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1 Thessalonians 2
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By Dan Maines

1 Thessalonians 2

1 Thessalonians 2:1-2

For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our reception among you was not without result. But after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.

† Paul reminds them that his ministry bore fruit despite persecution.

† Their suffering in Philippi only strengthened their boldness in Thessalonica.

† Acts 16 records their imprisonment in Philippi, showing the background of Paul's statement.

† Tacitus (Annals 14.27) confirms the harsh treatment Christians endured from authorities.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-4

For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not intending to please people, but to please God, who examines our hearts.

† Paul defends his sincerity and purity in preaching.

† His motivation is pleasing God, not gaining approval from men.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 47) praised those who served Christ sincerely, not seeking human glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:5-6

For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed, God is our witness, nor did we seek honor from people, either from you or from others, though we could have asserted our authority as apostles of Christ.

† Paul denies using flattery or greed to gain followers.

† Unlike false teachers, he sought no personal honor.

† Josephus (Antiquities 20.9.2) describes how false prophets exploited the people with deception, contrasting Paul's integrity.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

But we proved to be gentle among you. As a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children, in the same way we had a fond affection for you and were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

† Paul compares his care to that of a mother, showing tenderness and love.

† True ministry involves sacrificial love, not just preaching words.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

For you recall, brothers and sisters, our labor and hardship, it was by working night and day so as not to burden any of you, that we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

† Paul worked with his hands to avoid being a burden.

† His labor proved his sincerity in the gospel.

† Philo (On the Virtues 21) commended those who worked hard and lived uprightly, paralleling Paul's example.

1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how devoutly and rightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers, just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

† Paul invokes their witness and God's witness to his blameless conduct.

† His role was both fatherly exhortation and encouragement.

† The goal was for them to walk worthy of God's kingdom.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of mere men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which also is at work in you who believe.

† The Thessalonians recognized the gospel as God's word, not man's invention.

† The word actively worked in those who believed.

† Justin Martyr (Dialogue with Trypho 7) affirmed that believers received apostolic teaching as divine truth.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all people, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved, with the result that they always reach the limit of their sins. But wrath has come upon them fully.

† The Thessalonians shared in the sufferings of the Judean churches.

† Paul indicts the Jewish leaders who killed Christ and persecuted the apostles.

† God's wrath was already falling on them, fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

† Josephus (Wars 6.9.3) records the horrors of Jerusalem's fall, confirming Paul's warning.

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18

But we, brothers and sisters, having been orphaned from you by absence for a short while, in person, not in spirit, were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. For we wanted to come to you, I, Paul, more than once, and Satan hindered us.

† Paul longed to see them again but was hindered.

† Opposition to gospel work is described as Satan's activity.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

For who is our hope, or joy, or crown of pride? Is it not indeed you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.

- † The Thessalonians were Paul's crown and joy in Christ.
- † Their faithfulness would shine as evidence at Christ's coming in judgment.

How it applies to us today

- † 1 Thessalonians 2 shows that true ministry is marked by sincerity, sacrifice, and love.
- † Opposition and persecution are part of the faith, yet God's people endure with joy.
- † Paul's example reminds us to walk in a manner worthy of God's kingdom, resting in the fulfilled promises of Christ.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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