

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians

## "Helping The Baby Grow Up"

(1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2:1-12)

**What happened to Paul at Philippi?** Paul and Silas were in Asia minor when Paul received the call in a vision to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:9). They arrived first in the city of Philippi which was a Roman colony (i.e., Rome away from Rome) and without a synagogue. So, they went to a place of prayer and sat down and spoke to a small group of women that had gathered there on the Sabbath. A woman named Lydia was saved and Paul and his companions ended up being under her care (Acts 16:11-15). On the way to the place of prayer, Paul met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination who kept annoying him by continually crying out, "These men are servants of the Most-High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." When Paul had had enough, he cast out the spirit in the name of Jesus. When he did the masters of the slave girl were upset with their potential loss of income. Consequently, they took Paul and Silas into custody and brought them before the authorities, stirred up the crowd, had them beaten and thrown into jail with their feet placed in stocks (Acts 16:16-24). Ultimately, they were freed from jail by the providence of God. An earthquake struck and destroyed the jail. While Paul and Silas could have left, they did not. The jailer was set to commit suicide when Paul stopped him from doing so calling out to him that they were all still there. Then the jailer asked Paul how he could be saved, Paul preached the gospel to him, and the jailer and his whole family were saved. Then the jailer took care of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25-34). The whole event was unsettling to the authorities, who finally apologized to Paul and Silas when they discovered that both were Roman citizens. However, they also asked them to leave the city (Acts 16:35-40). They then traveled to Thessalonica.

**The Text:** <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. <sup>2</sup>But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. <sup>3</sup>For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, <sup>4</sup>but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. <sup>5</sup>For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. <sup>6</sup>Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. <sup>7</sup>But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. <sup>8</sup>So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. <sup>9</sup>For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. <sup>10</sup>You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. <sup>11</sup>For you know how, like a father with his children, <sup>12</sup>we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (ESV)

**The Purposes of writing 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians:** In the first part of the second chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians (v1-12), we see that Paul's purpose is to defend his conduct at Thessalonica against criticism that had developed in his absence. The style of writing suggests that people outside the church were accusing him of wrong motives and improper conduct.

**Analysis:** Warren Wiersbe indicates that Paul paints a three-fold picture of his own ministry toward the Thessalonians: (1) the faithful steward (2:1-6), (2) the loving mother (2:7-8) and (3) the concerned father (2:9-12).

**The Faithful Steward (2:1-6):** As a faithful steward Paul is emphasizing his own faithfulness. A steward owns nothing but takes control of and uses everything that belongs to his master. He has in mind the welfare of his master and sees to it that his master's welfare is advanced. At some point he must give an account to his master, and if he has managed poorly, he will suffer. Obviously, Paul's master is his Savior Jesus Christ. As Paul discusses this he provides insight into the manner, the message, the motive and the method of his ministry. Regarding the manner of his ministry, Paul and Silas had been beaten and humiliated in Philippi. This was enough to make anyone want to quit. However, they boldly continued even in the midst of conflict. Regarding the message of the ministry, Paul stated that the message was not wrong but true. He knew this because he had received the message directly from God. Regarding the motives of his ministry, Paul stated that his motives were pure. He did not suffer from covetousness and unfortunately there were others that did (Philippians 1:14-19). Paul was open and honest in all his dealings. Regarding the method of his ministry, Paul did not use deception to present the gospel message. He was someone who was concerned about how the gospel message was presented. The gospel is a costly message that required the death of God's only Son. Those that opposed Paul in Thessalonica accused him of being a peddler, trying to advance only his own circumstances (Acts 17:6-7, 13). He sought not to flatter people and inflate their egos. Nor did he seek the approval of men. He pointed out that he could have made demands from the church because of his position as an apostle of God but elected not to in order to demonstrate that his motives were pure.

**The Loving Mother (2:7-8):** As a loving mother Paul was emphasizing his gentleness. Paul indicated that he was faithful to God in presenting the gospel message, yet at the same time he was gentle with his new converts, caring for them and nurturing them on to maturity. He likened his method to that of a nursing mother who is in proximity to her baby and imparts her own life into her child. Paul loved them and was willing to share himself completely with them. They had become very dear to him.

**The Concerned Father (2:9-12):** As a concerned father Paul was emphasizing his care for them. This is shown in Paul's work, his walk and his word. Paul worked hard to support himself so that he would not be a burden to the Thessalonians while he was preaching the gospel to them. He wanted the people to see this and compare this fact to the accusations made against him that he was in it for the money and/or self-gain. Paul appealed to the Thessalonians themselves and indicated that they were witnesses of Paul's labor among them and could see for themselves that he was holy and righteous and blameless before them. He was willing to call on God as well because he knew that he had done right before his God. His enemies may accuse him, but he knew that no one could raise a charge against him and prove it (And so did they). A father must deal with each member in the family individually. While it is important that leaders address the entire group, they must also provide individual care. Paul encouraged the new believers, he comforted them as a group and individually and he charged them to move forward. He had a goal in mind – that they would walk in a manner that pleases God for God had called them in.

**Next Week:** "Growing Pains (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2:13-20)"