

1Thessalonians 2:1–7

“Spiritually Seasoned Believers”

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How could the Thessalonians see in the apostle's life that the apostle's preaching was powerful? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. 1Thessalonians 2:1–7 prepares us for the opening section of public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these seven verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that spiritually seasoned teachers will be earnest, courageous, sincere, content, generous, and gentle.

Thursday, March 10, 2022 ▫ Read 1Thessalonians 2:1–7

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the apostle call them (v1)? What do they know? What had happened to Paul and company previously (v2)? Where? But what had they done in Thessalonica anyway? Under what conditions? From what three causes might exhortation wrongly come (v3)? But from where had Paul and company's exhortation come (v4)? Whom do they not try to please? Whom do they try to please? What does He test? What did they never use (v5)? What were they never trying to cover (cloak) up? Who can attest to this? What didn't they seek (v6)? From whom? What might they have done? How did they conduct themselves instead (v7)?

There are three “For... But...” constructions that form these seven verses. This arranges the text into vv1–2, vv3–4, and vv5–7. In these sections, the apostle reminds the Thessalonians of his and his companions’ earnestness, sincerity, and selflessness among them. It is vital that Christ-transformed ministers display a Christ-transformed character in those whom they are looking to Christ to transform.

Earnestness, v1–2

Paul reminds them that they had not come to Thessalonica “empty” (v1 paraphrases it “in vain”). They didn’t come in a light manner, as if they bore news of something unimportant. They came bearing news that was worth suffering for in order to tell in Philippi (v2a) and was still worth suffering for in order to tell about in Thessalonica (v2b).

Sincerity, v3–4

There are many wrong reasons that someone might preach. He might preach from error. He’s come up with his own way of thinking or believing, and now he wants others to do so as well. This occurred already in the ancient world, and it happens much more readily now in the internet world.

A man might preach from uncleanness. This was probably something that the Jews in Thessalonica had accused Paul of—coming up with a teaching that allowed him just to keep careening onward in sinfulness. Certainly, some employ partial gospel-truths in this manner even today! But the character of the apostle’s company repudiated such accusations.

A man might preach from deceit. This connects to the third grouping. Such a man knows that what he’s saying is incorrect, but he’s still saying it anyway, in order to obtain some objective. It seems from vv5–7 that some had suggested that Paul and company were really just saying what they thought would bring in the donation denarii (“dollars”). Truly, there are still those today who “go into preaching” in order to make an “easy” buck and even appear respectable doing it.

Contrasted to these wrong motives for preaching was the actual motive that was compelling Paul, Silas, and Timothy: stewardship. God had entrusted them with the gospel as a sacred charge. God didn’t just give them a job to speak words that He would hear; He also gave it to them as a stewardship that He entrusted to them. And God Himself would see their hearts and whether they took this stewardship as a serious privilege and responsibility.

Selflessness, v5–7

The problem with accusing Paul and company of preaching from self-interest is that the Thessalonians and God Himself had witnessed the opposite: selflessness. You can often tell when someone is speaking flattering words (v5a) to try to get something out of you.

Such words are a “cloak for covetousness” (v5b), but the apostle asserts that God can see that this was not the case with them. Not only did they not want money or property from the Thessalonians (v5), but they weren’t motivated by a desire to be praised by them either (v6a). Interestingly, he teaches us that an apostle would have been worthy of both (v6b).

But the apostle’s group were among them “as a nursing mother nourishes her own children” (v7). Such was their conduct that if they had begun to ask for money or honors, it would have seemed as out-of-place as for a mom to demand compensation from her babe-in-arms.

We are all called to minister. Elders to congregants. Parents to children. And every part of the body to all the other one-anothers in the body. Let all who minister consider what their character communicates about the genuineness of the gospel that they proclaim. Not only should we want to commend the truth well by our character, but should the enemies of Christ attack the message by attacking the messenger, we ought then to have lived in such a way as to plainly discredit all such accusations.

To whom do you minister? What can they see about your character? How does this help your ministry to them?

Sample prayer: Lord, sometimes we find ourselves not even earnest, sincere, or selfless with You—let alone with each other. Forgive us, we pray, and form in us the sort of character that will commend well Your truth as we speak it to others, which we ask in Christ's Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP1 “How Blessed the Man” or TPH433 “Amazing Grace”

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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 one through seven. These are God's words for you yourselves. No brethren that are coming to you was not in vain, But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi. As, you know, we were bold in our God, to speak to you.

The gospel of God and much conflict for our exhortation. Did not come from error or uncleanness. Nor was it in deceit, But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. Even so, we speak not as pleasing men. But God, who tests our hearts for neither at any time?

Did we use flattering words? As you know, Nora cloak for covetousness, God has witness nor did we seek glory from men? Either from you, or from others when we might have made demands as a parcels of Christ. But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother, cherishes her own children.

