

I Thessalonians 2:7-12 The Care of Paul as a Mother and a Father

Alright, we are starting a new section today, I Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 7 through 12, which is actually the second part, to a two-part section. Verses 1 through 12 is one section, we have taken it in two separate occasions. Last week we took verses 1 through 6 and today we will take the second half of the section verses 7 through 12.

In verses 1 to 6 Paul shared his inner life, his motives for what he did. In verses 7 to 12 he is going to present to us his outer life, the outer function based on his inner life. Using last week's study verses 1 through 6 as our introduction for today. Paul started out chapter 2 verse 1 with, **For you yourselves know, brothers.** And I emphasized to you that in verses 1-12 the term *you know* is used four times. And one time he uses the word *remember*. So he is ministering things to the Thessalonians that they already know, and he is calling things back to their recollection. And it is all about his testimony. That is what chapter 2 is all about, The Testimony of Paul. Chapter 1 was The Testimony of the Thessalonians. Chapter 2 is The Testimony of Paul. Why do we even need a testimony from Paul? Why does Paul need to give his testimony to the Christians in Thessalonica?

Because during the two-year period, that is two years from the time that Paul entered into Thessalonica until the time that he wrote this letter is approximately two years. And in that time some false teachers had come into Thessalonica and spoke badly about Paul; about how he is always getting into trouble, he is always causing riots, finds himself in prison, all for preaching the gospel. So that means to them, they tried to make it so that there must be something wrong when all these things happen. So Paul is setting the story straight, that if I came into town to rip you off or give you misleading false statements I would not suffer so much for it. I would not be afflicted for it. I would not stand to do that. So Paul is presenting to them what he had to suffer for the sake of Christ and for the sake of preaching the gospel.

And even challenging - I know in I Corinthians he presented the same thing, and he challenged the super apostles who came into town. They said they were "super" apostles. "If Paul was an apostle," they said, "we are super apostles." And they taught the people to give all their money and everything that they had to these ministers. And so Paul challenged these so-called super apostles to give up everything like he is, just for the sake of the truth, for the sake of the ministry of the word.

He says, **For you yourselves know, brothers,** in verse 1 of I Thessalonians 2. Here is the first of four mentions that he is going to make mention of *you know*. **You yourself know brothers our entrance to you, that it has not become empty.** Not become for nothing. So two years ago there is still substance, there is still fruit. There is still the ongoing life of the Spirit in their midst.

But also having suffered before, and having been insulted, according as you know. Here is a second time he mentions *you know*. **According as you know in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak the gospel of God to you in much agony.** The word *conflict* in the traditional text is the word **ἀγών** (agōn), *agony*. And so he relates to them what he had to suffer, what he

had to be insulted with in Philippi - the town that they were in before they came to Thessalonica. He says, "And you know when we were there, **we were bold in our God**," - not *about* God, but *in our God* - **to speak the gospel of God to you in much agony**, much hardship.

We saw from Jude 3 that he says, **Agonize over the faith**. The faith is an agony.

We saw from Hebrews chapter 12 verse 1, **Therefore we also since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race**. That is the word **ἀγών** (agōn). **Let us run with endurance the race that is being set before us**. So it is presented as an agony. Something that Paul went through and this helped him in his presentation to the people.

He says verse 3, **For our encouragement was not out of error**, (that is, *misleading*) **neither out of uncleanness**, (that is, *impure motives*) **nor out of deceit** (that is, *speaking one thing but meaning another*). He calls it *encouragement*. **But according as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, in this way we speak; not as pleasing to men, but to God, the One proving our hearts**.

So according to his message it was not misleading, it was not with impure motives. He was not out to get the things that they owned. Nor was it in deceit, nor in double (duplicity) message. **But according as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel**. So by Paul going through the agony and not quitting, he has been approved by God. **In this way we speak not as pleasing to men, but to God the One, proving our hearts**.

We saw last week from I Peter chapter 1 verses 6 and 7 that God proves all believers. God puts all believers through the test to prove them, to prove whether they belong to Christ. And it is through the agony. If a person does not belong to Christ, they are not going to stay with the Christian movement, or Christianity, or the things of the Lord if there is agony and affliction accompanying it. But God puts us purposely through afflictions and hardships, proving our hearts. So Paul says, "I have been proved. The Lord put me through it. I am still with the Lord." He is not talking about performance here. He is talking about the fact that when the agony is all over, or during the time of the agony, Christ is still there. We are still with Christ, and Christ is still with us. It might be hardship, but nevertheless every Christian is being proven. And Paul is presenting the fact how he was proved by God and approved by God.

