

The Book of Thessalonians

Chapter 2

“Tell it like it is”

Return To
All Commentary

A husband and his wife got up early one Sunday morning to go to church.

The wife dressed and prepared herself and when it was just about time to leave for the service, she noticed her husband hadn't moved a finger toward getting dressed.

Perplexed, she asked, "**Why aren't you getting dressed for church?**"

He said, "**Cause I don't want to go.**"

She asked, "**Do you have any reasons?**" He said, "**Yes, I have three good reasons.**"

“First, the congregation is cold. Second, no one likes me. And third, I just don't want to go.”

His wife replied, wisely, "**Well, honey, I have three reasons why you should go.**"

“First, the congregation is warm. Second, there are a few people there who like you. And third, you're the pastor! So get dressed!"

There was a recent survey of pastors that came back with some staggering statistics:

Over 30,000 pastors are considering quitting the ministry!

Why?

1. **Feeling inadequate to motivate the congregation** to get involved in the ministry themselves.
2. **Not being supported financially** by the people they teach.
3. **Feeling as though they are not loved** by the people in the congregation.

In our first study of 1 Thessalonians, in chapter 1, we learned about the ideal church.

This morning, in chapter 2 of 1 Thessalonians, we learn what the ideal pastor or Minister should be.

The following are The Apostle Paul's qualifications to be a pastor:

1. I am a little over 50 years old.
2. In poor health.

3. I have never ministered at any church for more than 3 years.
4. Most of the churches that I ministered in were small, even though they were in large cities.
5. I have often had to quickly depart from a church because when I taught, it caused riots and other disturbances.
6. I do not get along too well with other religious leaders.
7. I have been beaten several times and even stoned for teaching.
8. I have gone to jail for taking a strong position on the Word of God.
9. I am not particularly good at keeping records, I have to admit I cannot even remember all those that I have baptized.
10. before I was a Christian, I participated in the murder and imprisonment of Christians.

After hearing that, how many of you would want Paul to pastor your church?

Paul himself must have questioned whether or not he really was a minister of Jesus:

- 1 **When Paul** was called to go to Macedonia, while there teaching in Philippi, he was thrown into the dungeon prison and locked in stocks..
- 2 **Paul left** Philippi, and then went to Thessalonica where the people he was seeking to teach stirred up more problems against Paul and took him before government officials, where he was told it would be better if he just left town.
- 3 **When Paul had left for Macedonia**, he had prayed and felt that the Holy Spirit had told him to go to these places.
- 4 **Do you think that Paul often thought**, “Man, I must have not heard the Lord right, otherwise why has all of this happened to me?”

Here this morning, at the beginning of 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, Paul is going to tell us his personal thoughts on this whole trip that he made.

- **Paul waited to write these things** until after he had left Macedonia where he had had so much trouble.
- **He is writing this letter now** about his experiences from the city of Corinth, about the year 54 A.D., about 22 years after Jesus was Crucified and raised from the dead.
- **Young Timothy and Silas** had come and met Paul there in Corinth, Timothy will hand carry this letter back to the church in Thessalonica, so that Paul could encourage, and strengthen the believers there.

This letter to the Thessalonians in chapter 2, becomes very valuable for us, in that it shows to us a couple of important things.

1. Jesus uses the most unlikely people to teach and minister to others.
 - **As you look at Paul’s qualifications**, you realize Jesus can use anyone that is just surrendered to Him.
 - **You realize that most churches today** would never permit or even want Paul to teach in their church.

2. That when difficulty and trials are present in your life, when you are trying to do the right things in following the Lord, this is a fact of life, for everyone of us.
 - **The very trials that make you wonder** if you were really called by Jesus to speak up for Him, are the trials that He uses to train you to speak up for Him.
 - **Difficulty and struggle** are not a sign that you are a failure. Lack of results are not a sign that God is not using you.
 - **When people don't like you** or what you have to say, very often that is a sign that you are doing exactly what you are supposed to be doing.

