

1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

A Good Testimony

Have you ever been embarrassed by someone to the point you didn't want to identify yourself with them?

A)Your relative from another state or better yet calls and wants you to meet them at the beach.

B)You arrive at the beach – only to discover that your cousin doesn't belong in a bathing suit at all.

1)But he is not in a regular bathing suit - Speedo – Rob over here

C)Middle age parents who try to dance at weddings –

D)You know what they say about Christians and Dancing – Some can – some can't

1)Some can't – Uncle out there doing the Chicken

2)WATCH all the young people vacate the dance floor quickly

E)We have all had moments like that right?

1)Kids at Soup plantation – Ice cream bowl – overflowing – You believe those kids – disgusting

Have you ever been embarrassed by other Christians? – Reluctant to identify with them?

A)I have – guys screaming at people down at the Krikorian – Repent

B)Pastors on TV who fleece people – living lives of luxury

C)When a pastor falls – or even just a person in the congregation – living a double life.

1)Brings shame to the cause of Christ – reminder of our Humanity and the fact the Church is full of broken people

I admit because of things like that I have had times when I am a little reluctant to mention I am a pastor

A)Especially when I am around a group of people who have a lot of animosity toward the church.

B)Get to know me a little before I start telling what I do?

C)Maybe you have had similar experiences –

D)The poor testimony of others has made you a little less reluctant to identify yourself as a Christian –

1)At Work – with friends – maybe even family.

But here is the problem with that sort of REACTION

A)The world is a mess and we alone – KNOW THE ANSWER! – HAVE THE HOPE!

B)The world needs to hear us – Not a better time for the church to give a reason for the hope that is in our hearts. 1 Peter 3:15

B)OUR WORLD IS IN NEED OF HOPE!

C)Did any of you catch the story that was in the news 2 weeks ago – 3 first grade girls in Anchorage Alaska who plotted to poison and kill their classmate

A)First graders? - Alaska is a dark place – 3 months of the year no sunlight – but First graders?

B)We live in a world that is full of a lot of turmoil.

In the last 45 years worldwide – 147 terror attacks in 25 different countries – 1,165 killed - 3,221 injured

C)That is Sad - but what does that have to do with anything? – Jesus said in Matt 24

D)Times leading up to His coming would be like the days of Noah -

1)One of the things that marked the days of Noah – increase in violence

Another thing would be Wars and rumors of Wars-

A)Wars happening today in 23 countries - resulting in death of 3.4 million people – many civilians

B)During World War I, civilians made up fewer than 5 percent of all casualties.

1)Today, 75 percent or more of those killed or wounded in wars are non-combatants.

C) Syria remains the world's most lethal and overall "biggest" current war, with an estimated 250,000 deaths in the past three years, **Yea but that is over there - We are here - TRUE**

A) If honest - we don't think much about the wars going on in places like Syria,

B) But with the rising threat of ISIS - we are definitely more aware

C) Our world is getting more and more hopeless

Which is why we need to be ready to give a reason for the Hope that is in our hearts

A) Our hope is Jesus - **Died - sin - Rose - life -**

B) **AND HE IS coming back** to set things straight =OUR HOPE!

C) Because Jesus did exactly what He said He would do - **Death and Resurrection**

1) We should have the same confidence that Jesus will one day return just like He said He would.

We don't know what the future holds but we do KNOW HIM who holds the future -

A) The one who holds the future is holding me - holding you - Us

B) The only hope for our country is Revival or Rapture.

1) Ready for both - Rapture - ready to go home

2) Revival more people get saved!

C) Peter tells us in his epistle 2 Peter 3:9 **NONE TO PERISH - All come to repentance.**

That is why our message is so important to get out and even more so why having a good testimony as believers is so important.

A) We may not be able to erase the STIGMA that others have caused people to have about the church.

B) But we can by the way that we live and **help people** - see Christians differently.

C) So What does that have to do with our message today 1 Thessalonians Ch.2

Paul knew what it was like to face ridicule for his faith and ministry.

A) Detractors accusing him - doesn't really care - he bailed after 3 weeks

B) So here in Chapter 2 Paul is going to defend his ministry and actions

C) In doing so he gives all of us - some great insight on how **to live lives that will make an impact** - in a lost world

D) Especially in the face of the growing animosity toward the church where **our conduct** is more important than ever

Paul gives us insight on what NOT TO DO - What we should be doing

A) He frames it this way: This is what **we were not** - and this is **what we were.**

B) Outline today:

❖ This is **what we Were NOT! V.1-6**

❖ This is **what we WERE! V.7-12**

❖ This was the RESULT! V.13-16

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

C) Someone is only willing to take a beating for something they believe in.

