

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

1Th. 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.

Paul and his companions are reminding the Thessalonians that they are all brothers in the body of Christ, born again in the Spirit as sons of God.

Before they had come to Thessalonica, Paul and Silas had first gone to Philippi. They were beaten and thrown into prison because they had cast out a demon from a slave who was quite profitable to her masters through fortune telling; so her masters took them to court and accused them of teaching people to do things that were against the law. (You can read the whole story in Acts 16.) Their awful experience in Philippi didn't deter them from boldly declaring the gospel of God in the power of His Spirit. They were not received enthusiastically to say the least. They were met with opposition, but persevered in their mission with great effort and determination. Evidently, their perseverance paid off; "it was not in vain;" many eventually responded to the gospel message. (Paul's visit to Thessalonica is related in Acts 17.)

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

1Th. 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.

It would seem that Paul's message to the Thessalonians was being undermined by his enemies; they were planting seeds of doubt in the minds of the Thessalonian believers as to Paul's motives. Paul is assuring this body of believers that their encouragement for them to accept the gospel was not made with deceit (fraud, delusion), uncleanness (impure, immoral) or guile (trickery, bait) for their own personal purposes. They were sharing the gospel because God had entrusted them with the privilege of doing so. The message they were sharing was not one to please men; they were speaking a message that would please God and honor Him. They recognized that only God knows the intents of our hearts. (The Greek for the word *trieth* references "test, approve, discern, examine.")

As I was reading back over this verse, I noticed that the Greek for the word *allowed* in verse 4 is the same word used for *trieth*. This would indicate that the privilege given to Paul and his companions of being commissioned to share the gospel with the Gentiles was a result of their being examined and approved by God as worthy of this responsibility.

1Th. 2:5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

1Th. 2:6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

These two verses seem to be an exclamation point to the previous two. The NLT states it quite clearly:

Never once did we try to win you with flattery, as you very well know. And God is our witness that we were not just pretending to be your

friends so you would give us money! As for praise, we have never asked for it from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we certainly had a right to make some demands of you....

It would seem that using the cover of “in the name of the Lord” as a means to personal profit became a problem very early in the existence of the “church.” To emphasize the truth and purity of their mission, they appeal to God as their witness. Paul reminded them that they did not depend on the provision of the people for their support while they were there neither did they act in any way as if they had superior status and should be treated accordingly. The fact that they were apostles of Christ should have afforded them some special privilege and provision, but they did not demand it.

1Th. 2:7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

1Th. 2:8 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.

Instead, Paul and his companions served among the Thessalonians with a heart comparable to that of a loving nursing mom for her children. They were willing to take the greatest of care in sharing God’s message with them and invest so much of themselves in them because they loved them. The Greek for the phrase “affectionally desirous” indicates that they *yearned* for them to become part of the body of Christ.

What a convicting scripture. As I examine my own life and my efforts to share the gospel with the lost, I cannot honestly describe my desire to win them with that same passion. I speak that to my shame and pray God will give me a true burden and desire to do more. Although I feel my main ministry is to be directed to the body of Christ, I know there is much more I could be doing to reach the lost—especially in the area of prayer.

1Th. 2:9 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.

Again, Paul urges the Thessalonians to **remember**. Throughout scripture that seems to be an important process in the life of one who trusts in God.

(11/08)

Deut. 32:7 ¶ Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

Josh. 1:13 Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

1Chr. 16:12 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

Is. 46:9 Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me,

Mal. 4:4 ¶ **Remember** ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments.

Luke 17:32 **Remember** Lot's wife.

John 15:20 b the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

Rev. 2:5 **Remember** therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Paul reminds them that he and his companions had worked hard (to the point of weariness) night and day in order to pay their own way and not cause them hardship by depending on them for their upkeep. The fact that they worked so hard did not keep them from preaching the gospel.

