**LIVE LIVES WORTHY OF GOD**

1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

Key Verse 12

 “encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”

**Introduction**



 In chapter 1, Paul, Silas and Timothy gave thanks for the faith of Thessalonian Christians and their faith in action. In today’s chapter, Paul and his coworkers are sharing their testimony on how the gospel was preached in spite of severe persecution in Thessalonica. It is God who enabled them to dare to preach the gospel and to care for the disciples like a mother and father. The work of God was evident that they also could suffer for Christ.

1. Read verses 1-6. How did Paul and his companions preach the gospel in the midst of strong opposition in Thessalonica? (1-2, Acts 17:1-9) What can we learn from their attitudes as God’s servants? (3-6)

1-1, Read verses 1-6.

 You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. **2** We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. **3** For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. **4** On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. **5** You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. **6** We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. **7** Instead, we were like young children[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29578a)] among you.

1-2, How did Paul and his companions preach the gospel in the midst of strong opposition in Thessalonica? (1-2, Acts 17:1-9)

 ***You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. 2 We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition.***

* Before Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica, they were persecuted in Philippi outrageously. It could have discouraged them from preaching the gospel in Thessalonica.
* But they overcame discouragement and preached the gospel again. But they faced strong opposition in Thessalonica again, when the gospel challenged some of the Jews. (Acts 17:1-9)

 When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue,and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,” he said. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. 5 But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.” 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

* They were jealous of God’s work among others and hired mobs from the market places and invaded Jason’s house to find Paul and Silas. When they could not find them, they dragged Jason to the city officials.
* In spite of strong opposition, they continued to dare to tell people the gospel of Jesus Christ.
* They could overcome and continue to serve God’s work with the help of God. Without God’s help, they could not do so.
* With human strength, we cannot do anything beyond our own human limitation. With human wisdom, we cannot understand God’s wisdom.
* When Paul, Silas and Timothy depended on God through prayer and his word, they could experience strength and wisdom from above. With the help of God they had sufficient courage to preach the gospel in spite of strong opposition.

1-3, What can we learn from their attitudes as God’s servants? (3-6)

 ***For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. 4 On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. 6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.***

* Those who have impure motives are trying to trick others for their benefit. In fact, the people in Thessalonica (Acts 17:7) lied that Paul, Silas and Timothy were defying Caesar’s decrees.
* When people are falsely accused, they act violently, but Paul, Silas and Timothy were different. They did not fall into human argument but continued to preach the gospel instead.
* They spoke that Jesus is the Promised Messiah, who died on the cross for their sins and rose again from the dead.
* They could do so because they were trying to please God. The goal of their life was to live for Jesus and his kingdom.
* The people accused Paul, Silas and Timothy of being greedy, taking money or things from other people when they accepted the gospel.
* But they declared that they did not use flattery in order to cover up their greed. This might be another reason why they worked as tentmakers in Thessalonica.
* When there is a success there, Paul, Silas and Timothy could have been tempted to enjoy praise from people. But they continued to deny themselves.
* Even though Paul had authority as an Apostle, he did not use his authority but humbled himself.
* God approved their work. The Jews were persuaded and joined them, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.
* They fearlessly preached the gospel just as God entrusted the life-giving message to them. They had a clear motivation in doing God’s work. It was for the glory of God and for his kingdom. They were approved by God by passing tests.

2. Read verses 7-10. How did Paul and Silas care for Christians in Thessalonica? (7, 8) How did they live an exemplary life among the believers in Thessalonica? (9-10)

2-1, Read verses 7-10.

 Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, **8** so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. **9** Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, 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. **10** You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.