1) Paul took a lot of them - Philippi one example - of the norm

D) Preach - Jews reject - gentiles received - Jewish people riot -

1) Philippi - Jews rioted - Paul beaten - arrested - jailed - MUCH CONFLICT

3 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.

4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

This is what we were NOT!

A) **V.3 Hypocritical** – did not come from error or uncleanness

B) Uncleanness – **Polluted testimony** – Tainted Messenger

C) Like a cold drink from a hose on a hot day – worst when you can taste the rubber! – Water is refreshing – hose leaves a bad taste in your mouth.

D) Uncleanness has the idea of a conduct that was poor.

A Poor Christian witness is the #1 reason people don't want to be Christians

A) Don't see a difference – **Blatant compromise** – Ephesians 5:3 – Paul gives a list of worldly behaviors **that Should Not be named among you.**

B) There is a certain behavior that people just expect from Christians

1) We can complain – not fair – too much pressure

C) Or we can embrace AS A MANTLE the fact that people watch our lives!

1) **Privilege to be salt and light** - that before anyone reads the Bible they are going to be reading you and reading me – Privilege.

D) **People watch our lives** – doesn't mean perfect - we will make mistakes but – we need to own our mistakes –

1) That was wrong and I am sorry – out of character for me- that goes such a long way.

D) **Most people are like Fonzie** – never admit when they are wrong

1) When you as a Christian are willing to do that – adds credibility

WERE NOT - Deceitful – Carries The idea of putting bait on a hook.

A) Paul saying – we were not trying to put something phony before you to bait you into believing in Jesus.

B) Not trying to pull one over on people – not trying to be deceptive.

C) Whole ministries today focused on deceptive tactic. They will pretend to be what they are not for appeal.

1) Secular music - make them comfortable to get them to hear our message.

Being deceptive – tract – looks like a \$100 bill – tip - wow

A) You think that blesses the waitress – especially if you didn't leave a tip with that?

B) Wow – 4 kids to feed – no tip – but they left me this worthless piece of paper – tells me about Jesus

1) **I apologize – for all Christians**

C) **HERE IS Better** – often do – bring the food – Christians – pray for our food – ask anything we can pray for you.

1) When you leave – make sure you leave **a great tip** even if the service was bad!

D) Denise at Rodrigos – daughter – next time – asked her how is your daughter doing? Great

E) Recently there – been like 2 years - She said – Do I know you – I don't think so – wait – guy asked pray for my daughter – great married

1) Can you pray for my son?

D) We were not DECEITFUL

Here is why – not needed Paul says v.4 we were entrusted with the gospel

A) Because Paul believed in the Power of the gospel – he didn't need to resort to anything else

B) Romans 1:16 **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek**

C) Paul believed that with all of his heart – POWER IN THE MESSAGE – NOT THE MESSENGER

Last week I joked about filling out Publishers Clearing House – I Did – God I'll give You half

A) Imagine being the guy who had the job – **show up at houses – you won! – Awesome job**

B) **Better** – Tell people – Eternal Destiny just changed!

C) Listen when you believe in the power of the message – **you don't need to rely on anything else – you just need to get it out**

D) We need to believe in the power of the message.

1) Sometimes as believers because of the poor testimony of others and the pressure to be Politically Correct – we can be reluctant to tell the truth.

E) Have to speak the truth – power in it - Speak the truth in Love!

WERE NOT – V.5 Not seeking financial gain - Not a cloak of Covetousness

A) Paul wasn't like – the Thessalonians are loaded – lets see how we can get into their pocketbook –

B) We will flatter them - Tell them how smart they are –

1) We will seek to win them over – for our own financial gain.

C) Happens all the time today – gives the church a bad name – all about money

D) Guys on TV – schemes –

1) They do studies – people who live in this area give more if you show them a kid in **wheel chair**

2) Over there **malnourished**

3) Over there it is kid **with cancer**.

