

Paul's Life And Ministry Among Them

2:1-12

1TH 2:1 For you yourselves know, brethren [brothers], that our coming to you was not in vain,

1. "For you yourselves know, brethren" - He refers to these believers again generically as "brothers."
 - a. They had become a part of the great brotherhood of God. See "brotherhood" - 1 Peter 2:17.
 - b. They were members of the family of God - the church. (1 Tim. 3:15).
2. "that our coming to you was not in vain" - Lit. "the entrance of us to you"
 - a. Their trip had not been fruitless or failed in purpose. (Acts 17:4; 1 Thess. 1:9).

Acts 17:4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with **a large number** of the God-fearing Greeks and **a number** of the leading women.

1 Thess. 1:9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

- b. Converts were made in Thessalonica, but we do not know how many were originally converted or how many were later converted.
- c. We do know that a good size and faithful congregation existed in Thessalonica.
- d. This is evident by the epistles of 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
 - 1) Acts 17:4 indicates it was not a small church. Note "a large number" and "number."
 - 2) 1 Thess. 1:9 reveals converts in addition to those listed in Acts.

1TH 2:2 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 [in spite] much opposition.

1. "but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi" - Paul and Silas had been beaten and cast into prison. (Acts 16:19-40; Phi. 1:30).
2. "as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition"
 - "opposition" is from "agon" [ah **gohn**] meaning "strife, contention, peril, toil"
 - a. Though strongly opposed and physically persecuted, they had boldly preached the "gospel of God" there.
 - b. They had not compromised the pure "gospel of God," but had lived faithfully and faithfully proclaimed the gospel under extremely adverse circumstances.
 - c. "The gospel of God" is also called: (1) the gospel - 1 Thess. 2:4 (2) the gospel of Christ - 1 Thess. 3:2; Gal. 1:7

(3) the gospel of peace - Eph. 6:15 (4) our gospel - 1 Thess. 1:4 (5) word of God's message - 1 Thess. 2:13 (6) my gospel - Rom 2:16 (7) eternal gospel - Rev. 14:6 (8) glorious gospel - 1 Tim. 1:11 (9) law of liberty - Jas. 1:25; 2:12.

Opponents Charges

1TH 2:3 For our exhortation [encouragement, appeal, entreaty] does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit;

1. "For our exhortation" - "paraklesis" [pah rah klay sis] - "exhortation, entreaty, appeal." This refers to their preaching.
2. "does not come [spring] from error or impurity [uncleanness] or by way of deceit"
 - a. "error" - They did not advocate false doctrines or were deceptive in any way.
 - b. "impurity" is from "akatharsia" [ah kah thar see ah] meaning "impurity, uncleanness"
 - 1) Their motives were not impure.
 - 2) They had not been immoral in regard to the female or male converts. (Acts 17:4).
 - 3) They were not motivated by greed - a love of money. (1 Thess. 2:5).
 - 4) Their doctrine was the pure doctrine [teaching] of God.
 - c. "deceit" - There was no attempt or intention to mislead them.
3. Some had likely slandered Paul, Silas and Timothy and were seeking to discredit them by charging they were for selfish reasons seeking to exploit the people.

1TH 2:4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines [tests, proves] our hearts.

1. "but just as we [Paul, Silas, Timothy] have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel"
 - a. They had passed God's scrutiny.
 - b. God had entrusted them with the gospel - the message of salvation. (Rom. 1:16).
2. "so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts" - See Gal. 1:10

Gal. 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ

- a. They were in the business of pleasing God who examines and knows hearts.
 - 1) "dokimazo" [dah kee mah zoh] - "test, prove"
 - 2) God knows and examines even the secrets of the heart.

ROM 2:16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

b. God knows what is in man and cannot be fooled or mocked. (Gal. 6:7,8).

1TH 2:5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed-- God is witness--

1. "For we never came with flattering speech, as you know" - They never resorted to flattery, but spoke "the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15).
2. "nor with a pretext for greed-- God is witness" - Paul calls God as his "witness" to his motives and faithfulness.
 - a. They had no motive of greed [covetousness].
 - b. God who "examines and knows our hearts" is called upon to bear witness of their motives.
 - c. Paul frequently called upon God as his witness. (Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:10).

