

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 “The Model Ministers’ May 14, 2023

I. Welcome

A. Good morning and Happy Mother’s Day! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni. What a blessing it is to be here with you all as we gather together to worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.*

B. Before we continue any further, let’s go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School class.

1. *As well as the Bible English class (Second Service)*

C. Now, before we get into our study, we have the honor and blessing of doing a baby dedication this morning for the Waggoner family.

1. A baby dedication is something that we do from time to time upon request here at Calvary as a way to acknowledge the Lord and His precious gift of life.

a. God has blessed Joshua and Emily with a beautiful little girl named Elsie Amelia Waggoner and they want to give thanks to the Lord and dedicate her life to the Lord.

2. Now, before I have the Waggoner family come up, I’d like to briefly explain what a dedication ceremony is and what it isn’t. In order to make sure we are all on the same page and that everyone understands what we are doing here today.

a. A baby dedication is really a decision that the parents make in dedicating their child to the Lord.

b. It is an opportunity for families to stand before the Lord and the church body and publicly proclaim that they are going to commit to raising their child in the ways of the Lord.

i. Proverbs 22:6 instructs those who have children to train them up in the way they should go, [and

gives a promise that]... when they are old they will not depart from it.” (**Pro. 22:6**)

- c. What we are doing this morning is not something connected with or associated with the salvation experience. We believe that salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.
 - i. It is based upon a person’s individual decision to surrender their life to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
 - ii. Elsie, at this time, is not able to make that decision on her own. She has no understanding of her sin and her need for a Savior. She lacks the ability to make such a confession of faith at this young of an age. And so, this is not a salvation issue.
- d. And yet, while this is not something tied to the salvation experience, what Joshua and Emily are committing to today is to raise Elsie in the ways of the Lord and to present her with every opportunity imaginable for her to one day make that decision for herself.
 - i. The end goal of Joshua and Emily, and hopefully of all of us who are parents, is to see their child walk with the Lord all of their days.
- e. A baby dedication is not something that we are required to do in the scriptures. There is, however, Biblical support for doing child dedications.
 - i. Jesus, Himself was dedicated to the Lord as a baby as part of the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law that prescribed all firstborn males to be dedicated to the Lord. (**Lk. 2:22-23**)
 - ii. In addition to Jesus, we also know of Hannah’s dedication of her son Samuel to the Lord. He of course was completely given over to the service

of the Lord in response to God opening up Hannah's womb. (1 Sam. 1:27-28)

- iii. We see in these examples not an exact template to follow, the Waggoners aren't giving Elsie to the church for the service of the Lord, nor are they bringing an offering like what was prescribed in the Old Testament Mosaic Law, but more so, we see, a principle.
 - iv. A principle where parents acknowledge the Lord's gift of life and in turn commit their lives to bringing this child back to the Lord.
- f. We do these before the church body for a couple of reasons.
- i. One, is so the church can stand as witnesses to this dedication and commitment Josh and Emily are making before the Lord, to help hold them accountable to their commitment.
 - ii. And two, we do so in front of the church because we believe that we, as the church, play an important part in helping to equip, strengthen, and support Josh and Emily in their task of raising Elsie in the ways of the Lord.
 - iii. As we pray for Elsie and the Waggoner family, we are also agreeing to be part of the journey with them. To come alongside them and assist them as the Lord leads and guides us.
3. And so, I'd like to call up the Waggoner family at this time.
- a. Joshua and Emily are going to be dedicating little Elsie Amelia to the Lord. She was born just before the New Year so she's just over 4 months old and we're going to see if she lets me hold her.
 - b. We're going to simply pray over the entire family; thanking God for this precious life and asking God to

be with them as they grow and mature as a family.
(*Pray over family*)

D. As the Waggoners make their way back to their seats, will the rest of you open up your Bibles and make your way to the book of 1 Thessalonians?