1 Thessalonians 2

1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain.

2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at a Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

3 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.

4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness.

6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

- **During the same time that Paul was coming to teach** in the Jewish synagogues and the private homes where Christians were gathered together, there were also traveling philosophers and speakers that would also come and teach.
- **The philosophers and speakers** were there for one purpose, to get money from the people they were seeking to teach.
- **These traveling speakers** would tell the people what they wanted to hear, things that made them feel good about themselves and their life.
- **We need to understand** that there are hundred of people today who claim to speak for Jesus, who stand at the pulpit and are on Television and radio, that DO NOT SPEAK FOR JESUS, THEY SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR MESSAGE IS THEY ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN YOUR MONEY!

Paul says that he did not come with ulterior motives, he came to tell them the truth, about themselves and about Jesus.

Verse 3, Paul says, “We did not come with:

1. Error.
2. Uncleanness.
3. Deceit.

- **Paul was very careful** to make sure that he did not leave the impression with those that he came to teach that he was there to get their money, or to take anything from them.

- **His motivation was to give to them** the awesome news that Jesus is God, He forgives all sin, and He gives eternal life.

It amazes me here in verses 1 and 2 that Paul recognized that just because he suffered and was spitefully treated in the towns that he went to, that this meant what he was doing was in vain.

1. **In fact, it meant just the opposite**, it meant to Paul that he was doing exactly what the Lord called him to do.
2. **This is a lesson for us** from the Word of God:
 - Jesus called you to be His minister.
 - You are to open your mouth and speak for Him.
 - Jesus has approved you to do this, so you do not need the approval of men or women to do it.
 - In fact, if you speak up for Jesus and tell people the truth about themselves, the truth that Gods Word declares, you will be very unpopular.

There are thousands of churches today that have huge congregations, coffee shops, child care facilities, schools and other facilities right there on the church premises, that “Are tickling the ears of those that that go there”.

- **Just because a church is huge** with lots of people, facilities, money and ministry, does not mean that it is right.
- **What does that mean**; “Tickling their ears?”

2 Timothy 4:3-4

3 For **the time will come** when they will not endure sound doctrine, **but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers**;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables

Today, people do not want to hear that they are “Sinners”, condemned by God for their sins and that if they do not repent from their sins they will spend eternity in Hell.

John 8:24

24 Therefore I said to you that **you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe** that I am He, you will die in your sins."

Sin and Judgment and the doctrine that the Bible has to say concerning these are very unpopular today in the church.

- **What people want to hear is that**:
 1. God loves them and wants to bless them.
 2. That God wants to make you rich.

3. That your life style is ok with God, He does not want to judge that.

When Paul went and stood up against the religious leadership in Israel and told the people that they did not have to keep the Old Testament Law of Moses to be saved, people became enflamed.

- **If you challenge the traditions of the churches right here** in this town that are teaching nothing more than the “Traditions of men”, they will come after you like a firestorm.
- **If you tell them that the Jesus they teach is a false Jesus** and that their Jesus is not the Jesus of the Bible, they will accuse you of stirring up hatred.
- **If you tell them that they have replaced the Cross of Jesus** and His completed work to save us with the works doctrines of their church or organization, they will attack you.
- **If you challenge people on why they pray to Mary and the saints** when the Word of God says to Pray directly to the Father in Jesus name, they will get mad at you.

The true minister of Jesus has some very simple qualities that you can easily identify:

1 Thessalonians 2”5

5 For **neither at any time did we use flattering words**, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness— God is witness.

6 **Nor did we seek glory from men**, either **from you or from others**, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

1. **The true minister of Jesus** (YOU) will not seek to flatter with words, but they will tell you simply what the Word of God says.
2. **The true minister does not seek glory or recognition** from other men or women. The true minister is only interested in one thing, Exalting and lifting up the Name of Jesus.

Now who is a minister of Jesus? Any person who believes in Him as Savior and Lord...!