1TH 2:6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.

1. "nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others"
 - a. They never sought praise or glory from men.
 - b. Their aim was to please God by proclaiming the gospel to lost souls and strengthening those in the faith.
2. "even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority"
 - a. As apostles they could have made demands. They had the authority to do so. (Lk. 10:16).
 - b. They did not assert their authority.
 - c. "apostles" is not completely clear here. If it includes Timothy and Silas, it is not used in the official sense of the office of an apostle. (Eph. 4:11).

EPH 4:11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

- d. The word "apostle" literally means "messenger" and may be used here in the sense of messengers, representatives of the churches. (2 Cor. 8:23).

1TH 2:7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

1. "But we proved to be gentle among you"
 - a. They behaved gently among them.
 - b. "epios" [ay pee ahs] - "mild, gentle, kind."
2. "as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children" - They were as gentle as a nursing mother caring for her baby. Lit. the Greek has "as if a nurse should cherish the children of herself." The Greek has "trophos" [trah fahs] meaning "nurse" understood to refer to a "nursing mother."

- a. This indicates they were exceptionally gentle.
- b. This does not mean they did not expose and rebuke sin.
 - 1) Paul preached the same way he instructed Timothy to preach. (2 Tim. 4:1-2).
 - 2) From the reading of his epistles we find Paul did not hesitate to expose and rebuke sin.
- c. Both Jesus and the apostles called upon men to repent - turn from sin. (Mat. 4:17; Lk. 13:3,5; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

1TH 2:8 Having thus a fond affection 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 very dear to us.

1. “a fond affection for you”
 - a. Lit. “so longing for you”
 - b. We loved you dearly and were willing to make sacrifices for you.
2. “we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God” - They were willing and eager to share the gospel with them.
3. “but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us” - They were not only willing to preach the gospel, but to lay down their lives for them.

1TH 2:9 For you recall [remember], brethren [brothers], our labor and hardship [wearisome toil], how working night and day so as not to be a [financial] burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

- “kopos” [**kah** pahs] - “labor, toil”
 - “mochthos” [**mahk** thahs] - “toil, wearisome” - 2 Cor. 11:27; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8.
1. “For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you”
 - a. They put in long hours and suffered hardships that they might not burden the brethren financially.
 - b. They wanted to preach the gospel without charge.
 - c. This would keep them from being a burden to the brethren and would also prevent the charge that they were preaching for money.
 - d. He did receive wages and gifts from the church at Philippi. (Phil. 4:15, 16).

PHI 4:15 And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;
 PHI 4:16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

- e. He did, at times, “take wages” from established churches. (2 Cor. 11:8).
 - 1) “sulao” [soo **lah** oh] means “to rob, to strip, to encroach upon.”

- 2) Paul did not literally “rob” churches, but at times did “take wages” from established churches who were motivated to support him.
 - 3) Most of these congregations were not wealthy, but the members were poor.
 - f. They had the right to receive remuneration. (1 Cor. 9:6-15).
 - g. Paul most often worked and supported himself a tentmaker. (Acts 18:3).
2. “we proclaimed to you the gospel of God” - They proclaimed the good news of God’s salvation to them.

“You Are Witnesses, And So Is God”

1TH 2:10 You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly [without reproach] we behaved toward you believers [Christians];

- 1. “You are witnesses, and so is God”
 - a. They knew full well how Paul and the others with Paul behaved themselves at Thessalonica.
 - b. God also knew, and could testify of their behavior among these brethren.
- 2. “how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers”
 - a. Their conduct had been above reproach.
 - b. They had not given any occasion for charges to be truthfully made against them.
 - c. This does not mean they were absolutely sinless. (1 Jn. 1:8, 10).
 - d. Elders must be “above reproach” or “blameless,” but this does not mean sinless.
 - e. Only Jesus was sinless. (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22).
- 3. Their excellent conduct among believers does not imply their behavior was improper towards unbelievers.

