

STANDING FIRM

Part Two: *loving leaders*

September 10, 2023

This fall, we're studying the Apostle Paul's letters to the Thessalonians to learn how to stand firm in the Lord. Last Sunday, we looked at 1 Thessalonians chapter one, where Paul commends the church for faithfully working, witnessing, and waiting for the Lord. Today, we're going to study 1 Thessalonians chapter two, where Paul defends his ministry against some false teachers trying to impugn his character. These false teachers hoped to ruin the new church by destroying its confidence in the person who planted it.

In the first half of chapter two...

Paul reminds the Thessalonians how he delivered the Gospel to them. 2:1-12

1st – Paul reminds the Thessalonians of how the gospel changed their lives. Vs. 1

Paul's gospel message led the Thessalonians to turn away from lifeless idols and worship the true living God (1:9). Their changed lives proved the value of Paul's ministry and message.

2nd - Paul reminds the Thessalonians of his motivation to preach the gospel to them. Vs. 2-6

Paul's motivation for preaching the gospel to the Thessalonians was not sinful. He was not preaching for money or praise; he was doing God's will. He and his companions were God's messengers preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

3rd – Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he treated them like a caring mother. Vs. 7-9

Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he, Silas, and Timothy could have asked their converts to support them financially (1 Tim. 5:18), but they chose to serve the new believers like a nursing mother gently cares for her children. The missionaries toiled day and night to earn a living so they would not burden the Thessalonians with their physical needs (Acts 18:3; 2 Thess. 3:8).

4th – Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he treated them as an encouraging father. Vs. 10-12

Like a good father, Paul encouraged the Thessalonians in three ways (Vs. 12):

- Paul directed the Thessalonians onto the right path (Prov. 22:6).
- Paul comforted the Thessalonians so they would keep going (1 Thess. 5:14).
- Paul warned the Thessalonians to live like children of God (Gal. 6:7-10).

After he reminds the Thessalonians how he delivered the gospel to them...

Paul reminds the Thessalonians how they received the Gospel. 2:13-16

1st – Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they received his message as the Word of God. V. 13

Paul, Silas, and Timothy's message was different. It was as if God was speaking through them! Unlike the word of men, the Word of God is not empty and powerless. It has supernatural power (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

2nd – Paul reminds the Thessalonians how they chose to suffer for Christ. Vs. 14-16

Not only did the Thessalonians recognize and receive the Word of God, but they also chose to suffer persecution for Christ, just like the believers in the Christian churches in Judea. Their willingness to suffer for Christ proved they had received the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

3rd – Paul reminds the Thessalonians that Satan prevented him from returning to their city. Vs.17-20

Paul wanted to revisit Thessalonica and continue to minister to the young Christians there, but Satan hindered him. Paul doesn't say how the Devil stopped him from traveling to Thessalonica. But the fact that Satan didn't want Paul in Thessalonica showed the importance of the young church there.

Takeaways...

- Paul did ministry to please God – not people. *Are you ministering to please God or people?*
- Paul acted like a caring mother and encouraging father to lead the Thessalonians to Christ. *What are you willing to do to lead people to Christ?*
- Paul used the Bible to teach people the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *Do you know how to use the Bible to teach people the Gospel of Jesus Christ?*