1 Thessalonians

Lesson # 4

2:1-8

No new verses this week. Keep reviewing the verses memorized from chapter 1. Persevere! Sow to the Spirit and reap its fruits!

In chapter 2 we have “one of the richest descriptions of the work of a Christian minister to be found in the New Testament” (Rolston). Take a moment to ask God to give you a teachable heart as we examine this exemplary ministry, then read through the entire chapter.

1. **In verse 1 the authors state that “*our coming to you was not in vain*”. In what sense was their coming not in vain? What did they accomplish there? (Hint: Look back through Chapter 1.)**
2. The apostles call the Thessalonians as witnesses of their ministry and conduct. What do they want the believers to recall about them? See verses 1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 11.
3. **Directly prior to their arrival in Thessalonica, what had Paul, Silvanus and Timothy experienced in Philippi? See Acts 16:22-24.**
4. **What sort of “opposition” did they then encounter in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-10)? How does this compare to the sort of opposition *we* might expect to face when sharing the gospel?**
5. **What was their response to the opposition they faced (v. 2)?**
6. Where did this boldness come from (v. 2), and why was it so important to their ministry? See 2 Corinthians 3:12; Ephesians 6:18-20.
7. Does “boldness” characterize your sharing of the gospel? How do you respond to opposition if it comes? What can we learn from the apostles’ example?
8. **After being driven violently from Thessalonica, the now absent Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were being accused of conduct that was both evil and unbecoming. From their self-defense in verses 3-6, what picture emerges of the sort of accusations they were facing?**
9. Why would it be important to defend themselves against these accusations, rather than simply keeping silent in the face of such slander? How could *not* offering a defense do damage to the church, the gospel, and the glory of God?
10. **In the course of defending themselves against false accusations, the authors identify their true motive in verse 4. What was their understanding of the origin and purpose of their ministry?**
11. Verse 4 tells us that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy had been *approved*, which carries the idea of being proven by prior testing. What exactly had they been approved to do, and what limitations were placed on them as a result of this stewardship? See also Titus 1:1:3.
12. **These ministers were aiming to please God, with a full awareness that He was examining their hearts. What practical effects did this awareness have on their day-to-day ministry (v. 4-6)? What might happen to my message if I were motivated to “please men” instead of God?**

1. **The authors of Scripture have always been aware that God is a searcher and tester of hearts. From the following passages, what do you learn about God’s examination of our hearts? What is He looking for, and what does He do with what He finds? If time allows read1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 139:1-4, 23; Jeremiah 12:3;17:9-10.**

1. What affect should the awareness that God *examines our hearts* have on our lives?
2. From verse 4, whose message were the apostles proclaiming when they preached the gospel (see also vv. 2, 8, 9)? What does this indicate about how they must handle this message?
3. **We, too, have been entrusted with this treasure, and are called to faithfully proclaim the gospel of God to a lost world. What are some ways that we are tempted to alter the gospel in order to please men? What do people in our age want to hear? What elements do they NOT want to hear?**

**17.When the God who examines hearts examines yours, how will He judge your stewardship of the gospel? What have you learned from the apostles’ example that can help you to be more bold, faithful, or careful in your own life and delivery?**

**18.Verse 7 begins with “but”. Looking at the preceding verses, what are the authors contrasting here?**

**19.What specific actions did the apostles’ love give birth to (v. 7-12)?**

**20. The apostles find that their affections and actions towards the church are best expressed through parental imagery. What maternal elements do we see in v. 7-8? Describe this illustration in your own words?**

21.What parallels do you recognize between a faithful, affectionate, gospel preacher to the mother of a nursing child? With this maternal gentleness also came a willingness to impart to the church their whole lives. What affect would this opening up of their lives have on those to whom they were ministering?

**22.Think of the people you minister to personally. Along with your “official” responsibilities, are you also imparting to them your own life? In what ways?**

**What concerns and fears do we often have when we consider opening our lives to others in this way?**

**23.If a pastor today were to minister as the apostles did, many would warn him of the danger of “burnout” and encourage him to draw “healthy boundaries” between himself and his flock. How would Paul respond to this advice?**

**See Philippians 2:14-17, Colossians 1:28-29.**