1. This morning we continue our study through the small epistle we know of as 1 Thessalonians.
2. Two weeks ago, we did more of an overview and introduction to the book. And then last week we covered the details found in chapter 1.
 - a. We talked about how the church in Thessalonica was a model church; a church that Paul was very thankful to the Lord for, a church that was an example to all the other churches within the Grecian Peninsula.
 - b. The church in Thessalonica had the gospel presented to them, they received it, and then subsequently shared it with others.
 - c. The gospel had an incredibly powerful impact upon not only the lives of those who believed in Thessalonica, but the lives of countless others who heard about all the amazing things God was doing in and through them.

E. This morning, as we continue through the book, we're going to turn our attention to chapter 2 and what Paul has to say there as he continues to address the church in Thessalonica.

1. Chapter 2 really appears to be a response by Paul regarding certain accusations that seem to have been perpetrated by those who opposed Paul and the gospel message in Thessalonica.
 - a. Remember from our overview of the book, that Paul faced a good bit of opposition from some envious Jews when he first came into the city of Thessalonica.

- b. Acts tells us that some of the Jews became envious of Paul and the crowds of people that were responding to the gospel and so they gathered together a bunch of evil men and incited an uproar within the city, dragging out people from their homes who had turned to faith in Jesus Christ, and accusing them before the city rulers of turning the world upside down and stirring up rebellion. (**Acts 17:5**)
 - c. For their own safety, the young church in Thessalonica decided to send Paul and Silas off in the middle of the night, out of the city of Thessalonica, and they went to the city of Berea.
 - d. You would think that having run Paul and Silas out of town that the envious Jews would have been satisfied, but they were not.
 - e. For when they heard that Paul was preaching the gospel in Berea, they too went to Berea, and they once again incited an uproar stirring up the crowds of people and causing all sorts of problems so that Paul once again had to depart the city. (**Acts 17:13**)
 - f. The opposition in Thessalonica was fierce and they did not stop their attacks once Paul was gone. They continued to speak ill of him and his ministry and seemingly brought all sorts of accusations against him to those who had responded to the message he preached.
 - g. Though we are not specifically told the accusations brought against Paul, based upon his response here in chapter 2 it would seem that the accusations revolved around his message, his motives, and his methods. Basically, they questioned his entire ministry.
2. Our text this morning is going to be 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 1-12 and the title of our message is going to be "**The Model Ministers**".

- a. Will you all rise to your feet in honor of God and His Holy Word?
- b. I'm going to read through our text in my Bible, do your best to follow along in your own Bible.
- c. Paul writes to the Thessalonians to clear up his name and to remind the church in Thessalonica that these accusations have no basis in fact and that this was something everyone there in that church could all attest to themselves.
- d. Follow along in your bible, as I read from mine. Paul writes... (*R & P*)

II. Intro & Outline;

A. Last week we identified the Thessalonian church as a model church. But here in our text this morning, we see how Paul and his partners in the ministry really were the model ministers.

1. Paul reminds the believers in Thessalonica of what it was like when he and Silas and Timothy came through and started the church there.
2. How they came to them, how they ministered to them, and how they lived among them. There is an emphasis placed upon the church remembering these things for themselves; that they were witness of these things and that they know the truth.
 - a. In verse 1 he writes, "you yourselves know". In verse 2 he writes, "as you know". In verse 5 he writes again, "as you know". In verse 9 he states, "for you remember" and in verse 10 he mentions "You are witnesses". And in verse 11 he uses one more "as you know".
 - b. Six different times in this small section, Paul calls upon them to testify and to recall how they themselves know the truth and were witness to all that had taken place.

3. Not only did Paul have the church as witness to the message, motives, and methods he used, he also called upon the Lord as witness.

a. In verse 5 Paul writes, “God is witness”. And in verse 10 he again calls upon God as witness; that He too was witness right alongside them of the kind of ministry they had performed.

B. In responding to the accusations and reminding the church of his ministry, Paul divides his responses into two parts.

1. He first will look to sweep away the negative and false accusations, and then, with the ground cleared, he sets forth the positive truths regarding his ministry in Thessalonica.

2. While we can't be 100% certain, it would seem that the many negative things Paul mentions, were probably rooted in the various accusations that were being brought against him.