2-2, How did Paul and Silas care for Christians in Thessalonica? (7, 8)

***7 Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8 so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.***

* They took care of them like a nursing mother in loving them and a young child in keeping their pure motives.
* A baby is very demanding; crying for any and every reason, and often a mommy can distinguish what a baby is crying for.
* It is mother’s instinct to provide and protect her own children because she loves them. Yet, it is not easy to do so.
* Like newborn babies, the Christians in Thessalonica cried for help or made a lot of mistakes.
* They loved them so much so that they were delighted to share not only the gospel but also their lives with them. It is a shepherd heart, that came from God’s love.
* They could do so because they know that they were loved by God even when they were enemies of God.
* With the love of God in Christ, they could love others and were willing to share their lives with them.

2-3, How did they live an exemplary life among the believers in Thessalonica? (9-10)

 ***9 Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, 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. 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.***

* In Thessalonica, they worked hard in order not to be a burden to others but to provide for themselves while preaching the gospel.
* Holy means set aside for God. Probably, Paul set himself aside for God through prayer and meditating on the word of God.
* Righteous means to have a right relationship with God. They had lived blameless lives that people could not blame for anything.
* It does not mean that they lived a perfect life but they set a example for them of how to have right relationship with God and with others.

3. Read verses 11-16. What does it mean to deal with other members of the family as a father? (11-12) Why was Paul’s thanks topic for the Thessalonian Christians? (13) How did they become imitators of God’s churches? (14) What would happen to persecutors at the end? (15, 16)

3-1, Read verses 11-16.

**11** For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, **12** encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. **13** And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. **14** For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God’s churches in Judea,which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews **15** who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone **16** 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.

3-2, What does it mean to deal with other members of the family as a father? (11-12)

***11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.***

* They raised the Thessalonian Christians not only like a mother but also like father. While a mother cares for children, a father disciplines.
* As spiritual fathers, they encouraged, comforted and urged. How did they encourage, comfort and urge.
* Paul, Silas and Timothy probably comforted Thessalonian Christians when they were sorrowful or in trouble.
* They must have encouraged them to preach the gospel in the midst of hardships and persecutions.
* They urged them to live holy, righteous and blameless lives, living lives worthy of God, meaning that they may be live lives fitting in the kingdom of God as heavenly citizens.
* May God help us remember the grace of God always, so that we may be able to live lives worthy of God’s kingdom and take care of God’s flock with the heart of mother and/or father. Amen!

3-3, Why was Paul’s thanks topic for the Thessalonian Christians? (13)

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

* The word of God was spoken by Paul, Silas and Timothy, but they took it as the word of God, not as a human word.
* When they received the word of God as God’s word, something was working in their hearts.
* Their value system was changed and their lives were changed. It was evident that the word of God was at work.

3-4, How did they become imitators of God’s churches? (14)

 ***For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God’s churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews***

* First of all, they became humble imitators. At that time, Greeks were proud because their culture was honored and adopted by the Romans who spread their culture all over the Roman world.
* They were the doctors and philosophers of the time, and we still feel their influence to these days. To them, it was almost impossible to accept the strange philosophy so called the gospel from a third world country, from Jewish people.
* But when they accepted the gospel, they were changed. They became humble learners. They became imitators of God’s churches in Judea.
* The churches in Judea were going through persecutions. The persecution was so severe that the Christians in Judea had to run for their lives.
* Even many family members were scattered to all over the world. So they learned how to endure persecutions and hardships. When they imitated other Christians in Judea, they could overcome their situations.
* The Thessalonian believers were willing to suffer for Christ. They could because they accepted Jesus who suffered for them while they were enemies of God.

3-5, What would happen to persecutors at the end? (15, 16)

***15 who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone 16 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.***

* The wrath of God has come upon them at last. Although it seems to be unfair under persecution, God is living and will give account to any persecutor.

**Conclusion**

 Through today’s passage, we learned how Paul, Silas and Timothy served Thessalonian Christians. In the midst of hardships and persecution, they could serve them like a mother and a father with the help of God. God approved their work, bringing people to Christ. They also gave thanks for the evident work of God in them, being imitators of others’ life of faith and being willing to suffer for Christ. May God help us to remember the grace of God and serve others with the heart of a mother and father accordingly.

**One word: live lives worthy of God**