

“1 Thessalonians 2:1–20”

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I continued a series about 1 and 2 Thessalonians. The title of the presentation was “1 Thessalonians 2:1-20. Before we talk about 1 Thessalonians 2, let’s take a brief glimpse at the last two verses in chapter 1.

- 1 Thessalonians 1:9—Many brethren turned to God—from idols to serve the living and true God.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:10—The brethren were determined “to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

Continuing in chapter 2

- 1 Thessalonians 2:1—Paul reminded the brethren that the visit by Paul, Silas and Timothy was not in vain.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:2—He reminded the brethren how they preached the gospel even after they suffered and were spitefully treated at Philippi.

Troubles in Philippi

Do you remember the troubles that Paul experienced in Philippi?

- Acts 16:8-10—When they arrived in Troas, Paul had a vision from a man of Macedonia saying: “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”
- Acts 16:12—They sailed to Macedonia and went to the city of Philippi—“which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia.”
- Acts 16:16-19—After Paul cast out a spirit from a possessed slave girl (whose divinations had previously brought money to her masters), her masters dragged Paul to the magistrates.
- Acts 16:20-24—The magistrates beat them with rods and threw them into jail.
- Acts 16:25-34—God caused a great earthquake, which delivered Paul and Silas.
- Acts 16:35-39—When the magistrates gave orders to let Paul and Silas go free, Paul reacted by asserting his Roman citizenship to get better treatment.

Back to chapter 2

Let's go back to chapter 2.

Paul continued by reminding the brethren in Thessalonica how Paul, Silas and Timothy treated them with courtesy.

- 1 Thessalonians 2:3—Paul reminded the brethren how they did not have a hidden agenda and he did not use tricks.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:4—Paul reminded the brethren how they preached the gospel to please God (“who tests our hearts”).
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5—Paul reminded the brethren how they avoided using flattering words to hide covetousness.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:6—Paul reminded the brethren that they did not seek glory from people and they did not make demands “as apostles of Christ.”
- 1 Thessalonians 2:7—Paul reminded the brethren that they had love toward them “just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.” (In verse 11, he mentioned having love toward them “as father does his own children.”)
- 1 Thessalonians 2:8—Paul reminded the brethren that they preached the gospel to them and made sacrifices for them.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:9—Paul reminded the brethren that they worked jobs to serve them.

Did not always receive tithes

At this point in the Bible study, I covered scriptures that show that Paul did not always accept tithes to serve congregations. We will notice verses in Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth. Here is a reminder of the travel among those three cities.

- Acts 17:1—When Paul left Philippi, he went to Thessalonica.
- Acts 17:2-10—After Paul and Silas dealt with an evil mob in Thessalonica, the brethren sent them to Berea.
- Acts 17:13-14—When some of the evil mob in Thessalonica traveled to Berea to harass Paul and Silas, the brethren sent Paul to Athens (while Silas and Timothy remained there).
- Acts 18:1—When Paul left Athens, he went to Corinth.

Tentmakers in Corinth

- Acts 18:2-3—In Corinth Paul stayed with Aquila and Priscilla, because Aquila “was of the same trade” and “by occupation they were tentmakers.”

Paul wrote about his occasionally working another job (while serving the church) in the letters of 1 Corinthians (9:1-19) and 2 Corinthians (11:7-9). Notice a few of those verses here.

- 1 Corinthians 9:1—"Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?"
- 1 Corinthians 9:4—"Do we have no right to eat and drink?"
- 1 Corinthians 9:6—"Is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?"
- Corinthians 9:7—"Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?"
- 1 Corinthians 9:9-10—"For it is written in the law of Moses: 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.' Is it oxen that God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes?"

Notice a few verses where Paul explained that in a few places (like Corinth) he did not always use his right to collect tithes from the brethren.

- 1 Corinthians 9:12—"If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? . . . Nevertheless, we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ."
- 2 Corinthians 11:7-9—"Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. And, when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one—for what I lacked, the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything, I kept myself from being burdensome to you."

Comments about Philippi

- Philippians 4:15-17—"Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel (when I departed from Macedonia), no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving—but only you. For even in Thessalonica, you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account."

Comments about Thessalonica

- 2 Thessalonians 3:8-9—"Nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day—that we might not be a burden to any of you. Not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us."

Received the word with gladness

At this point, I returned to 1 Thessalonians 2.

- 1 Thessalonians 2:10—Paul reminded the brethren how he, Silas and Timothy treated them—devoutly, justly and blamelessly.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12—Paul reminded the brethren that they treated them like a father would—with comfort and with exhortation to walk worthy of the Lord.

■ 1 Thessalonians 2:13—Paul reminded the brethren how they loved hearing the Word of the Lord.

Suffered like brethren in Judea

■ 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16—“You also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans—who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us.”

Wanted to visit them again

■ 1 Thessalonians 2:17—Paul reminded the brethren that he and others wanted to see them again.

■ 1 Thessalonians 2:18—Paul reminded the brethren that Satan hindered their return to see them.

■ 1 Thessalonians 2:19—Paul reminded the brethren about their hope, joy and desire for the brethren—that they would be “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.”

■ 1 Thessalonians 2:20—This section ended with Paul writing: “You are our glory and joy.”