

# THE GOSPEL FROM THE HEART

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The Gospel Difference, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

April 23, 2023

*And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.*

1 Thessalonians 2:13

## The gospel arrives

*You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure.<sup>2</sup> We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition.<sup>3</sup> For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.<sup>5</sup> You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness.<sup>6</sup> We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else.*

*As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you,<sup>7</sup> but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.<sup>8</sup> We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.<sup>9</sup> Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.*

*<sup>10</sup> You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.<sup>11</sup> For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,<sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*

*<sup>13</sup> And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.<sup>14</sup> For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews,<sup>15</sup> who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men<sup>16</sup> in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.*

1 Thessalonians 2

1. The gospel has always faced opposition
2. The gospel has always been incarnational
3. About wrath – Paul's point is that while God's wrath is present (see Romans 1:18-25), believers will be saved from God's final wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9)



## In defense of the mission (but always ask who the “we” is)

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### 1 Thessalonians 2

1. An incarnational gospel must come from pure motives
2. An incarnational gospel knows who does the entrusting (Paul uses this same language in Romans 3:2; Galatians 2:7; Titus 1:3; 1 Timothy 1:11)
3. An incarnational gospel shares lives and lightens burdens

## **The pastor's "testimony"**

<sup>10</sup> *You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.* <sup>11</sup> *For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,* <sup>12</sup> *encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*

### 1 Thessalonians 2

1. God is watching
2. The pastor has an "along side" kind of ministry
3. Walking worthy (maybe "reverently" is better) is, according to 1 Colossians 9-14 a matter of:
  - bearing fruit in every good work
  - growing in the knowledge of God
  - being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might . . .
  - joyfully giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance . . .  
"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

## **The pastor's success**

<sup>13</sup> *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.* <sup>14</sup> *For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews,* <sup>15</sup> *who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men* <sup>16</sup> *in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.*

1 Thessalonians 2 (see Spurgeon's "Three Sights" sermon)

1. The pastor is continually thankful because the word of God is welcomed (see Genesis 3:1)
2. Accepting the word of God means \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 7:13-27)
3. The word of God (the "sword of the Spirit" in Ephesians 6:17) is the Spirit's tool for "energizing"
4. One sign of the Spirit's work is that we share a "family likeness" with the church persecuted

## Resources for reading 1 Thessalonians

The poster for 1 Thessalonians can be found at [bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com)

Doug's favorite 1 Thessalonians commentaries include

Charles Wannamaker's NIGTC volume (Eerdmans, 1990)

Hendricksen's *Expository Commentary* (Baker, 1955)

Robert Thomas' volume in *Expositors' Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1981)

John MacArthur has a very interesting sermon, "The Ideal Church" at <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/1317A>

Spurgeon has an important sermon on this text at <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols31-33/chs1979.pdf>

Alexander Maclaren has commentary on 1 Thessalonians 2:12 included below at

[https://www.preceptaustin.org/maclaren\\_on\\_1thessalonians#faith](https://www.preceptaustin.org/maclaren_on_1thessalonians#faith)

Thomas Schreiner has a wonderful essay on the optimism in 1 Thessalonians at

[http://www.sbts.edu/documents/tschreiner/3.3\\_editorial.pdf](http://www.sbts.edu/documents/tschreiner/3.3_editorial.pdf)

For a Puritan sermon on the 2:16, I recommend Jonathan Edwards's sermon at

<https://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/uttermost.htm>

R. M. McCheyne has a wonderful short piece on this text at <https://www.monergism.com/gospel-not-word-power-1-thessalonians-15>

John Piper has two sermons on this text at <http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary>

[/Sermons/ByScripture/42/507\\_On\\_Sharing\\_Your\\_Own\\_Soul/](http://www.desiringgod.org/Sermons/ByScripture/42/507_On_Sharing_Your_Own_Soul/) and

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/how-to-receive-the-word-of-man-as-the-word-of-god>

## **Paul's Letters**

- 35AD**      **Paul's conversion**
- 46 - 48AD**    **Paul's First Missionary Journey**
- 49 / 50AD**    **Paul attends the Council of Jerusalem**  
50AD      Letter to the Galatians
- 50 - 52AD**    **Paul's Second Missionary Journey**  
51/52AD    First Letter to the Thessalonians  
52AD      Second Letter to the Thessalonians
- 53 - 57AD**    **Paul's Third Missionary Journey**  
56AD      First Letter to the Corinthians  
56AD      Second Letter to the Corinthians  
57AD      Letter to the Romans
- 57 - 60AD**    **Paul's arrest, imprisonment & journey to Rome**
- 60 - 62AD**    **Paul in Rome awaiting trial before Nero**  
c.60AD      Letter to the Ephesians  
c.60AD      Letter to the Colossians  
c.60AD      Letter to Philemon  
c.60AD      Letter to the Laodiceans (lost)  
c.60AD      Letter to the Philippians
- 62 - 67AD**    **Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey**  
c.63AD      First Letter to Timothy  
c.63/64AD    Letter to Titus  
c.67AD      Second Letter to Timothy
- c.67AD**      **Paul executed in Rome**