- **We need to just be real with people**, be ourselves and tell them the truth.
- **If we declare just what God has said** concerning Sin, Judgment and Salvation, then we never have to fear anything, because we have told the truth.

There was a young priest who was going to listen at the confessional for the first time.

He went in with another senior priest.

After a day of hearing confessions he was approached by the older pastor who said, "You know, I think that when a person finishes with a confession, you should say something on the order of

'I agree it is terrible what you have done, and I would encourage you to stay away from that kind of behavior from now on,' **instead of after hearing them confess their sins saying, ' WOW!'"**

I kind of like WOW!, because it is real.

Why do we feel like we have to give people some kind of a religious response to their sin and struggles.

I think sometimes WOW, that is pretty bad, you came to the right place, Jesus forgives sin and He gives eternal life to every person who puts their trust in Him, is the right and genuine thing that people really need to hear.

1. **We have to realize** that we live in a generation of people that the Word of God predicted would not want to hear the truth about their sin.
2. **We have to realize that every person that really believes in Jesus is to speak up and say what the Word of God says about sin.**
3. **We need to realize that when we do this,** people are no going to like it.

Too Bad!!!

- **I used to tell my two sons Rob and Mike** that “The Lord did not make me their father to win a popularity contest, he made me their dad to teach and do the right things in their life.”
- **I told them that** “I don’t care if you like me at all, you are going to do what I tell you to do, and if you don’t you are going to suffer the consequences.”
- **You know what? After they moved out, they thanked us for raising them that way. They thanked us for doing the right thing instead of trying to please them.**

Some of you remember this letter that I read to you Easter Sunday 2001

“For those of you who know me—and for those of you who don’t. My name is Robert Charles Robinson.

A born again Christian and the son to the best dad on earth, pastor Rob.

Listen to his words for they have helped me tremendously.

As I cry when i write this letter missing my parents, it is not out of sorrow, but more for the love of Jesus Christ.

He is leading me down the correct path, a difficult one, but nonetheless, the path he has chosen for me.

I can only hope I will be able to raise my own children the way my father pastor Rob has raised me.

To be a man of integrity, truth, honesty and above all else, a servant of my Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.”

- Tell people the **truth** about Jesus.
- Tell them the truth about their sin.
- Tell your kids the things they need to do, not what you need to say to make them like you.

If you will do this, the Lord will always honor the fact that you honored Him. Like Rob my son, all the hard things you have to say and do today will reap a huge resource of righteousness in people lives later.

- **The message of Chapter 2 of 1 Thessalonians** is “Tell it like it is”
- **Don’t try to be a man pleaser, be a God pleaser.**
- **Remember that this message is not for pastors, it is for Ministers of Jesus,** and a minister of Jesus is everyone who is believing in and trusting in Him.

Listen to the definitions that someone gave to the people who lead different ministries in Jesus Church: Now remember these are not true, they are just making fun of the way that some people see these people...I think that sometimes we see ourselves or others this way...

PASTOR: Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. More powerful than a locomotive. Faster than a speeding bullet. Walks on water. Makes policy with God.

Children’s Ministry Leader: Able to leap short buildings in a single bound. As powerful as a switch engine. Just as fast as a speeding bullet. Walks on water if the sea is calm. Talks with God.

Worship Leader: Leaps short buildings with a running start. Almost as powerful as a switch engine. Faster than a speeding BB. Walks on water if he knows where the stumps are. Is occasionally addressed by God.

Youth Leader: Runs into small buildings. Recognizes locomotives 2 out of 3 times. Uses a squirt gun. Knows how to use the water fountain. Mumbles to himself.

CHURCH SECRETARY: Lifts buildings to walk under them. Kicks locomotives off the track. Catches speeding bullets in her teeth. Freezes water with a single glance. When God speaks she says, "May I ask who is calling?"

In reality, this should be the correct attitude and behavior of all of us who claim to know Jesus:

2 Timothy 2:24-25

24 And a servant of the Lord must **not quarrel** but be **gentle to all, able to teach, patient,**

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25 **in humility correcting** those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth ...

