



What actions showed the Thessalonians that Paul, Silas, and Timothy’s ministry was authentic? Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. 1Thessalonians 2:8–12 prepares us for the second serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that biblical ministers and elders love deeply, are never “off the clock,” think about the good of the church in everything they do, and minister in every helpful way to each member personally in addition their public ministries.

Thursday, March 17, 2022 • Read 1Thessalonians 2:8–12

Questions from the Scripture text: How does the apostolic group feel for the Thessalonians (v8)? What two things were they pleased to impart to them? Why? What two things do they remember (v9)? What did they do at what times? Why? What did they preach? What were the Thessalonians (v10)? What three attributes characterized the apostolic group’s behavior? What three things did they do (v11)? To how many of them? In what manner? How did they want them to walk (v12)? What was God doing to them?

Chapter one had focused largely upon the effect that the Spirit had produced in the Thessalonians, to display to Paul, Silas, and Timothy that He had done a genuine and powerful work. Now, in chapter two, that apostle and elders are reminding the Thessalonians that the Spirit had also displayed evidences of His work in them to the Thessalonians. In vv1–7, they had reminded the Thessalonians of their character and motivations toward them. Now, in vv8–12, the apostle and elders remind the Thessalonians of three aspects of their conduct among them: affection, effort, and fatherly counsel.

Affection, v8

The word translated “affectionately longing” describes the strong emotional attraction and expression toward the Thessalonians. Yes, they had come to bring God’s gospel, God’s treasure to the Thessalonians (not to get the Thessalonians’ treasures for themselves, cf. v2, 4). But it wasn’t just God Who was loving them with deep affection.

The word for “lives” in v8 is actually “souls”—the image is of a mother nursing her baby and cherishing and nourishing them with such affection that it’s not just milk that she gives but with great emotional/affectionate love feels herself to be giving her whole self to the child. Such was the affection of that apostle and elders as they preached, and the Thessalonians could feel their dearness to them (cf. “you yourselves know” in v1).

Effort, v9

Just as the Thessalonians’ effort had shown their love (cf. 1:3), so first the apostle’s and elders’ efforts had shown theirs. There are three, intense “effort” words in v9, describing the service that someone might get from his most diligent slave. Indeed, the phrase “night and day” implies that sort of effort. It is rare from slaves, and sadly in the culture in which I write, it is rare even from parents.

But in whatever culture and from whatever relation, it is the kind of sweat and strength and endurance that is put out by devoted love. Anything that they could do to make it easier on the Thessalonians, they eagerly did. They wanted the Thessalonians to have every advantage for receiving the ministry well and for responding well to the ministry, so they added to the preaching at the end of v9 the night-and-day pastoral laboring of the beginning of v9. There’s probably an implication here of their willingness to labor for their financial needs as well, though Paul, Silas, and Timothy had only been there for three weeks (cf. Ac 17:1–10). It’s the night-and-day pastoral laboring that is more in view here (cf. Ac 20:20).

Fatherly counsel, v10–12

Not only did the apostle and elders have a preaching ministry among them (v8), and a pastoral ministry among them (v9), but they also had a very personal ministry among the (v10–12). It was marked by devotion (“devoutly”), uprightness (“justly”), and blamelessness.

There was one particular part of the ministry where these all shone: personal counsel (v11). There were three kinds of fatherly speech that they had for “every one of you.” Every Thessalonian believer had received from them words of exhortation (instruction), comfort (consolation/cheering), and charge (imploring/pleading/urging). A father who ignores one of his children while attending to the rest is a monster. A father who leaves out one of these kinds of speech is a failure. This apostle and elder conducted themselves like good fathers—having personal words of every needful kind for every one of their “children” in the congregation.

Why? Because these were the children of God. They had been called to His own kingdom. They had been called to His own glory. And they needed the “parenting” of v11 to produce the appropriate “walking” of the children of God in this world (cf. Mat 5:45, 48; Phil 2:15). He who is entrusted with the spiritual parenting of the children of God must see to it that he doesn’t leave out words of exhortation, consolation, or urging from any one of those children.