C. Take a look at the opening verses of our text once again as Paul speaks to the manner in which he came to the Thessalonians in the first place.

III. 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2;

A. It would appear that one of the main things that was being perpetrated about Paul and his ministry was that it was a failure, that it was without results; that is the meaning and idea behind the phrase “in vain”.

1. Paul's opposition was trying to make the claim that Paul's visit was a failure. That there was no lasting impact or fruit from his ministry.

2. But the very existence of the church there was proof and evidence of the effectiveness of Paul's coming to them. Their lives had been changed dramatically.

3. Many of them had believed upon Paul's message and repented from sin. They turned, as we read last week,

to God from idols to serve the living and true God. (**1 Thes. 1:9**)

4. While some may want to point at the fact that Paul and his companions were ran out of town and had to escape the city under the cover of night evidence of failure, the presence of the church there in Thessalonica proved that his visit wasn't a waste of time, that it wasn't all in vain.
 5. Paul arrived in Thessalonica and there was no church at all. He left Thessalonica and there was a strong church that was alive and growing, standing up to persecution, and becoming an example to believers across the world.
 6. Lives had been changed for eternity and there was no denying that fact.
- B. The idea of being "in vain" can also refer to the idea of Paul lacking true power. And Paul mentioned how he and his companions had been treated in Philippi and used that as evidence of his heart and proof of their empowering from God.
1. Paul's ministry in Philippi was not for the faint of heart.
 - a. When they entered the city, they found a group of women who were meeting for prayer outside of the city by the riverside. One of them, a lady by the name of Lydia, became a believer and insisted that Paul and Silas stay with her at her house.
 - b. Then one day, while traveling to the riverside for prayer, Paul and Silas encountered a certain slave girl who was possessed with a spirit of divination. And she continually followed after Paul and Silas and the rest of those traveling with him yelling out at them every time she came across them proclaiming, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." (**Acts 16:17**)

- c. After a while, Paul became greatly annoyed by her and spoke to the spirit demanding that it depart from the girl. And though the girl was delivered from this evil spirit, her masters were not too happy with Paul because they were using her to make a fortune off of the people by having her tell people their futures.
 - d. They raised up a multitude of people to come against Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities bringing false allegations about them teaching unlawful customs and troubling the city.
 - e. And Paul and Silas were ordered to be beaten with rods. They had many stripes laid upon them and were subsequently thrown into the inner prison where their feet were fastened in the stocks. (**Acts 16:23**)
 - f. If you are familiar with the account, you know that God eventually set Paul and Silas free, but not before the Philippian jailer and all his household received the gospel for themselves.
 - g. The magistrates that had ordered Paul and Silas to be beaten decided to let them go, but requested that they depart the city.
2. It is very likely that Paul and Silas arrived in Thessalonica while the wounds from their time in Philippi were still fresh. A beating like the one they received was not something you would soon forget and it was not something you would not bare the marks from just a few days after.
 3. These wounds no doubt stuck with them. And what did they do when they arrived in Thessalonica? They preached the gospel just as they had done in Philippi. They did the very same thing that had led to their beating and imprisonment in Philippi.

- a. Now, most of us probably would have taken a vacation, or found an excuse not to preach. Most of us probably would have packed up our bags and looked for the quickest exit out of ministry if it led to that sort of treatment and persecution.
 - b. But not Paul and Silas. Even when they encountered more opposition in Thessalonica, they continued to boldly proclaim the gospel message.
4. And the boldness that they had was not in and of themselves. It was a boldness that was found in God.
- a. It was the same kind of boldness that Peter and John displayed back in Acts chapter 4. After healing a lame man that had been placed at the temple gate to beg for alms, they preached boldly the message of the gospel to those who witnessed the healing and rushed to them.
 - b. But the religious leaders didn't like Peter and John preaching in Jesus' name there at the temple, so they laid their hands upon them and arrested them, throwing them in prison for the night.
 - c. The next day they were brought before the religious leaders and commanded to no longer preach in Jesus' name and severely threatened about what would happen if they were caught doing it again.
 - d. But after being released, Peter and John went to their companions and told them all about what had happened, and they prayed to God for more boldness.
 - e. They prayed, "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word," (**Acts 4:29**)
 - f. "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." (**Acts 4:31**)