Back to our study this morning:

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for **we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,**

⁹ not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

Paul was very careful to make sure that no one could accuse him of being a teacher of the Word of God for the money.

- **In reality, the Bible is very clear** on the fact that if you are a teacher of the Word of God, you should be paid and supported by those that you teach.
- **Paul, Silas, and Timothy** rightfully could have expected those that they taught and ministered to, to support them financially and could have called on them to do so

1 Timothy 5:17-18

¹⁷ Elders who do their work well should be paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching. NLT

- Sometimes pastors labor without pay.
- **Sometimes** we supplement our income with income outside of the ministry.
- **Sometimes when we are being trained** in the ministry we labor without pay.
- **I labored without pay** for 15 years in the ministry.
 1. **Pastor Dean and Jennifer** have been here 2 years and have been faithful. In teaching and ministering, but they have done so without pay.
 2. **We pray for the time** when the church can support them and pay them full time.
 3. **Sometimes Elsie and I do not get paid the full salary,** because we choose to put you guys first, we choose to minister without trying to make you feel guilty in your giving.

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

⁷ For you yourselves know **how you ought to follow us,** for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, **but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,**

⁹ not because we do not have¹ authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us

- **Paul says** "We chose to minister rather than to be ministered to"
- **The sincere true minister** is not in it for the money.
- **Trust me if you want to get rich,** don't go in the ministry.

- But if you love Jesus and are compelled to teach and minister to people, then the money doesn't matter.
1. **Many times, we speak of the stewardship** of material things, but we need also to remember that every believer is a steward of the Gospel and the Word of God.
 - **God gave** the message to Paul (1 Tim. 1:11);
 - **Paul in turn** committed it to Timothy (1 Tim. 6:20), and
 - **Timothy was expected to commit it to faithful people** in the churches who would then commit it to others (2 Tim. 2:2).

It is important to understand that Jesus will reward all those who are following Him, not based upon how successful they are, but how faithful in hanging in there to the end they are.

1 Thessalonians 2

7 But **we were gentle** among you, just **as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.**
8 **So, affectionately** longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you **not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives,** because you had become dear to us.

- **Notice the attitude** that we are to have towards those of us who are still baby Christians, “Gentleness”, “Affection” as a nursing mother, teaching the Good News about Jesus.
- **If a nursing mother does not feed herself,** she cannot feed her baby. If she eats certain foods, her baby will get sick.
- **If you want to be able to nurture, encourage and feed a younger believer,** you must take in nourishment, and encouragement yourself.

Newborn babes need

- **The milk of the Word** (1 Peter 2:2) and then must “graduate” to:
 - **The meat** (1 Cor. 3:1–4 ; Heb. 5:11–14),
 - **The bread** (Matt. 4:4 , and see Ex. 16 ,
 - **The honey** (Ps. 119:103).
1. Milk, Repentance, Faith, Salvation, laying on hands, baptism, resurrection...
 2. Meat, Prophecy, Rapture, Reigning with Jesus
 3. Bread, Jesus, partaking of Him, Eating Him, He becomes a part of you.
 4. Honey, The word of God, is sweet and pleasant.

Hebrews 6:1-2

1 The Peril of Not Progressing Therefore, **leaving the discussion of the elementary principles** of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of **repentance** from dead works and of faith toward God,
2 of the doctrine of **baptisms**, of **laying on of hands**, of **resurrection of the dead**, and of **eternal judgment.**

1 Thessalonians 2

9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;

11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, **as a father does his own children,**

12 **that you would walk worthy of God** who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Hebrews 12:14

14 Try to live in peace with everyone, and seek to live a clean and holy life, **for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.** NLT

“Without Holiness, we will not see the Lord”

1. **What exactly** is Holiness?
2. **It is not your attempts** at being a good person.
3. **Holiness means to Belong to The Lord**, in your heart, your mind, your body and your life, you have settled the fact that you belong to Jesus, you are His possession.
4. **Holiness in not behavior**, it is Attitude.

