

## Paul's Work Among The Thessalonians

by John Isaac Edwards

A reading of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 will reveal Paul's work among the Thessalonians — a great example for gospel preachers today.

1) **Not In Vain.** His work was not fruitless or empty (1 Th. 2:1; 1:9). Some things which would cause one's work to be in vain: a non-resurrection (1 Cor. 15:14), observing the law (Gal. 4:10-11), failure to hold forth the word of life (Phil. 2:15-16), when the devil gets the best of people (1 Th. 3:5), when the word is not mixed with faith (Heb. 4:2). It was not in vain as some believed (Acts 17:4) and were converted (1 Th. 1:9).

2) **Bold.** Paul said, "...we were bold in our God..." (1 Th. 2:2). According to Acts 16:22, the multitude rose up against him and the magistrates commanded to beat him. This took a lot of courage! First-century preaching was with boldness (Acts 4:29, 31; 13:45-46; Eph. 6:19-20). The world needs men today who preach the gospel without fear or favor of men!

3) **Spoke The Gospel.** Paul's preaching entailed "...the gospel of God..." (1 Th. 2:2). His attitude was, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto

salvation..." (Rom. 1:16).

4) **Exhortation Was Not Some Things.** "For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile" (1 Th. 2:3). Paul was a preacher of honesty, sincerity, and integrity.

5) **Recognized The Gospel As A Sacred Trust.** He stated, "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel..." (1 Th. 2:4). The gospel is a sacred trust. We are responsible for how we use it (1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 2:2). Remember the song that says, "Into our hands the gospel is given, Into our hands is given the light, Haste, let us carry God's precious message, Guiding the erring back to the right."

6) **Didn't Preach To Please Men.** "...not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth the hearts" (1 Th. 2:4). Many would rather preach to please men than God! Paul's mentality was, "...if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

7) **Never Used Flattering Words.** "For neither at any time used we flattering words..." (1 Th. 2:5). Flattering words are words of insincere, excessive praise which the Bible condemns (Prov. 26:28).

8) **Wasn't Covetous.** "...nor a cloke of covetousness..." (1 Th. 2:5). He was interested in their spiritual welfare; not their physical wealth. Some by covetousness make merchandise of brethren (2 Pet. 2:3).

9) **Didn't Seek Glory Of Men.** He was uninterested in fame; nor did he have the love of applause as he said, "Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others..." (1 Th. 2:6). Paul gave God the glory (Rom. 11:36).

10) **Was Not Burdensome.** Paul kept himself from being burdensome (1 Th. 2:6; 2 Cor. 12:14, 16).

11) **Was Gentle.** "...even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (1 Th. 2:7). The word "gentle" means to be mild. Some are hot tempered and contentious. Not Paul!

12) **Was Affectionate.** Paul was characterized by a loving and tender disposition — "So being affectionately desirous of you..." (1 Th. 2:8). Some show very little love and affection toward brethren. There is a great need for men to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

13) **Had A Willing Heart.**

“...we were willing...” he said (1 Th. 2:8). God has always demanded a willing heart of service (Ex. 35:5; 1 Chr. 28:9). It’s no wonder Paul suffered at Philippi and went to Thessalonica — he was willing!

**14) *Gave His Own Life.***

“...we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls...” (1 Th. 2:8). Paul’s inclination was: spend and be spent. “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you...” (2 Cor. 12:15). He considered it a joy to be offered (Phil. 2:17). He said, “...neither count I my life dear unto myself...” (Acts 20:24). This shows how dedicated and committed Paul was to preaching.

**15) *Counted The Brethren Dear.***

He told the Thessalonians, “...ye were dear unto us” (1 Th. 2:8). Notice some terms of endearment used by Paul: “I have you in my heart”, “how greatly I long after you all” (Phil. 1:7-8), “my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown” (Phil. 4:1), “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in

the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1 Th. 2:19-20).

**16) *Laboured And Travailed.*** The words descriptive of Paul’s gospel work are such as used of childbirth! “For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail; for laboring night and day...” (1 Th. 2:9). In 2 Thessalonians 3:8-9 he reminded the brethren, “Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.” Paul often worked with his hands to provide his needs so he could keep on preaching (Acts 20:34-35).

**17) *Behaved Himself.*** “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe” (1 Th. 2:10). Preachers need to know how to behave themselves (1 Tim. 3:15), and avoid behavior that would raise question or suspicion!

**18) *As A Father.*** “As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children” (1 Th. 2:11). To the Corinthians he said, “I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you” (1 Cor. 4:15). As a father, Paul exhorted, comforted and charged.

What was the end of all this? “That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory” (1 Th. 2:12). As preachers, we would do well to follow example of the life and preaching of Paul!

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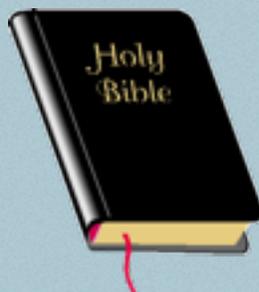
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