5. You see the power to boldly proclaim the gospel in the face of opposition was not a power of their own. It was a power that came from God, from His Holy Spirit empowering them

a. Paul and Silas were empowered by the Holy Spirit to boldly proclaim the gospel message, just as the Spirit had empowered Peter and John to preach boldly in the face of opposition back in Acts 4.

b. And this leads me to the first point I want to make about Paul and Silas and their ministry. These men were **empowered by God's Holy Spirit** to boldly proclaim the gospel even in the face of opposition, even in much conflict as described in verse 2.

C. So, in response to the accusations that Paul and Silas' ministry was "in vain", being fruitless and powerless. Paul here clearly shows how that was not the case.

1. The evidence of the fruit from the changed lives and the evidence of Paul and Silas continuing boldly in the face of much conflict completely stood against such a claim. Their ministry was very fruitful and very powerful and the church in Thessalonica knew this to be true.

D. Take a look at verses 3 & 4 as Paul continues to address other allegations.

IV. 1 Thessalonians 1:3-4;

A. In verse 3, Paul looks to sweep away more of the negative false accusations that were being brought against him. There were three pertaining to his exhortation, the message he preached and taught to the people there in Thessalonica.

1. The first accusation was that Paul's message came from error.

a. Now this doesn't just mean that they were accusing Paul of being wrong. The idea behind this word in the Greek is that Paul's teaching was delusional and

fraudulent. That he actively sought to deceive and to lead people astray.

2. The second accusation was the Paul's message came from uncleanness, or your translation may read impurity, or impure motives.
 - a. It is possible to preach the right message with the wrong motives, but this was not the case for Paul.
 - b. The accusation could have been connected to the idea that Paul had ulterior motives when preaching the gospel. That he was motivated by pride or greed in gathering people to himself.
 - c. But it also could actually be referring to sexual sin as well. The Greek word that is used here for uncleanness is often associated with another Greek word that is translated fornication.
3. The third accusation was that Paul's message was in deceit.
 - a. The word used here speaks of craftiness and being skilled in deception. The root of the Greek word carries the idea of baiting a hook, of setting a trap.
 - b. The accusation is that Paul's message was just something used as bait to get the people to buy in to whatever it was that he was selling.

B. Now, these types of works were unfortunately very common in that day and age. There were a number of itinerant preachers that would go around looking to take advantage of people.

1. They would actively look to deceive people and lead them astray.
2. Some would come in and act a part to try and seduce people. Many of the false religions and cults practiced temple prostitution and would entice people to engage in such activities.

3. Others would come simply trying to line their pockets with donations and get whatever they could from the people, bleed them dry and then move on to the next unsuspecting group of individuals in the next city.
 4. Sadly, many of these things still happen even today, in our day and age. Many people have used religion as a means to ungodly pursuits.
- C. But, when it came to Paul and his fellow ministers, they did not operate with impure motives, but they sought to please the Lord.
1. Paul believed that he and his fellow companions had been entrusted as stewards of the gospel message. That they had been tested and approved by the Lord Himself.
 2. Paul attested that their aim had nothing to do with pleasing men, but was entirely devoted to pleasing the Lord.
 3. Paul's motives were to please his Master. To please the One who had entrusted him as a steward of the gospel message. And Paul knew that God saw his heart and had tested his heart, and found him to be approved by the Lord.
 4. Paul looked at himself as nothing more than a steward. He wasn't in this for his own gain. He wasn't doing the ministry to get something out of it for himself. His motive was to simply please the Lord and to be faithful with what God had entrusted to him.
 5. Faithfulness, after all, is the most important quality of a steward. 1 Corinthians 4:2 states, "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." (**1 Co. 4:2**)
 6. Paul simply wanted to be a faithful steward of the gospel, and his one goal was to please the Lord. He didn't care about what other people said or thought about him. He just aimed to please the Lord.

