

## 1 Thessalonians Pastor Lou DeVizia

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Introduction: After testifying in Chapter One to the wonderful work God had begun at Thessalonica, and after giving God much praise and thanks in his writing, Paul turns more personal. He writes to them recounting certain aspects of his experience at Thessalonica. In so doing, we learn what great care and love Paul had for this church. A great example of devotion to God through faithful service is put forth, and we do well to learn from it and follow suit.

### 1. Verses 1-12 - Paul, Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy: The Conduct of Ministers of the Gospel

- vv.1-2 - Paul & co. were very **bold** in the preaching of the Gospel. They had **suffered** and were **spitefully treated** at Philippi. They were also poorly treated by the unbelieving in the synagogue at Thessalonica. Nevertheless they were strong and resilient in the Gospel, and this was **not in vain**. People were saved and a church was born.

- vv.3-6 - Paul & co. were bold because their **exhortation** (their message) was correct, holy and sincere. A *doctrinally accurate, non-worldly and firmly trusted and unchanging* message is a *powerful* message. **God** had **entrusted** them with this ministry, and so they preached to please Him, not the earthly audience. They did not flatter. They did not coax by offering promises of fleshly benefit, nor did they seek the same (no **cloak for covetousness**). They did not position themselves as anything special and seek the praise of men. Their message was the Gospel, pure, simple, preached with clarity, accuracy, conviction and from the heart for the pleasure and glory of God and God only.

- vv.7-9 - Paul & co. exercised great personal care towards them, like a **nursing mother** towards **her own children** (you'll see in vv.10-12 that they exercised *fatherly* care as well). They gave their **own lives** for these people. They laid aside many personal rights; chiefly, to be financially supported for their ministry. They labored **night and day**, and they were also supported by the church at Philippi (Philippians 4:15-16). The idea is that they loved these people so much and so longed for their spiritual welfare that they did not want to be a **burden** to them. It's possible that, had they stayed longer, the Thessalonian church would have been able to support them. Their devotion to these people prompted them to forsake that. That was evidence of their personal affection for these people.

- vv.10-12 - Finally, Paul & co. were devout, just and blameless in their behavior; they set a good example for these new believers. *Example setting is a big part of ministry, especially in holy conduct.* Just as it is a father's responsibility to portray and teach good conduct to his children, so did these ministers towards the Thessalonian believers. We are to **walk worthy of God** - it is the only reasonable response to those who, by His love and grace, have been called to be in **His own kingdom**.

### 2. Verses 13-16 - The Thessalonian Believers: The Right Response to the Gospel

- v.13a - The great desire of every preacher and every believer who witnesses is that those who hear receive the message **not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God**. And so Paul & co. thanked God without ceasing.

- v.13b - A tremendous testimony to the power of the ministry of the word: Beyond bringing us to salvation, careful study and learning and application of God's word **effectively works** in believers. Through the ministry of the word we are instructed in truth, and we acquire knowledge, understanding and wisdom; we are shown where our ways are wrong and we are corrected; we are shown how to walk in righteousness; we are equipped for every good work; we are fed so we can grow up to maturity; we become holy in our thinking and in every attitude of the heart; we learn of

God's great works in days of old, we learn of what He is yet going to do; we learn powerful things to share with those who are lost; etc.

- v.14 - Their increasing knowledge of the word also gave them great strength to endure suffering, just as the churches in Judea endured it.

- vv.15-16 - A testimony against the persecutors in Judea, and a lesson about the real aim of the enemy in persecuting Christians: *Satan wants the gospel silenced*. The Judean persecutors **killed... Jesus**, the **prophets, persecuted** the apostles, and tried to block the spread of the Gospel to the **Gentiles** - all direct attempts to silence the Gospel. But the **wrath... upon them** (the persecutors are about whom Paul writes) is certain.

### 3. Verses 17-20 - The Selfless Love of the Minister

- vv.17-18 - This is a beautiful picture of the love among brethren that faith in Christ creates. It also portrays Satan's intense hatred of that.

- vv.19-20 - The measure of a minister's heart: he's not in it for himself; rather, his longing is to see those to whom he ministers **in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming**. A faithful minister's reward is not the size of his congregation, his esteem in the community, or his earthly well-being. His reward is knowing that the people to whom he is ministering clearly understand the gospel and its demands, that they are hearing the pure word of God, that they are soundly saved and growing in their faith, that they are endeavoring to share their faith, and ultimately, that they are ready to be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ. The minister's **crown of rejoicing** is that his flock is ready. And he makes them ready by faithfully feeding them the word and nurturing them all along the way.

Conclusion: Be committed to enduring trials, loving the word of God, and growing in your faith. Apply the word of God to every form of conduct in your life, and walk worthy of being a subject in God's kingdom. Be thankful, pray, and love God's word.