Behavior is “Sanctification”, being set apart for Jesus be being separated from the world.

1. **Sanctification** is a slow but steady process where the Holy Spirit, day by day transforms you more and more into the image of Jesus.
2. **Sanctification begins by a desire** to Be Holy for Jesus, to completely belong to Jesus, Sanctification takes your entire life

Ephesians 1:4

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

1 Thessalonians 2

13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, **you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God,** which also effectively works in you who believe.

14 For you, brethren, became imitators a of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,

- **The New Testament**, as well as the Old Testament claims that it is “The Word of God.
- **Many times Paul said** that what He was teaching was directly from Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:23

For **I received from the Lord** that which I also delivered to you...

Galatians 1:11-14

11 But I make known to you, brethren, **that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.**

12 For o I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but **it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

2 Timothy 3:16-17

6 **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,** and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 Thessalonians 2

15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men,

16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always **to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.**

One of the difficult doctrines to understand in the O/T, is that of the Lord ordering the complete destruction of every man woman, child, and many times their animals.

In Genesis 15, the Lord told Abraham that his people would be slaves in Egypt for 400 years...

Genesis 15:16

16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.**" NKJV

“The sin of the Amorites is not yet complete”. There is our answer as to why...

1. **For at least 400 more years** after the Lord told Abraham about this judgment of the Amorite pagan nations, they would have time to repent and turn to the living God.
2. **The Lord was patient with even the vile pagan nations** for hundreds of years, but eventually, with everyone, the Lord says, that is enough, time for judgment.

Ezekiel 33:11

11 Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, **'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.** Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die?

So, in 1 Thessalonians 2:16 above, the Lord is exercising the same patience with you and I today, patiently waiting for us to turn from our sin, and to Jesus...

2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

1 Thessalonians 2

17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire.

18 Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but **Satan hindered us.**

- **Having left Thessalonica** earlier than he had wished, Paul wanted to return as soon as possible, but had been prevented by what he calls satanic opposition.
- **Sometimes, the Lord gives limited access** to satan to buffet us, delay us, or even hinder us, but always for the purpose of training us and growing us up.
- **In the Book of Job**, the Lord gave satan limited access to Job, He told him, you can take his health, but not his life.

Job 1:8-12

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

9 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

10 Have **You not made a hedge around him**, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

11 But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

12 And the **LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person."** So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Paul said that because He had actually seen Jesus and received directly from Him the revealing of Mysteries that no other person had ever heard before in all of time, that the Lord allowed satan to buffet him, to keep him humble.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a ^g thorn in the flesh was given to me, ^h a messenger of Satan to ² buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ^{8 i} Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."**

Therefore most gladly ^j I will rather boast in my infirmities, ^k that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore ^l I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. ^m For when I am weak, then I am strong.

1 Thessalonians 2

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

20 For you are our glory and joy

This crown here in 1 Thessalonians is one of five that are mentioned in the bible, that the Lord will give to a person after they are saved, for faithfully serving Jesus until the day He comes.

- **This crown appears to be given to the Soul Winner**, the one who tells others about Jesus, the one who waters that word with further words, and the one that actually leads the person to Jesus.
- **At that moment that we meet Jesus in the air**, it appears that you will have gathered around you, those that made it to heaven because you shared Jesus with them.

Jude 24

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy...

a Acts 14:5 ; 16:19–24 ; Phil. 1:30

^l 1 Cor. 9:4, 6–14

a Gal. 1:22

^g Num. 33:55; Ezek. 28:24; Hos. 2:6; Gal. 4:13, 14

^h Job 2:7; Matt. 4:10; Luke 13:16; [1 Cor. 5:5]

² beat

ⁱ Deut. 3:23; Matt. 26:44

^j 2 Cor. 11:30

^k [1 Pet. 4:14]

^l [Rom. 5:3; 8:35]

^m 2 Cor. 13:4