So far the reading of God's inspired and inerant word. So the end of chapter 1, actually pretty much the whole of chapter 1. The Apostle was expressing his confidence in God, gratitude to God whenever he prays for the Thessalonians or right now as he's writing to the Thessalonians because what God had done in the Thessalonians lives made it so plain that it came from God and that the Holy Spirit was working in them powerfully.

And then he turns and he says, and and you guys know how that's like for us with you because it was like that for you with us. That's the sense of verse 1 for you yourselves. No brethren that are coming to you is not in vain and he uses word there.

That means empty. Like We weren't empty or fake, just spinning theological terms or spiritualized veneer, I don't know. Veneer is surface outside stuff to cover up the fact that there's nothing to it? He says, so you are coming to you was not empty but and then he's gonna go on to describe at least three things that the Lord had produced in them that showed that God had worked in them.

And that the the gospel with which they had been entrusted was God's means of doing real spiritual work, and people glorifying himself glorifying Christ as our mediator by doing real spiritual work in people. And the first one is Ernestness and courage under fire. But even after we had suffered before, and were spitefully, treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God, to speak to you, the gospel of God and much conflict.

Christians should be prepared to suffer, or be afflicted, or to use a more contemporary colloquialism to get burned for doing the right thing. Sometimes you are generous not just financial, although maybe financially or hospitable or with friendship to someone and they turn around and you maybe you didn't even open yourself up to them and they still turn around and speak as if you did and slander.

You Sometimes, you tell someone the truth about God, and his gospel for sinners, and they get super hostile to you, because you suggested that they were a sinner. Um, yes you are and that's part of what the gospel makes, the gospel. So glorious, is that Jesus came for sinners, and Jesus died for sinners, and Jesus, forgives, sinners, and Jesus helps transforms sinners in Jesus, help, sinners.

And Jesus will glorify those who were sinners.

Especially those whose image of themselves is what they have been hoping in and you come and you show them things that are wicked and weak and defensive about what they thought was so wonderful that they had hope. And that's what happened to the Jews. Wherever Paul went in Philippi and and then again in Tesla and Ike and then So he'd suffered before and was spitefully treated One of the fruits of the work of the Spirit in you is that when you get burned or when you suffer, or when you are attacked for doing good, for loving the Lord, and loving, sinners and desire that they are outside of Christ would come to an end.

And that they would become new in Christ. One of the marks of a real work of the spirit is that you continue courageously persistently earnestly to serve the Lord. And this is closely tied to the next mark that we see in verses 3 and 4. And that's sincerity single-heartedness towards God.

Having right motivations that the motivations that are on the surface reflect accurately proportionately, the motivations that in your that are in your heart. So why were they able to be earnest and courageous versus do? Because they were sincere versus three and four for our exhortation. That is our preaching, our ministry among you, especially preaching, but a lot of things here that word exhortation being related to the the word for coming.

Alongside someone for our preaching. Did not come from error or uncleanness. Nor was it in deceit. There are, those are three different reasons that people like to get up in front of crowds and talk. The first

reason is that they are an error. They have their own ideas and they're different than other people's ideas and they really love their ideas.

This is how evangelicals who get theology PhDs and up. Creating new versions of old heresies, which is something that. And I've seen happen many times in my lifetime as a minister and a professional Bible scholar and a professional theologian. One of the places that liking to get up in front of people and talk can come from, is from error from having a new teaching from falling in love, with the uniqueness of your own ideas.

Thinking, for yourself is something that people, you know, you're supposed to think. But you're supposed to think what God says and if you're the first one to come up with it or as recently been come up with, for the first time it's probably heresy. Another reason people like to spout off their theology is uncleanness especially those who have a incomplete or opposite idea of grace.

There's, of course in, you know, straight up into Antonymianism. That grace means that God doesn't that concerned about our sin? And then there's an incomplete idea of grace that God is concerned about our sin and his furious with it and you talk a lot about justification but you're just focus on the justification.

You focus on how forgiven we are by God's grace to give blessing to those who deserve guards. But you don't talk about God's grace and sanctification that he works in us to will and to work. And on the basis of the fact that God Almighty who loves us and is sanctifying us is the one who is working in us, that we are thereby enabled to work out our own salvation with fear, and trembling, and to kill sin, and to be led by the Spirit of what the death, the deeds of the body.

And that Christians should be holiness. Obsessed people. Because we have a holiness, obsessed God, and holy is obsessed Savior. His plan for those whom he saves is to make them holy and this too, is part of his wonderful grace that repentance comes and dependence upon him and devotion and delight in him.

And so sanctification is growth in that repentance that holiness. Well, there are some who like to preach in such a way as to make it sound like holiness. Is that that important? And it's because they're serving their own uncleanness. They have that remaining fleshliness and they want to feel okay about it.

And so they preach from the motivation of uncleanness and he says our preaching did not come from error. Yeah. Or uncleanness. Nor was it in deceit? There are some who preach because it's a way to get men's admiration and you want them to admire you in their hearts with their mouths and with their money and then he says, but as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.