7. And this brings me to my second point about these model ministers. Paul and His companions were **focused upon pleasing God** and not man.
 - a. This was something that Paul emphasized in a number of his writings.
 - b. In his letter to the Galatians he wrote, “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.” (**Gal. 1:10**)
 - c. In Ephesians he encouraged servants to serve “not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart.” (**Eph. 6:6**)
 - d. Likewise in Colossians he wrote, “Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.” (**Col. 3:22**)
8. Paul saw himself as a bondservant of Christ. He knew that he could not do both; he could not please man and at the same time please God. He desired to do the will of God from the heart, to do so with great sincerity and in fear and reverence towards the Lord.
9. What a great example he is of what it means to be a minister of the gospel of Christ. Looking to please God no matter what the cost.

D. Well, let's continue in our text and see what else Paul was facing. Read with me verses 5 & 6.

V. 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6;

A. Once again, Paul looks to sweep the floor of these false negative accusations. He mentions three more things that were evidently being said about him and his ministry as it pertained to his methods.

1. First of all, Paul was accused of using flattery.

- a. Flattery involves more than simply saying nice words about someone or to someone. It refers to using language in order to persuade someone or to coax something out of someone, always with a selfish motive.
 - b. Paul didn't come using nice flowery language to butter these people up. He spoke the truth of God to them in power. He didn't say things to them just to make them feel better about themselves. He was a feel-good preacher. That wasn't his motive or aim. He didn't use those sorts of methods to get people to respond to him.
2. The second accusation was that Paul used a cloak for covetousness.
- a. The insinuation was that Paul and his companions were putting up a front to simply get what they wanted. They were putting on a mask to cover up their true intentions.
 - b. The wording here carries the idea of using a pretext for greed. All that Paul and Silas and Timothy were doing was all an outward show, an illusion used to mask their true intentions of covetousness.
 - c. They accused them of being greedy and materialistic. That they wanted something from the Thessalonians and wouldn't stop until they had it for themselves.
3. The third accusation was that Paul and his fellow ministers sought after glory from men. That they were looking for fame and prestige.
- a. The idea is that they were seeking after special recognition, special treatment. They wanted to be honored and praised by men.
 - b. The glory of man speaks of reputation and the opinion of man. When being accused of seeking after glory from men, the idea is that they were

wanting everyone to praise them, they wanted everyone to acknowledge them and speak highly of them and their ministry.

- c. That they were seeking after that “good job”, “way to go”, “great message, Paul”. That they fed off of that sort of stuff. That they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

B. Now, interestingly enough, Paul does mention and recognize that as apostles of the Lord they did have the right to have certain advantages given to them.

1. In other letters Paul wrote about how the apostles had the right to receive support for their service. That they should be able to receive food and drink from the people they minister to, that they should be able to bring along with them a believing wife in the ministry and have her supported as well. That if possible, they could be fully supported by the ministry and not have to subsidize their ministry by working a second job. [**1 Co. 9:4-6**]
2. Paul wrote to Timothy, “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’” (**1 Tim. 5:17-18**)
3. As apostles sent out by the Lord, Paul and his companions had the right to these things, but they didn’t seek them out or take advantage of these rights amongst the Thessalonians.
4. They didn’t seek preferential treatment. They truly came with a heart to give to the Thessalonians, not to take from the Thessalonians.
 - a. They didn’t seek after something from them, they wanted something for them. They wanted to see God bring salvation to their lives.

5. True ministers of the gospel will be more concerned with giving than receiving. They won't look to take from the body, but to give to the body.

C. This leads us to our next set of verses, and our next point. Take a look at verses 7 & 8 with me.

VI. 1 Thessalonians 1:7-8;

A. Paul describes how they were gentle among the Thessalonians, that they were like a nursing mother who cherishes her own child.

