

In this chapter, Paul declares that the persecution that he and his companions experienced at Philippi did not dampen their desire to share the gospel with the Thessalonians. In fact, they worked hard to insure that their behavior did not hinder the Thessalonians' reception of the gospel, treating them with the same care and gentleness that parents would use with their children.

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

Paul had already mentioned the manner of his group's arrival and reception at Thessalonica in the previous chapter (1 Th. 1:9). He reminds the Thessalonians that it was not "in vain" (Greek: *empty; of no value or purpose*). Paul and his companions were not on vacation seeking to entertain themselves while they were at Thessalonica, nor were they merely killing time while in the city. On the contrary, they had come to share the gospel and their preaching had resulted in the salvation of many at Thessalonica (Acts 17:4).

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.

"But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated [treated shamefully], as ye know, at Philippi" – Paul and Silas had been falsely accused, whipped and imprisoned at Philippi immediately before they moved on to Thessalonica (Acts 16:12-40). The Thessalonians had become aware of what Paul and Silas suffered at Philippi.

"we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention" – "Even after" all that they had suffered at Philippi, this persecution had not dampened the enthusiasm of Paul and Silas to preach the gospel of God. They did not become discouraged when they began to face persecution at Thessalonica as well (Acts 17:5) because they knew the importance of sharing the gospel with the Thessalonians. God gave them the boldness to preach the gospel in spite of the immense opposition.

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

"For our exhortation was not of deceit [to lead astray into error], nor of uncleanness [of impure motives], nor in guile [deceit]" – The message that Paul and his companions preached was not one of falsehoods designed to deceive their listeners. Those that preached a false message tended to say things that appealed to the listeners in order to gain their acceptance. This was not the case with Paul and his companions, who preached against sin and pointed to Christ as the solution.

"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak" – God had entrusted Paul and his companions with the gospel of Jesus Christ and they understood the gravity of that responsibility. Since they did not want to betray the responsibility that God had entrusted to them, they had no choice but to preach the uncompromised gospel just as it had been given to them.

"not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth [to test or examine] our hearts" – They knew that they were accountable to God for the message they preached, so they did not preach a message that would please men. They preached the message that God gave them in order to please Him. **Gal. 1:10** "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

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

God was a witness to the way they conducted themselves and of the message they preached to the Thessalonians. They did not use words of flattery to gain the acceptance of their listeners nor did they preach a message that sounded spiritual but was actually a veiled attempt to benefit from the Thessalonians, financially or otherwise. Too many so called "preachers" today preach a message intended to convince people to give them money ("a cloke of covetousness") rather than a message that will point people to salvation through Jesus Christ.

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.

"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others" – Paul and his team did not seek for the admiration of men nor did they present themselves as worthy of glory.

"when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ" – As the apostles of Christ, Paul and his team could have required that the Thessalonians support them while they were in the city. However, they declined to do this in spite of their right to do so. In 1 Cor. 9, Paul spent the bulk of the chapter explaining why he chose not to be a financial burden to the Corinthians despite his right as an apostle to expect it. Paul did not want to take the risk that they might misunderstand his motives and then reject the gospel he preached.

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

"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" – Paul uses the image of a mother nursing her child. Just as a nursing mother is gentle with her child, giving it what it needs to grow, so Paul prioritized what the Thessalonians needed to grow in their faith. He did not want to do anything (such as asking for money) that might cause the Thessalonians to turn away from the gospel.

"So being affectionately desirous [to lovingly long for] of you...because ye were dear unto us" – These words express the love that Paul and his team had for the Thessalonians. They understood that it would only harm the Thessalonians if they turned away from the gospel.

"we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls" – Paul and his team did not come to Thessalonica in order to gain from them but to seek their salvation. They were willing to give their time, energy, and even their very lives if necessary to bring the gospel to the Thessalonians so that they could be saved. That is truly the love of God!

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.

“For ye remember, brethren, our labour [*intense labor with trouble and toil*] **and travail** [*labor with hardship*]” – Paul reminds the Thessalonians of how hard he and his companions worked while they were at Thessalonica. This could refer to the persecution they faced while attempting to share the gospel and/or to the intense labor they did in order to support themselves while at Thessalonica. **“for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God”** – Paul and his companions worked during the day to provide for their own needs (food, shelter, etc.) and then preached/taught in the evening despite the opposition they encountered sharing the gospel. It seems they had little time to rest. Paul and his companions did not want to be a burden to the people they were trying to reach with the gospel. They came to give, not to take.

10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they themselves were witnesses (as was God) of how he and his companions behaved themselves while in the city. They behaved themselves “holily” (in a pious manner), “justly” (uprightly, properly), and “unblameably” (without blame). Paul and his companions were honest and genuine in their behavior and no one could honestly say otherwise.

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, 12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

“As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children” – Not only were the Thessalonians witnesses to the honest character of Paul and his companions, they also remember the content of their preaching. There were three major components to the preaching of Paul and his companions: 1) exhortation (encouragement) – Paul encouraged them to turn to Christ; 2) comfort – they were delivered through Christ from God’s judgment of their sins and now had peace with God; 3) charged – they challenged the Thessalonians to live holy lives in obedience to Christ. This preaching was done with the same type of love that a father would express toward his own children who wants his children to grow to become good and capable adults.

“That ye would walk worthy [*suitable*] of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory” – The fatherly desire that Paul and his companions had was that the Thessalonians would grow in their faith and thus walk in a manner suitable to followers of God, Who had called them to be glorified as citizens of His kingdom.

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.

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing” – Paul repeats the fact that he and his companions continually thanked God for the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:2-3).

“because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men” – Paul is grateful that the Thessalonians did not dismiss the preaching of Christ as an imaginary tale that was conceived in the minds of men.

“but as it is in truth, the word of God” – The Thessalonians did not view the gospel of Jesus Christ as the word of men, but they instead recognized it for what it truly was: the word of God.

“which effectually worketh [*energēō – to actively work*] **also in you that believe”** – The Greek word translated “effectually worketh” is where we get our English word “energy.” Paul is saying that the word of God that they preached was the energy source that worked in the hearts of the Thessalonians to generate faith and accomplish their salvation (**Rom. 10:17** “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*”). If we want more faith then we should immerse ourselves in the word of God.

Verses 14-20: Paul wanted the Thessalonians to be aware that the suffering they were experiencing for Christ put them in good company because the churches in Judea were also suffering in like manner. In fact, the unbelieving Jews that were persecuting the Judean church were acting contrary to God and were in opposition to the well being of men in general since they opposed the preaching of the gospel. These Jews were under the severest judgment of God. Paul then expresses his desire to return to Thessalonica to see the believers there since even though he and his companions were not there physically, their hearts were still with the Thessalonians. Even though Satan had hindered them from returning, what gave them great joy was the thought of seeing the Thessalonians in the presence of Christ at His return.