When we pray for our elders to be full of the Holy Spirit, we are praying that they will shepherd with this sort of affection, effort, and fatherliness. And, when we seek from God to give us elders who are full of the Spirit, we are seeking that He would provide men of such affection, effort, and fatherliness. And when men seek to become elders (a good thing to do, 1Tim 3:1), or men who are elders seek to be ones in whom the reality of the Spirit is displayed, we are seeking to have lives that exhibit such affection, effort, and fatherliness.

When do you pray for your elders to be full of the Spirit? What are you praying to see when you do so? When a congregation displays evidence of true spiritual life and when elders display evidence of true spiritual ministry, whom should we glorify? How do we do that?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for the evidences of Your Spirit’s work in our congregation and in the undershepherds that You have given us. When we read about these displays of Your work in the Thessalonian church, we realize how much we still fall short. Forgive us, we pray! And do that work that You alone can do in us, so that You will get all the glory in it, we ask in Christ’s Name, AMEN!!

Suggested songs: ARP1 “How Blessed the Man” or TPH546 “God of the Prophets!”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

First Thessalonians 2 versus 8 through 12. These are good's words so affectionately longing 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 dear to us for you. Remember brethren our labor and toil for laboring night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you.

We preached to you, the gospel of God, you are witnesses. And God also how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you, who believe, as you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father, does his own children that you would walk.

Worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. So, for the reading of God's inspired and inherent word,

So beginning of this chapter, the apostle says, you yourselves know brethren that are coming to you is not in vain and we heard in the first seven verses Last week, some of the character that the Holy Spirit had produced in Paul and Silas and Timothy, and as the Thessalonians observed, what kind of men they were they saw some of the fruit of the transformation that the Holy Spirit gives is he applies the life of Christ to someone very similar mirroring in chapter 1 how Paul says that he and Silas and Timothy were very thankful whenever they remember the Thessalonians, whenever they prayed for the Thessalonians even as they wrote to the Thessalonians because it was so obvious that God had done an authentic work.

And then and so In this chapter thus far we're seeing what a man looks like when he is an authentic minister of the gospel and then especially in verses 8 through 12. What his work looks like, it wasn't just their character, but the way they did their work, their aspects of their ministry, and he picks up on this gentle among you as a nursing mother, cherishes, her own children, and in verse 7, and he first talks about the apostle and his minute ministry and partners affection for themselves affectionately longing for you.

It's a that translates a word that is rare in the New Testament, but it picks up off of this gentle nursing mother. And it talks about strong, emotional desire attraction affection and it's connected to the and parts to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives.

It's that emotion that God gives out of love. That makes you want to pour yourself out for someone. Mom will know what it's like and the young ladies and maybe even the boys can imagine what it's like as you nurse a baby and you feel from your heart that you would give everything that you are, anything that you can whatever is required for this baby whom God has given you.

So to love and ministers and elders in the church are to feel that way. For the congregation of the church, the ones for whom the Lord Jesus, gave his own self for them, that the elder or the minister would have this affection that the Lord gives them in their hearts.

That produces this willingness to do whatever is beneficial. Whatever is necessary to pour out, one's life for the church. And so the first thing we see about a proper biblical ministry here, is this affection and it's very related, then that there is effort and that we start in verse 9, or we see in verse 9, rather for you, remember brethren our labor and toil for laboring night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you.

We preached to you, the gospel of God. So, the image perhaps changes the commentaries, say, it changes here from a mother to a slave. But there are perhaps some others who say, there's not that much difference. I mean, there's difference in position and dignity between a mother and slave, but as far as laboring day and night and it's being labor and toil, there is strong effort here.

It's probably not unlike what he was saying earlier in verse 3 of chapter 1, when he said that they remembered without ceasing the Thessalonians work of faith, okay? So there was there was effort that came out of their faith and labor of love. They were actions that came out of their love and patients.

Have hope that endurance that came from their help. The the proper minister will never be off the clock as it were. It's very important that he remembers that his family has the nearest and closest part of the congregation so that he doesn't sacrifice his family for the ministry. But he is to sacrifice himself for both the family and the ministry.