1TH 2:11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,

- 1. “just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you” - They knew and could not deny the great effort Paul and the others had made to exhort and encourage them.
- 2. “as a father would his own children”
 - a. A loving father seeks the best for his children, and constantly seeks to exhort, encourage and implore them to do good and be successful.
 - b. A good father obeys the commands of Paul. (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21).

EPH 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

COL 3:21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.

- c. Paul constantly sought the welfare of these Christians for whom he had deep and loving concern.
- d. Earlier their gentleness towards these brethren was compared to a nursing mother and her child. (1 Thess. 2:7).

1TH 2:12 so that you may walk [live] in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1. “so that you may walk [live] in a manner worthy of the God” - These actions refer to the purpose of “exhorting and encouraging and imploring.”
 - a. This means they were to obey and honor God. (Matt. 7:21). We live “in a manner worthy of God” by surrendering ourselves to God’s will.
 - b. The Christian’s life is frequently described as a “walk” by Paul. (Rom. 8:4; 13:13; 1 Cor. 7:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 4:17; 5:15; Col. 4:5).
 - c. “Worthy” did not mean they could ever be worthy of God’s grace. (Rom. 11:6; Eph. 2:8, 9).
2. “who calls you into His own kingdom and glory” - “calls” is translated from a present participle indicating a continuous calling of God.
 - a. They had been called out of the kingdom of darkness and shame into the glorious kingdom of God. (Col. 1:13).

COL 1:13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

- b. Being a part of God’s kingdom was not future, but entrance into the kingdom came at the new birth. (Jn. 3:5).
 - c. They were, as citizens of the kingdom, submitting to Jesus, the King of kings who was reigning at the right hand of God. (Acts 2:32-36; Heb. 1:3).
 - d. They were suffering for the sake of the kingdom. (2 Thess. 1:5).
 - e. As the brethren at Colossae, they were “fellow workers for the kingdom of God.” (Col. 4:11).
3. Christians are now in God’s kingdom, but one day they will have entrance “into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 1:11).

2 Pet. 1:11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

- a. Jesus, at His coming, will hand over those in His earthly kingdom to God. (1 Cor. 15:24).
- b. “Heaven” is “the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
- c. He is speaking of “His heavenly kingdom.” (2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 11:16).

2 Tim. 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Heb. 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

- 3) Those who enter God's kingdom and let Jesus rule their hearts will one day inherit "the heavenly" or "eternal kingdom." (Jas. 2:5; 1 Cor. 6:9; 15:50; Eph. 5:5; Gal. 5:21).

Paul Repeats His Thanksgiving For Their Conversion Under Persecution
2:13-16

1TH 2:13 And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1. "And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message"
 - a. They were convinced Paul, Timothy, Silas spoke the words of God and received God's saving message.
 - b. Paul was very thankful for the way they were received and for their acceptance of "God's message [the gospel]."
2. "you accepted it not as the word of men" - These men recognized "the gospel" as God's word.
 - a. Some would reject the message saying it was from men, but they were sincere and received it into their hearts as the word of God.
 - b. God's word must be meekly received from the heart. (Jas. 1:22).
3. "but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe"
 - a. They were not fooled, but had readily heard "the word of God."
 - b. "The word" had performed "its work" in them by transforming their lives.

1TH 2:14 For you, brethren [brothers], 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, even as they did from the Jews,

1. "For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea"
 - a. They had been imitators of Paul, Silas and Timothy and had themselves become examples to others. (1 Thess. 1:6,7).
 - b. They had also followed the example of God's churches "in Judea."
 - 1) This has primary reference to their suffering for the sake of Christ.
 - 2) From this epistle it is certainly implied they imitating them in other ways.
 - 3) The Jerusalem church was a splendid example for them and for Christians in all ages. (Acts. 2:42).
 - c. They were manifesting the same love and loyalty for God and His word as the Judean Christians.
2. "for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews"
 - a. The Judean churches suffered persecution "from the Jews." Read Acts 9:1, 13; Gal. 1:13 and Acts 7, 8, 9, etc.

