

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8.

“For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.”

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 ESV

Ask, What are some possible time wasters for you? (Things that are not necessarily bad, but bring no real value to life. The kind of things that you say you will only briefly spend time on and 3 hours later you wonder where the time has gone.)

How does it make you feel when someone takes the time to invest in you? (Allow some to reflect and share their thoughts.)

Lead the group to review the first two verses - v. 1-2 - Paul reminds them that they did not waste their time in coming to share with them. They were glad that they had come to Thessalonica to share the gospel with them. It was not an afterthought on their part. Their visit and church planting there was intentional because they love God and they loved people enough to share the gospel in them.

Paul reflects that they had been driven out of Philippi - driven out by the Jews there but they came to Thessalonica to share the gospel with you boldly because of God.

Ask, What are some ways we can be accommodating and accepting of those who come to Friendship? Sometimes we forget to be hospitable, to be kind and considerate because our hearts tend to run the other way. Self-absorption can cause us to miss others and their needs for love, care and for Christ.

Some times when packing for a trip you make sure you take some things with you and then you purposely leave other things at home.

Let's review what Paul, Silas and Timothy did not bring with them to Thessalonica -

Review verse 3 – and here are the things they did not bring with them.

No Error, impurity or deception

- Deception – This can take many forms even among evangelicals – prosperity gospel; me focused theology where man is the center rather than God Himself; and “the you’re fine just the way you are - God has faith in you!”.
- Error – Their words to the Thessalonians are completely true and Paul says that he is living it. The example for us is that our lives are to be consumed by the truth in every area of life. Being

diligent to make sure that the things you say, tweet, post are biblical faithful. The way we know that it is biblically faithful is that we search Scripture and be true to God's Word.

- Impurity – Paul says we were not just close to the truth but we were spot on because being close to the truth is really just being far from the truth.

We also see that v. 4-5 that there some others things that chose not to do. As a Christ-follower, it is not only choosing the right things to do but not choosing to do some other things that are not biblically faithful.

Their motivation was not for their own good so that did not use flattery to try and convince them of the truth. They were not greedy in their actions.

They realized they were entrusted with the gospel for God's glory alone. They chose to please God.

Many time we try to be people pleasers and as a people pleaser you will not share the gospel because it is offensive. Christ makes some strong claims about Himself that

Again in v. 6, they were not seeking glory for themselves but for Christ alone.

Are you a glory hog? You as the center rather than Christ. If your conversation rarely if ever gets to Christ, then you are a glory hog. You keep the focus on you and sometimes in a very subtle way hoping that others might somehow discern that you might be talking about Jesus. If you never mention Christ, there is a good chance that your more consumed with yourself much more than you are willing to admit.

Remind the group that in v. 7-8 the words here are tender and caring. No one was trying be harsh or blunt and "win at all cost" attempt as sharing Christ. Paul writes using the illustration of the tenderness of a gentle, caring, nursing mother. He has great love, tenderness and concern for them

How does boldness differ from bluntness? As you share Christ with others, we can boldly share what we truly believe but share as one who loves others as God loves them. As our lives exemplify the fruit of the Spirit, it becomes evident we belong to Christ.

Allow your group to think about this statement –

To live like Paul, imitating Jesus, we must live lives rooted in the purity of God's inerrant truth, not seeking to flatter, people please, get glory, or get rich, but being bold about this truth and yet gentle with an affectionate concern for our hearers of our words.

What might this look like in your life this week?

Take time to hear prayer requests and spend time praying together.