This is something that is extremely biblical. The people who write books on the balanced life of a minister probably have not done a deep dive into the ministry of Paul, or of Jesus, or any, what else in New Testament and the unfortunate thing for ministers like myself, is that our flesh?

Totally agrees that we should balance serving ourselves, and living for ourselves and it's very easy

to slouch into that and my conscience approaches me. As I read about this labor and toil laboring night and day, This is very closely related to what he says to the Ephesian elders and Acts chapter 20 that he not only preached in public but also from house to house and there's a transition into verses 10 to 12 that we'll see, even more closely ties, the two passages together.

But here, anything that he could think of that would benefit them or make keep himself from being a burden to them. And really it's primarily spiritually. Although there is materially here, He probably did fund himself and not make demands of them as we heard last week about this, not a cloak for covetousness, or we might have made demands as apostles of Christ, but especially spiritually that we would not become an obstacle or a fence, that they would be careful even in their manner and their conduct whatever they did.

You know, one example is, if now we know that the Lord has given alcohol for many, good reasons, and good purposes in the scripture and that it is wrong to view itself as something evil or forbid, the use of it. But there are those who are less instructed. Don't have as much confidence in the gospel to transform etc.

Easily offended by alcohol. And so you would want to be careful not to become a spiritual burden for them. You would want to disciple them in things, like all the things that God made good. The complete ability of the Lord, Jesus to reorient. Those whom he saves so that the building of the theological and spiritual foundations of why Christians can and should drink and, and approve of the right use.

But you wouldn't want to cause stumbling or offense without that foundation being built underneath. That's one. Maybe overly specific example, But in the entertainment that you are willing to talk about or even attend upon or places that you are willing to go ways that you're willing to spend any time ways that you're willing to spend your money.

All of these temporal things that don't matter, nearly as much as the people of God for him. We labor night and day. So, I always on the clock, we could say with First Corinthians 10, not only whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all into the glory of God.

But for a church member and especially for a church minister, It's also whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all unto the spiritual prophet of your brothers and sisters in the Lord of the church. So that's the idea in verse 9 and foreign elder or in the minister.

It especially means ministering the gospel, not only preaching, the gospel in the public gatherings, but taking other opportunities to speak a word for the Lords speak, a word of the Lord, for the good of the people and where this connects to house to house, we see especially in verses 10 through 12.

You are witnesses has got and God also had devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you, who believe? And so there's this devoutness, there's this consecration that they were devoted to God and to God's people, there is, this justly, there is this uprightness unwillingness to do any wrong thing whatsoever.

And not just unwilling to do any of the wrong thing before, God. But even unwilling to do anything that would bring any shame or doubt upon the gospel and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you, who believe this is not letting someone else's conscience rule you. But in many cases it may be knowing that someone is of weaker conscience and not wanting to harm them Or knowing that although they would know, you know, that you weren't doing anything wrong and you would know that you weren't doing anything wrong avoiding.

Giving the impression even of doing that which is wicked or worldly in, you know, there is a duty a requirement of blamelessness in 1st Timothy 3 and Titus chapter 1 for the elders of the church that is connected to what Paul says he and Silas. And Timothy demonstrated when they were in Thessalonica and elder the church, cannot be one who gets up and says I discovered Christian Liberty and now I can do all these things.

He stabs blamelessness in the heart and it bleeds and he wouldn't be able to say what the apostle says here in verse 10. How devoutly and justly and blamelessly, We had an elder actually very few people will know and and he would be embarrassed, but he'll never hear about it.

Maybe until glory, When I was in Orange City, Gary Vanderhart cared very much and did everything with great service and consecration and seriousness before the Lord. And one of the tests that I would just have like in the back of my head, if I was tempted to do something silly or foolish or worldly before the congregation, or with people from the congregation I would ask myself, could I see Gary Vanderhart doing that?

And then I wouldn't do it because he was more mature and older and had a very strong sense of this life that was set apart unto God and nothing should be done. That could bring any blame upon our master. And so I'm thankful for him. And I hope that even when we are not elders, we would want for our friends.