- b. These Christians also suffered “at the hands of” their “own countrymen.” This came from Jews and Gentiles, but Paul is here primarily referring to the persecution of the Jews.
- c. Gentiles also frequently persecuted Christians out of jealousy and hatred.

1TH 2:15 who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men,

- 1. “who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out”
 - a. The Jews killed “the prophets” and “the Lord Jesus” and most often persecuted the apostles and believers. (Matt. 23:37; Acts 7:51,52).
 - b. Peter charged the Jews with killing Jesus. (Acts 2:23).
- 2. “They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men”
 - a. Some thought they were pleasing God by these actions, but nothing could be further from the truth.
 - b. Paul once had that frame of mind. (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; 22:4; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13, 23).

1TH 2:16 hindering [forbidding] us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

- 1. “hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved” - They did not want Gentiles to be saved, and did some horrible things in their attempt to stop Gentiles from being saved.
 - a. Jesus charged the Pharisees of rejecting the kingdom, and keeping others outside the kingdom. (Matt. 23:13).
 - b. Some throughout the ages have hindered the preaching of the gospel to certain races and classes of people.
 - c. They have refused to teach certain people, and have hindered or stopped others from preaching to them.
 - d. This is still practiced today by those who do not have a love for all and believe salvation is for them alone.
- 2. “with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins”
 - a. NIV “In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit.”
 - b. God was allowing their sins to accumulate, but this made them ripe for vengeance.
 - c. This was fulfilled in part by the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 - d. It most likely also has an eschatological meaning pointing to the punishment of the wicked at the end of time.
- 3. “But wrath has come upon them to the utmost” - KJV and ASV have “uttermost.”
 - a. God’s wrath had come upon them in this world and would come upon them even more in the world to come.
 - b. “to the utmost” is literally “to [the] end.”
 - c. The idea may be “come upon them at last.” NIV, ESV

- d. It could also have the idea that the full measure of God’s wrath was about to come upon them, that is, “in the fullest degree.”

Paul’s Interest In Thessalonica Believers

1TH 2:17 But we, brethren [brothers], having been bereft of [separated or torn away from] you for a short while-- in person, not in spirit-- were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.

1. “ But we, brethren, having been bereft of you for a short while-- in person, not in spirit--“ - They were not with them bodily, but they were “in spirit.”
2. “were all the more eager with great desire to see your face” - They longed to have personal fellowship with them again.

1TH 2:18 For we wanted [wished] to come to you-- I, Paul, more than once-- and yet Satan thwarted [hindered] us.

1. “For we wanted to come to you-- I, Paul, more than once” - They frequently wanted to visit them. but had been hindered.
2. “and yet Satan thwarted us” - Satan working through evil men had thwarted their efforts.
3. Satan constantly seeks to thwart everything good in our personal lives and in the church.
4. Here are some ways Satan hinders good things.

Discourages prayer	Tell us to wait and do it later.	Causes us to be focused only on ourselves
Tells us we are not good enough.	Creates jealousy among us.	Convinces us we cannot make a difference.
Makes us afraid of failure.	Causes division and leads us to bite and devour one another.	Uses the criticism of others to discourage us.
Stirs evil men against us.	Leads us to walk by sight and not by faith.	Makes us men pleasers rather than God pleasers.
Makes us content to be lukewarm	Convinces us we cannot do it or it will not do any good.	Encourages us to squelch our good motives.

1TH 2:19 For who is our hope or joy or crown [wreath] of exultation [boasting]? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

- Paul spoke similar words to the church at Philippi. (Phil. 4:1).

Phil. 4:1 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, **my joy and crown**, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

1. “For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation?” - He immediately answers this question.
2. “Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?”

- a. They were so proud of this church.
 - b. They would be a great source of hope and joy at the coming of Christ.
3. Some might have believed in the immediate or near coming of Christ, but no one including the apostles knew the time of His coming. (Matt. 24:36).

Matt. 24:36 But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

1TH 2:20 For you are our glory and joy.

1. Paul makes it clear so there could be no doubt.
2. The believers in this church were his “glory and joy.”
3. He was so proud of these faithful believers in Thessalonica.

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