: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. 5: For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: 6: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. 7: But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. 9: For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

Paul's manner of preaching was holy, just and unblameable.

God's preacher and his people seek God's approval rather than man. Paul wrote, "*So we speak, Not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts; For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know.*" The gospel is offensive to sinners, especially religious sinners who trust self. Preaching the total depravity and inability of every sinner offends sinners. When we declare how unbending, unyielding, unchangeable the law of God is and that it reaches to the heart, declaring all men guilty and stopping our mouths it offends the guilty. Declaring that God demands perfect holiness and righteousness that only Christ is to his people is an offense to those trusting in their own works. When we preach the necessity of the new birth and preservation which is by the Spirit of God alone, it offends those who trust in their will and their own strength. When the gospel is preached someone is always offended. No one wants to be hated of men. But God makes his people seek to please God rather than men. So Paul's manner was not to take the offense out of the cross and flatter men by telling them salvation was by merit in them or by their will or by their works.

Paul reminded them they did not preach the gospel as a disguise for gain, "*nor a cloke of covetousness, God is witness.*" Thessalonica was full of rich folks. God saved many among them who were of nobility. Our God has elect from all classes of men and walks of life. But unbelieving rich men will use their riches in attempt to get God's messenger to tone down the message. If a man is a false preacher then he will take the offense out of the gospel rather than offend rich men. But Paul did not show a respect of persons due to their wealth. He declared, "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel" (Acts 20:33).

Paul knew that in Christ, God has enriched us with the unsearchable riches of Christ. He made us the righteousness of God in Christ. Christ abides in his people keeping us abiding in him. We have the

constant protection and provision by Christ out of his treasury in heaven. God spared not his own Son but delivered him up for all his people therefore, we can be sure, God shall provide all we need in this life.

2 Corinthians 9:8: And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

So Paul's manner was to glorify God by trusting God to provide as he took the burden off his people, *"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."* Paul did not seek glory and honor from men. His desire was for God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ to receive all the honor and glory. Paul knew everything he had was given him of God by grace through the obedience of Christ. He knew if the Lord purified the hearts of those to whom he preached, it would be through faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit giving them a new spirit. Paul knew God would only do so through the preaching that glorifies God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul preached the gospel which declares that God makes Christ to be Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption of those who believe. Paul sought the honor that comes from God alone.

Paul had authority as an apostle but he did not use it to be burdensome to the people, *"When we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ."* He did not use his authority to demand anything of them nor to claim honor for himself as the minister of Christ. Paul had authority as an apostle. But he did not abuse his authority. He was worthy of honor as an apostle. In another scripture, he exhorts brethren to show honor toward their ministers. But Paul did not seek such honor for himself.

Opposite this, the unbelieving Jewish rulers sought honor from men by putting heavy burdens on the people.

Galatians 6: 12: As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13: For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. 14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Paul and Silas knew that Christ took the burden and curse off his people by being made a curse for his people. So they did not constrain men with the burden of the law. They did not put on them heavy burdens of guilt and the works of law to save themselves. Instead, they gloried only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, preaching the Lord our Righteousness. They had experienced Christ's power. Paul knew the gospel is the power of God unto salvation because Christ had revealed himself to be Paul's righteousness. . He knew only God can quicken and draw sinners to Christ in faith because Christ had done it for him.

Therefore, Paul gloried in the Lord Jesus Christ by preaching Christ who is the Salvation of his people. And Paul prayed for God to do this work rather than putting the heavy hand of the law upon them. He said, *"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."*

Paul, like each minister sent of Christ, learned this from Christ by the Spirit of Christ. "For the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28). Paul knew the Lord laid down his life for his people, even for him, the chief of sinners. So the love of Christ made Paul willing to impart not only the gospel of God but his own soul, *"because ye were dear unto us."* Paul was willing to lose whatever he had to lose for their salvation.

Rather than putting legal or financial burdens on the brethren, Paul took off every burden that they might hear and believe the gospel of Christ alone. Paul is including his labor in the gospel, as well as providing for himself so as not to lay a financial burden on them, *"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."* Paul writes here much the same word as he wrote to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians, Paul quotes the law. But Paul did not use the law to put the burden on them. Instead, in grace, Paul took it off them. Notice, the likeness between our text and what Paul writes to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 9: 3: Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, 4: Have we not power to eat and to drink? 5: Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?...7: Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 8: Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? 9: For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10: Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11: If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? 12: If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless WE HAVE NOT USED THIS POWER but suffer all things, LEST WE SHOULD HINDER THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST...15: But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. 16: For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!...18: What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. 19: For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more....23: And this I do FOR THE GOSPEL'S SAKE, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

We can be sure, the unbelieving Jews heard Paul as bold but not as gentle. Every word Paul preached offended them. We can be certain that they latched on to Paul's words to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians, accusing Paul of boasting of his motive and behavior, of seeking honor and glory for himself. But Christ said that is what the unbelieving will do. They find fault no matter what. Listen to the Lord Jesus.

Matthew 11: 16: But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, 17: And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. 18: For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. 19: The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

And Christ being *the* child, *the* Son of God his Father, Christ justified the Father for his wisdom.

Matthew 11: 25: At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes 26: Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Those God saved through Paul's preaching were born of the same Spirit as Paul. They were robed in the same righteousness of Christ. Each one saw Paul's feet as beautiful for preaching the gospel to them by which God saved them. Love seeks no faults in brethren nor receives slander. Love forgives and pursues unity. Why? For the sake of Christ and his gospel. Knowing their own shortcomings, knowing God's daily mercy toward them for Christ's sake, they loved Paul, thanked God for him and defended him.

Amen!