We are so spoiled in this day and age that excuses flow from us readily as to why we can't possibly give time to serve the Lord or even spend quality time in His Word (our job, family commitments, etc). Although I have been quite involved in church ministry for most of my life, I have been guilty of doing the same. In fact, the demands of church activities sometimes affected my personal time in the Word. The truth is that when we get too busy to serve the Lord and/or spend time with Him in His Word and prayer, we are too busy. Priorities need to be reassessed and changes need to be made. The Lord should have the priority in our life. When we honor that, He will provide for everything else we need.

Matt. 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

1Th. 2:10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

Paul continues to remind the Thessalonians how Paul and his companions had behaved among the body of believers:

- Holily – in accordance with the character of the Lord, with moral integrity and purity, righteously
- Justly – in conformance to the law, honestly
- Unblameably – faultlessly, irreproachable, morally

Again, he appeals to God as witness to the truth of his claim.

David Guzik's comments on this section of scripture reminded me of an old saying that applies here:

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

1Th. 2:11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

1Th. 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Paul is reminding the Thessalonians that he is not telling them anything they don't already know. They dealt with the body of believers as fathers would their children, individually and as a group.

"exhorted" = invite, implore, beseech, comfort, pray

"comforted" = encourage, console

"charged" = testify, give evidence, witness

Paul used these different words to describe their efforts to get the Thessalonian believers to walk "worthy of God." The Greek for *walk* referenced how one "deports himself" among other things; it's a reference to how one lives. The question becomes how to "walk worthy of God." Paul answers this question in his letter to the Colossians.

Col. 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, **being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God...**

Being fruitful is evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in your life.

Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:

Eph. 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

How do we grow in the knowledge of God? Solomon addresses this question in the book of Proverbs.

Prov. 2:1-5 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

We grow in the knowledge of God by:

- Accepting the Word of God as truth.
- Esteeming (from the Hebrew for *hide*) the commandments of God enough to obey them.
- Making good use of the spiritual knowledge you possess for discernment and judgment.
- Using skillful reasoning that results in acting discreetly and wisely.
- Praying with earnest desire to acquire such knowledge.
- Understanding the fear of the Lord.

"who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory" – Not only has God invited us through the provision of His Son to live with Him in His kingdom, but also to share His glory. This is a reminder that although the kingdom is within us at the present time, it has not yet been established in its full glory. That is yet to come, and it will last for eternity.

Luke 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

Luke 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Is. 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Is. 9:7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Dan. 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

Dan. 7:14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

1Th. 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it not as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Paul's team continued to thank God that the Thessalonians accepted the gospel message as the Word of God. The gospel message may have been delivered by man, but it was recognized as the truth of God being revealed through human messengers. One of the proofs of the validity of the message was the fact that it was producing obvious results in the lives of the believers.

I think this is a truth that is often underemphasized. Many people believe that walking forward in a church and praying a prayer with the pastor is proof that you are born again. That is not the case. I always encouraged my small groups of new believers to examine themselves for evidence that the Holy Spirit was producing change in their lives. The book of James was written to clarify the fact that faith without works is dead.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

James 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead.

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

1Th. 2:14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews:

Paul often addresses the believers as "brethren." I believe this is a reminder that we are all part of the same family, and we are all equal at the foot of the cross.

Evidently, the Thessalonian believers faced opposition and persecution for choosing to identify with Jesus. The troubles they encountered were instigated by their Jewish neighbors.

Acts 17:5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

In this regard they followed/ imitated the communities of believers in Judaea who suffered greatly from the Jews in that region that rejected Jesus as the Son of God.

1Th. 2:15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

1Th. 2:16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

This is a statement clarifying that it was the Jews who rejected Jesus as Lord who were responsible for the death of Jesus, just as they had been responsible for the death of faithful prophets of God in the past. (11/06) Though the Jews were responsible for having Christ crucified, it was to redeem men from sin that He had to come to earth as a man and submit to that death. The Jews were the instruments in the hand of God for accomplishing that purpose. It was **my** sin, just as surely as the actions of those Jews, that is to blame for His death.