1. Instead of being demanding and taking from the church, Paul saw himself as a mother that cared for and nurtured the church.
2. He was gentle with them, understanding that they were babes in Christ in need of someone to lovingly come alongside them and take them in.
3. The word cherish literally means to make warm. The picture is that of a baby being wrapped up in swaddling cloths and held close to a mother's bosom; that the baby may feel the warmth of their mother, that touch that is so vital to the health and well-being of the baby; the care and affection that a mom has towards her children is so invaluable.
4. It's on days like today that we are reminded of just how valuable our moms are to us. We love them and appreciate them, and some of them we miss and long for their touch and embrace once more. It is hard to put in words just how much they mean to us. They are an invaluable part of our lives.
5. And this is how Paul viewed his ministry to the Thessalonians.

B. And I love the picture this creates as well. For in verse 8 Paul speaks of how affectionately they longed for the Thessalonians, they simply longed for and desired to be with them. Moms love to be with their children, to care

for them, to see them grow, to see their children molded and shaped right before their eyes.

1. This is how Paul felt as he ministered alongside the Thessalonians. He just loved being with them. He loved seeing them grow. He loved seeing them take the gospel and run with it; to see them turn from sin and surrender their lives to God completely.
2. And he mentions here two ways in which he desired to impart to them like a mother imparts to her children.
3. First of all we see that he desired to impart to them the gospel of God.
 - a. The word of God is life-giving. It brings nourishment and sustenance to the believer just like a mother's milk does for her baby.
 - b. The word of God is actually likened to the milk of a mother in 1 Peter. There Peter writes, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby," (**1 Pt. 2:2**)
 - c. God's word is a vital part of the growth and maturity of any believer in Christ. And Paul made sure he imparted to them the gospel, that he supplied them with the milk of the word that they may grow thereby.
 - d. It is extremely important that as a minister of the gospel Paul made sure to feed the church **a steady diet of God's Word**. This should be a defining factor of any minister of the Lord.
 - i. Jesus, in his commissioning of Peter to the work of the ministry exhorted him three times, "Feed My lambs", "Tend My sheep", and "Feed My sheep". (**Jn. 21:15**)
 - e. Paul understood this great responsibility and imparted to them the milk of the word of God.
4. But that wasn't all that he imparted to them. For the rest of verse 8 speaks about how Paul and his

companions imparted to them their very lives because they had become so dear to them.

- a. Paul, like a mother, was willing to give of everything he had in order to see them grow and mature into all the Lord was calling them to.
- b. Moms love their children sacrificially, they give and give and give and even when it seems like there is nothing left to give, God somehow increases their capability so that they can give beyond themselves.
- c. A mom's love for her child will bring her to give of her own life in exchange for the life of her child. King Solomon knew this and used it to settle an issue that was brought before him. You may be familiar with the account.
 - i. In 1 Kings we read an account of two women who both had given birth to children and lived together in the same house. And it came to pass that one of the children died in the middle of the night and the mother of the dead child swapped her dead baby for the living baby and when they awoke in the morning, the mother that was given the dead child realized that the baby next to her was not her own. And so the women fought over who's baby the living child was and who's baby the dead child was and the matter was brought before King Solomon.
 - ii. Both mothers claimed that the living child was their own and that the dead child was the other's. How could he tell who the mother really was?
 - iii. The bible tells us that King Solomon called for a sword and decided that the best way to solve the issue was to cut the baby in two and give each mom half a baby.
 - iv. One of the moms agreed with Solomon that this was the best case scenario, but the other mom

said, “O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!” (1 Kings 3:26)

- v. By this King Solomon knew who the real mother was. A real mother would do anything to save the life of her child.
- d. This is how Paul looked to the church in Thessalonica. He just wanted to give to them anything and everything that they needed. He wasn't there to take from them. He was there to give them what they needed to grow into mature believers in the Lord. He was willing to give of his very life.
- e. And this too is a very important element of being a minister of the Lord. A good minister will be one who looks to **impart his life to the body**. They want to give whatever they can to see them grow. They are truly invested in their well-being. And are willing to make the sacrifices needed to minister to the body.