Verse 5, **For neither at any time did we become in a word of flattery, according as you know**. There is the third instance where he says *as you know*. **Nor in pretense of covetousness (God is witness)**. So we did not flatter you to try to win you over. We did not use a pretense, **a covering of covetousness**. To *covet* means *to want more than what you have*. It is to covet what other people have and do whatever it takes to get it.

He says, **Nor seeking glory from men, neither from you, nor from others, being able to be in weight, as apostles of Christ**. We will see a little bit of that today in our verses 7 to 12. *Being in weight*, that is the literal translation, but it literally means *to push your weight around*. We are apostles of Christ. We did not come in and push our weight around. We did not push our

weight around and say, "You need to give to us, you need to serve us, we are apostles. We are superior in status."

So now we come to I Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 7 to 12. He just got through presenting in verses 1 through 6 his inner life, his motives for what he did. But now he is going to present his outer life. This outer life function based on his inner life. He says in verse 7, **But we became gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother might warm her own children.** Notice the reflexive pronoun: *her own children*. But he starts out by saying, **but we became**, another one of his phrases for this section. To become something means it is not normal. They became this by the Spirit of God.

But we became gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother might warm her own children. There are several words here that have to do with the parental relationship with children that are not found in other texts. It is the only place that some of these words are found here in the Bible. **We became gentle in your midst as a nursing mother.**

Nursing does not mean *a nurse in a hospital*. It means *a mother who is nursing her children* that she might warm her own children.

The word *warm* means *to bring close to you to keep warm*, much like a mother does when she breastfeeds her children.

The word *gentle* is a special word. It is not used for *gentleness* in general, but gentle as a parent would relate to the children. So gentle with your own children is what he was saying.

We treated you like a parent with their child, we were gentle. Interesting, no hellfire and brimstone from Paul. He was gentle.

Verse 8, **In this way longing for you.** And again the term *longing* is a special word that is especially applied from parents to children. **In this way**, that is *gentle* in verse 7, **longing for you we are pleased to give to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own souls.** So interesting this introduces really the purpose for this whole entire section. It is not just to preach the gospel, but to give your life. That is what it means to minister. It is not just being a preacher or being a teacher, it is giving your life and giving your soul.

It is like the new converts were Paul's very own kids. There is a certain affection that you have with your own children that you do not have with anyone else. And they became having this affection. It is the actual sacrifice of your own life as if they were your own children where you would lose yourself and even sacrifice yourself. And he gives the reason for this. The reason why it is sacrificial, **On account of that you have become** (there is our term *become* again) **you have become beloved to us.**

Beloved means *to be the object of love*, much like God does to us. Paul says, "You became the object of our love, like our own kids." First of all, as like a mother would be gentle with her child when she is nursing them, nursing her own children, not someone else's, but her

own. **So in this way longing for you we are pleased to give to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls.** That is word used in the Greek text. **On account of that you have become beloved to us.**

Verse 9, **For, brothers, you remember our labor and toil.** Again using the term *brothers* as a family affection for them. He uses the word *remember* instead of *you know*. He now says **You remember our labor and toil**, recalling their attention back. **Working night and day for not a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.** What was interesting is that when Paul came into town, he did not preach tithing, he did not preach giving at all, so that the people would not be burdened, and it be a trap or a reason for not coming to hear the gospel. So Paul went and got a job where he could work during the day and then sit in the homes, and sit in the places, and preach the gospel to the people. It is the sacrifice that a person gives. It is the love that a person gives by sacrificing their own selves, earning their own way if need be.

I can remember my own childhood. My mother was a single parent raising my sister and I. My sister was nine years older than me. When she got married and left home, it was just me. But my mother provided enough income to where we could live in a nice neighborhood. We did not live in the part of town where the gangs were, but a nice neighborhood near the school that I attended. But she worked during the day is an optometrist receptionist, her day job, and then she came home and fixed dinner for me, and then she went to her night job, and she worked till 1 o'clock in the morning, working as a switchboard operator. But she did this in order to provide for me. The sacrifice that she made. She did not make me go work, even though I had multiple paper routes, and it provided some extra money for me.

But the sacrifice, the labor, toiling night and day so that people can have what is necessary in the truth of the Gospel is what Paul is presenting here. If you remember, I keep alluding to I Corinthians chapter 9. Paul presented the same thing to the Christians in Corinth. He says, "When we came into town, we even have the Scriptures to back us up that you are to support us." Jesus said, "He who preaches the gospel should live by the gospel," but he had other scriptures from the Old Testament about giving and supporting. And Paul says, "Out of love we did not even use that, we did not even mention it." I mean after all the logic goes, he says in I Corinthians 9, a farmer plants a field in order to eat from off of the harvest. And does the soldier go to war paying his own wages? The answer is no. But yes, the farmer reaps some of the harvest that he plants. So Paul says, "Should not we, even according to the Scriptures? But we do not. We do not even take up an offering so that it will not be a burden to you." Because if it is a burden to you, if it stops you from hearing the word then it is not worth it.