These same Jews were the ones persecuting those who were choosing Christ as Lord at this time. Their motives were selfish and their hearts hard. They were not pleasing God and were positioning themselves as the enemy of all men by trying to prevent the gospel message from reaching the Gentiles.

This brings to mind the government leaders and politicians of our day. They are more concerned with accomplishing their own agendas than they are about allowing people the ability to make informed choices on their own about what is right for them. They act as if the people aren't capable of making wise decisions and that the government should assume all responsibility for making these choices for them. For example,

- You can't possibly allow the teaching of creation along with evolution; people might logically deduce that the fact of a Creator makes more sense.
- Activist judges have decided to allow same sex marriages even though the majority of Americans believe marriage should be defined as the union of a man and a woman.
- Pork barrel spending is viewed as an acceptable form of bribery in order to get legislation passed that has nothing to do with otherwise good pieces of legislation. It doesn't matter that these projects are being paid for by many more people who won't benefit from them than those who will.

Of course, I believe we the people have to take the blame for allowing them to act so independently. We have been duped into believing that only the rich and powerful can have an impact. We have been fooled into thinking that the individual is powerless---and he is, until and unless he chooses to join forces with those of like thinking. The percentage of people who vote in elections proves our apathy. Enough for that rabbit trail.

“to fill up their sins alway” – It seems that these Christ-rejecters are continually doing something to add to their sins against God and His Son.

“uttermost” = the point aimed at as the limit, the conclusion, result (immediate, ultimate, or prophetic)

“for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost” – In context, Paul is again referencing the wrath of God spoken of in chapter one, verse 10. They definitely fit into the categories of those upon whom God’s wrath will come—His enemies/adversaries, children of disobedience. It would seem that Paul’s reference to the *uttermost* would be referencing His ultimate wrath, which has been prophesied and is yet future. The direct reference is to those Jews who represent all Jews who have positioned themselves as enemies of God.

One of the reasons for the 70th week of Daniel yet to come, which we commonly call the tribulation, is to cause the Jews to recognize their Messiah. In order to bring this about, they will first experience “great tribulation” such as never before in their history.

Matt. 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

1Th. 2:17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

1Th. 2:18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

Although Paul and his team had to leave Thessalonica, they carried a love and concern for those believers in their hearts. They tried very hard to get back there; Paul, in particular, tried more than once, but they never made it. Why? Satan hindered them. That is a very interesting phrase to me. We know that Satan couldn’t have hindered them unless God had allowed that to happen. We don’t know how Satan hindered him, but we do know that Satan can use individuals and has limited powers over nature—as evidenced by his persecution of Job. That his hindrance was through the intervention of Satan we can be sure because Paul is writing through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2Tim. 3:16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God...

We can also be sure that since Satan was allowed to directly impact Paul’s plan, there was an opportunity for God to be glorified in some way as he and his companions responded to Satan’s interference. In the life of His children, God always brings about good from the things that happen to us.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

It’s also interesting to me that Paul wasn’t complaining to God for allowing Satan to interfere. He lived by the truth he taught. He knew that good would result if He would keep His faith focused on serving God and trusting Him as **Lord** and Father.

1Th. 2:19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

1Th. 2:20 For ye are our glory and joy.

Paul teaches in his letters to the Romans and Corinthians that we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Rom. 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

2Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

In his first letter to the Corinthians he describes a time when the works of believers will be judged to determine rewards.

1Cor. 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1Cor. 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

1Cor. 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

1Cor. 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

1Cor. 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

This judgment will obviously happen after the body of Christ has been taken to dwell with Jesus in the Father's house. Paul, Silas and Timothy were looking forward to that time as a time of presenting the Thessalonian believers to the Lord in consideration of reward. They were confident that the work accomplished in the lives of these believers would qualify as gold, silver, and precious stones. They also recognized that the work accomplished in the lives of these believers was a work of the Holy Spirit, but they rejoiced in the fact that they were allowed the privilege of being the messengers of the gospel and laying a firm foundation of God's truth for their continued spiritual growth.