C. Well, let's turn to our last set of verses where Paul speaks of his conduct not only as a mother, but as a loving father also. Read verses 9-12.

VII. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-12;

- A. Paul turns from his illustration of a gentle and caring mother to that of a loving father and he does so by speaking about three different aspects of his role as a spiritual father to this church.
 - 1. Number one, Paul highlighted his work for them.
 - a. A father works to support his family. This was the norm and expectation of fathers back then.
 - b. Paul asked them to call to remembrance his work ethic. How he worked night and day, laboring and toiling, that he might provide enough for himself, so that he wouldn't be a burden to any of them.

- c. Paul was a tent-maker by trade. And on numerous occasions, he would turn to tent-making in order to provide for himself and his ministry so that the church wouldn't have to bear that burden themselves.
 - d. It was not easy to work throughout the day making tents and still make time to minister the word of God to the people and to invest his life into them, but Paul did so. He wasn't afraid of hard work and he willingly worked in order to be a blessing and example to the church in Thessalonica.
 - e. A good minister of the gospel will be someone **who works hard** and doesn't look to be a burden to others. They desire to serve, not to be served.
2. Number two, Paul highlighted his walk before them.
- a. Fathers must live the kind of life that their children can follow after. A father has the responsibility of being an example to their children of what it looks like to live a life of faith.
 - b. Paul elsewhere exhorted fathers to not provoke their children to wrath, but to bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” (**Eph. 6:4**)
 - c. Paul did so for the Thessalonians by living devoutly, justly, and blamelessly before the Thessalonians.
 - d. The idea behind all of these words is that Paul lived a life that was above reproach. Though there were many bringing false accusation against Paul, none of them had any staying power because of the life he lived. Any such accusations were unfounded and without any sort of proof or evidence.
 - e. This is so important when it comes to the work of the ministry. A minister of the gospel must be **above reproach in his** walk with the Lord. He must be a man of great character, one who not only talks the talk, but also walks the walk.

3. And number three, Paul highlighted his words to them.
 - a. A father has the responsibility to speak into the lives of their children.
 - b. Paul and his companions had invested personal relationships with each of the people there in Thessalonica. And it should in the various ways that they spoke to them.
 - c. First of all, Paul mentioned how he exhorted them.
 - i. This is the Greek word “parakaleo”; it means to call alongside. It carries the idea of coming to the aid of someone. Helping them, comforting them, and encouraging them.
 - ii. To exhort in this sense doesn’t necessary mean to command as it does in other places. A father isn’t doing their children any favors if all they do is lay down the law without coming alongside their children and encouraging them, comforting them, helping them to see why it is important that they heed your words.
 - d. Second, Paul mentioned how he comforted them.
 - i. Children will go through tough times, through difficult seasons. They will have to learn lessons from their failures.
 - ii. That is where a father can step in and share those important words of comfort to them, words that will give emotional strength and relieve certain stresses that can come in life.
 - e. And third and last of all, Paul mentioned how he charged them.
 - i. Paul charged each of them to walk worthy of the Lord who had called them into His Kingdom.
 - ii. The idea behind this word is that of being a witness. To assert something, offering firsthand authentication of the fact.

- iii. Fathers charge their children to learn from them. To follow their example and not make the same mistakes they made.
- iv. Paul charged them and bore witness to them of the facts of the gospel. He implored them to learn from him, to follow his example, to learn what it means to walk with the Lord.
- v. That they may walk worthy of the Lord.
- f. All the words Paul spoke had their aim in meeting the church where they were at and calling them to grow and mature in their walk with the Lord, that they would walk worthy of the Lord.
- g. How important it is for ministers to encourage, comfort, and charge a church **with walking worthy of the Lord**. And to do so from the perspective of a father mentoring his children.
- h. A minister of the gospel has a responsibility to exhort and encourage their flock to walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;” **(Col. 1:10)**
- i. That was the heart of Paul for the church in Thessalonica and that is my heart for us as well. That we all would walk worthy of the Lord and the calling He has upon each of our lives. Amen?
Amen.