D) Ploy to get into people's pocketbooks while the leaders live lives of luxury

SO sad – makes churches like ours reluctant to mention money giving –

A) We should probably mention more – pastoral duty – teach on tithing

B) Not because God needs your money – but because God doesn't want you missing out on great opportunity partner with him

1) He knows where our treasure is – there our heart will be also

C) Tithe – 10% but can't – **He says give what you can** –

1) But if you can't give with the right heart – don't give at all until your heart gets right –

D) **Loves a cheerful giver** - You deal with your heart

D) Paul: We were NOT about Financial gain – not about notches in the belt –

1) It is about lost people and the glory of God! SO that is what we WERE NOT - Here is what WE WERE

7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. 8 So, affectionately longing 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 dear to us. 9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

We were loving and Caring V.7-9

A) Paul paints a beautiful picture of **A Nursing mother** to describe his approach toward these people.

B) **A Nursing mother cherishes her children!** – is there anything more **affectionate and TENDER** than that.

1) Nursing mom – beautiful

C) We didn't just give you the gospel we gave you our lives!

1) Nursing mom – She is giving her life to that child – responsible for his nutrients –

D) **ON DEMAND Middle of the night** – child wakes up hungry – dad is of no help.

1) Honey – sorry – she wants you.

Moms do that – they give of themselves – Get back nothing in return.

A) Not like she is keeping count – nursing – 2,000 gallons of milk – **Average cost of gallon of milk today is \$4.00 – subtract \$8,000 from your college fund**

B) Mom – just gives of her life – **no strings** -

1) Paul worked – making tents during day – preached at night. **NO BURDEN** – instead a **BLESSING**

C) Nursing moms have a tenderness – **ALWAYS ON CALL**

1) So concerned about the welfare of the child they are willing to be inconvenienced – way **MORE THAN DADS**

Listen: One of the best ways that we can make an impact in this world – be willing to give not just a message – our lives.

A) People **don't CARE how much you know** until they **KNOW** how much **you CARE!**

B) Note: V.8b — Paul said we were this way because – **you became dear to us.**

1) wasn't an act or a strategy – GENUINE

C) I Am a Huge believer in relational evangelism – Get to know people – **ASK QUESTIONS**

Ask them questions about their lives – Most people love to talk about themselves.

A) Traveling on airplane – 4 plus hours with someone – ask questions – talking

B) People are lonely – When we genuinely care – means a lot to the world

C) IF YOU lack that – too self absorbed – own problems - Pray for a Burden for the lost

Here is what we WERE! - Inspiring V.10-12

A) CHANGES the metaphor to An encouraging father.

10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe.

11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Just – devout – blameless – Father's – men of integrity – they inspire with their lives – their example

A) Dads inspire with their words

B) **Exhort = to bring alongside – to assist** – Dad bring close – pull them in - Listen son

C) Comfort – to stimulate toward activity

Mom and Dads are so different in this - Amy riding a bike on School track – Denise first time she fell – lets go home- tender –

A) **No pain – no gain right?** So I said to Denise You go home today - Amy is going to learn to ride a bike

B) Denise left – **I pulled Amy close** – said come on you can do this – afterwards – ice cream

C) **AMY LEARNED TO RIDE A BIKE**

Denise and I are Even different with the dog – Eating chicken and rice/ Dog has become picky

A) Denise is always worried – not eating enough – all day trying to get that dog to eat.

B) **He will eat when he is starving – Don't give in**

C) I Read that a healthy dog can go 3-4 days without food.

D) I will take him for a long walk – run around the back yard – guess what – afterwards he is hungry

Charge: Motivation by using your own Story

A) I did this – I Know you can – God did this in my life – he can do it in your life too.

B) that is the Joy of fellowship – Hebrews **stir up one another to love and good works**

C) Remember – Ch.1 they received the word with **Joy in much affliction.**

1) Paul had to encourage them – charge them to keep walking

Walk that is worthy of their calling – 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

A) Worthy = to weigh the same – Calling – His Child

B) Called the redeemed –

C) Partakers of a Heavenly calling

Note the phrase – v.12 Christ who is calling you into His Kingdom! – Is He calling you today?

A) Turn to Him – allow Him to help you – turn from you

B) Called? Redeemed – Cleansed –

The result: Their Conversion

13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, *you welcomed* it not as the **word of men, but as it is in truth**, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,

15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, 16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

They **received the Word**

They became **imitators** – examples for those who suffered

True Conversion – Received – ALL IN !

IMPACT WAS HUGE – Ch. 1 spread all throughout that region