So he says in verse 9 again, **For bothers you remember our labor and toil.** He wants them to realize that when the false teachers come into town, they try to get everybody to support them. But he went and got a job so that financial support is not a problem in hearing the word. So that is Paul's care for them as a mother would be gentle and provide for her own, sacrifice for her own children. He saw them as his own children, like his own kids. But then in verses 10 through 12, the care of Paul as a father. He says, **You and God are witnesses how holily and righteously and blamelessly we became.** Here is our word again, *to become*; something that is not natural, something that God has to do. **We became to you the ones believing.** Three things

that he says that **You and God are witnesses**. So he is calling upon their remembrance to be witnesses how he conducted himself. Not only was he gentle as a nursing mother, but he *as a father to his own children* he will say in verse 11.

The word *holily* means *to be holy in action*. Pure.

Righteously is a judicial term that means *to be lined up with the law*. A person is right with the law - if you go to court and they find that you are lined up with the law and you obeyed the law, you are considered *righteous*. Spiritually speaking to be righteous means to be lined up with God - to do what is right in the sight of God.

And *blamelessly*, another judicial term that means *without fault, without blame, without reproach*. It does not say *without accusation*. There were plenty of accusations against Paul, but he says, "We were blameless. The accusations were false. They were not true. We lined up with God."

Then verse 11 says, **According as you know**. We have the fourth time that we have the phrase *you know*. **According as you know how each one of you, as a father to his own children**, (notice the reflexive pronoun, *to his own children*) **encouraging you, and consoling you, and testifying**.

So here is *as a father*. First, it was as a nursing mother and now he is saying, **how each one of you as a father to his own children, encouraging you**. The word *encourage* means *to comfort with encouragement*. It is a word that means to come alongside, to give someone the encouragement that they need.

To encourage you and consoling. The word *consoling* has to do with dealing with people who have experienced a death, a loss in the family, or a personal loss. He says, "We were consoling you as a father." The word is found also in John chapter 11 verse 19 and John chapter 11 verse 31 where the people attempted to console Mary, and Martha, and the family at the death of Lazarus. Consoling.

So encouraging you as a father, consoling you as a father with his own children, **And testifying to you**. So the testimony was to the encouragement found in verse 12, **For you to walk worthily of God** - that is the testimony - **the One calling you into His own kingdom and glory**. Notice the reflexive pronoun again, *His own*. So we are testifying, and encouraging you, and consoling you for you to walk worthily of God.

Interesting, how do you walk worthily of God? The word *worthy*, **ἀξιῶς** (axiōs) in Greek, and it has to do with the balance scales down in the marketplace. The value of something was measured by weight. So you put an object in one side of the balance scales and you put money to where the balance scales even out, they are equal, that is how much the item would be worth. To be worthily of God means that if you belong to the Lord, and you live and walk with the Lord, then you walk in balance with the Lord. **The One calling you**, and that is a present participle, **continually calling you into His own kingdom and His own glory**.

So Paul is sharing his care over them as a mother, and his care over them as a father, showing that ministry is not just preaching and teaching, ministry is family. Caring for people as if they are family. Not in general. He had to become that. By the Spirit of God they became like his own kids, and he is calling this to their attention. Compared to the people who came into town who set up shop, and ran church like a business, that showed no interest or care at all for the people. That is what ministry is, caring for the people, as a mother, as a father, as brothers and sisters. As he keeps calling them, *And you brothers*, a family. A family of the Lord, brothers and sisters. So it is more than just teaching and preaching, it is ministry. And Paul said, "I sacrificed myself as if you were my own children. I did not put any burden on you to make you feel like you had to leave or not hear the gospel. I will go out and get a job if I have to," Paul said.

Which he did. He did in Corinth too. Remember I told you that he said the same thing to the Christians in Corinth? Except in Corinth the false teachers, super apostles came into town and took money from the people, took the people's possessions. So Paul says, "I sacrificed myself for you but the false apostles come into town, and they take your possessions. You give your money to them. So forgive me this wrong." So Paul says, "I did wrong to relieve you of this burden when you turned around and gave your money and everything to the false teachers."

So Paul had sacrifice in mind. Insight into Paul's life is more than just Bible study, it is more than just preaching a message. Caring for the people, to pray, to pray that God would make you become what the people need.

Let's close with prayer.