We would want for our brothers and sisters in the congregation. We would want for our children and our

grandchildren to be able to use us in the same fashion that they would know what a blameless person looks like the temptation is to read this passage. And to think of the people that we are, pretty sure are not blameless and maybe even exalt in things that are blame worthy or blamable the opposite here, but as much better to think of that which is blameless and aspire to that.

And then there wasn't just this devotion and justness and blamelessness, but that there was, there was this fatherly exhortation and comfort and charging. Obviously, you can hear how there are so many sermons in these passages, exhortation instruction. The word that's used for comfort, is a word that means, especially consolation or cheering.

People has tenderness a seeking to to soften whatever, griefs and anxieties they have and see them pointed to Christ and comforted and gladdened in him that they would have the peace and joy of the Lord Jesus. And then the charging is imploring and depleting, and and urging them. And this wasn't just something that he did generally publicly in the congregation.

This is where it can expect to the preaching in public and from house to house that we were thinking about when we were thinking about the night and day in verse 9, because he says, as you know how we exhorted and comforted in charged, every one of you as a father, does his own children.

So it wasn't just instruction with the family generally but the everyone here. Well teaches us. Something about how fathers should be with their children. First of all that every once in a while you you get one of your children alone and you you speak to them about particular things to, you know, comfort them and agree for urge or plead with them.

And some area of their life that they need to work on, or give them some instruction feel a gap in their knowledge or whatever it is that they need personal attention to but that that's not just for fathers with their children. That's also for ministers with the flock of God because they're not saying walkworthy of me or walk worthy of the family name.

It's the family of God, it's the flock of God, and the standard to, which he has called them is perfect holiness. He calls you into his own kingdom and glory. And so a proper ministry, will be aiming at heaven and fitness for heaven in the people of the church, which is so much higher than aiming for the people to keep liking you and the congregation well enough.

Not to go to another church, which is what many in the eldership or the ministry are tempted to aim at. But it's not our church, It's the Lord's. And so, we aim at his standards in his way, but not just as standards, but knowing what he saves his people for, which is heaven itself and wanting to see them more and more ready for that, eternal and perfect holiness, and happiness, for which God has chosen them and given himself for them and given himself to them.

So These are pretty pretty lofty. Things to desire in ministers and elders. We should pray for our elders to have these things. Pray, especially for me, It is hard for men who has a center to read and remember these things. But Christ, as our sufficiency for these things to pray for me, that that I will both remember that and that he will help me by his spirit to reflect these things.

Well, and then pray, especially not that you wouldn't pray this for the, for the young ladies, we want them to be moms like this for their children, and for one another, his sister's in Christ, but pray, especially for the younger men in the church that God would be forming in them.

Such character and such habits of service and ministry as he would use to bring the elders of future generations of the church. All it takes is one generation of the church to not have elders who are like, last week's passage in this week's passage in the first Thessalonians and much ground is lost and the groundwork the foundation has to start being relayed again for the church to be built back up.

So there's a lot to pray for and to aspire here. Let's ask God for some of those things. Now, Our Father in heaven, we ask that you would give our own elders. Give me the kind of pouring out of our lives and today, and night labor, and toil, and devoutness, and uprightness, and blamelessness, and exhorting and comforting.

And urging with the fatherly, it personal, ministering to every one of your people that aiming at your kingdom and glory to which you have called them, We pray Lord that you would bless my boys was such a view that they wouldn't just be trying to get through their tasks and their days, it wouldn't even just be trying to Mortify particular sins from their former nature and Adam.

But that they would be seeking after the the kind of heart and the kind of habits that would make them fit for the eldership or the ministry. I that whether ever you are calling them to that, they would still have the holy hands that can be lifted in prayer without wrath.

Grant a God that your church would be like the Thessalonian church and what you produced, real Holy, Spirit transformation and grant that her officers would be like, Paul and Silas and Timothy who are examples of a real Holy Spirit produced and sustained ministry. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.