Even so we speak not as pleasing men. But God, who tests our hearts. So he says, you know when we stand and speak in front of you, We're standing and speaking in front of God. And so it would do us no good to speak because we want you to be impressed with us because if all of you were impressed with us and that was why we were speaking, God would see it and we would be horribly exposed before him and it doesn't do us any good to stand and speak in front of you because we want you to give us earthly treasure.

This goes well with what we had from Matthew 6. A couple days ago said we already have something better than earthly treasure. We have the gospel. God has given us a great treasure, that we have come to distribute. We don't stand up and speak to you. As those who think that, who are trying to get the little treasure that you have in your pockets so that you can give it to us.

This is one reason why it is important. That that you follow the biblical qualifications because among them. Is that a elder or a minister is not to be someone who is in love with money and has a tight grip on it and is greedy for it. Mmm, but someone who is easily content and it's generous with others and does not greedy.

They need to be able to preach from the idea that they have the treasure. That the gospel is the treasure So much more, the then any wealth. And so both of those things that we care most about what God thinks of us. Not what? Others think of us, this is something that gets tested often in your Christian life because often people don't think well of you and it hurts.

Maybe even in our own family, you'll have times where There are others in the family who seem to be thinking ill of you for one reason or another and yet God who knows that you're worse than that person thinks has given his son for you. And He has given you to walk in.

Good works Having saved you by grace through faith in Christ and he's pleased with that the outworking of his son's character in you and your union with him. So that as you try to do well in your life independence, upon the Lord Jesus, you know, that God sees the character of his son in you.

And so, you can enjoy the pleasure of God, not just in his everlasting love in which he decided to take you to be his own. But you can even enjoy the pleasure of God and the good things that you do, knowing that they are coming from Christ and not and not from you.

So not as pleasing men. But God, who tests? The hearts sincerity. So, the first thing was that Ernestness or courage, even under affliction, The second thing, this the second fruit of a real work of the Holy Spirit that they could see in the apostles and that the apostles are setting as a model for them.

And for us is sincerity that we would have right motivations for all of our Godly actions. And the third is selflessness and this, this is related to this sincerity. Obviously, For neither at any time. Did we use flattering words as you know nor a cloak for covetousness? So, we weren't manipulating you to get your praise or your money nor did we seek glory from many from you, or from others when we might have made demands as Apostles of Christ.

And so the glory there is both the praise and the money but we were gentle among you just as a nursing mother. Cherishes or nourishes is probably a better translation. Just there Her own children that there is a gentleness and a generosity that is part of the fruit of the spirit's work in you.

You can hear that in the list in Galatians 5, right? Love joy. Peace patience. Kindness. Goodness, faithfulness. Gentleness, So many aspects of the fruit, or this generosity and gentleness of the character that they had. They did not seem to be something among the Thessalonians, but they came and, and they treated the Thessalonians as more important than themselves.

They weren't demanding with them. They were generous to them and that, that generosity of spirit and that generosity of conduct.

Was was an indicator because that's not what teachers and those in authority and those who seem to be something to the world. That's not what their life. They're not gentle and generous of spirit the way Paul and Silas and Timothy were to the Thessalonians. And the way that they were hoping that God would use them and this letter to reproduce in the character of the Thessalonians and the way we are hoping, as we read independence, upon the Holy Spirit.

Just now that God will reproduce in us. That we will have a gentleness and generosity of spirit and you guys. Praise God. Get a lot of opportunity to practice that. So think about that as you interact with one another, whether there's a gentleness of spirit generosity of spirit, not trying to get from one another.

But even when you have to correct when another and you don't always have to correct. Everything love covers over a multitude of sins, says the scripture, but even when you have to correct one another, that your manner, with one another throughout the day but that especially in those moments of correction would be such as as nourishing and cherishing and your sibling will know or your child will know that you are cherishing them even, as you minister to them, a dental correction or rebuke like a kiss to the head or an anointing with oil.

All right, let's pray and ask God to produce an oss, according to this example, that he had produced in the Apostles, our Father in heaven. We thank you that you have giving us these seven verses that give an example of some of the aspects of character that are grown.

And those whom you are doing a genuine spiritual work, those who may have joined to Christ and are applying him to them, by your spirit us to our Father, applied Christ to us too. By your spirit. Grow us genuinely by the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus that we may be earnest and courageous and sincere.

And gentle selfless and generous with one another even in the manner of our conduct to one another so that just as we come and we see the examples of what you did in Paul and Silas and Timothy and the Thessalonians sought. And then so also we pray that others would be able to see what these things look like in and living example as well by what you do in us.

We pray that you would be glorified O God, who do such work in sinners, such as we are until in the day of Christ Jesus. You will have completed the work that you had begun in us toward which we long, and for which we ask in his name, Amen.