

1 Thessalonians: Standing Firm

Lesson 2 “Hallmarks of a True Minister”

I. Review and Introduction - This church was founded on Paul’s second missionary journey after he left Philippi. Paul taught in Thessalonica for three Sabbaths and was then run out of town by unbelieving Jews. Paul then travelled to Berea and began to minister there, but the Jews from Thessalonica traveled there and ran him out of town there also.

A. Paul wrote *1 Thessalonians* about six months after he planted the church in Thessalonica to strengthen, comfort, and ground this church in truth.

B. Paul wrote to help them understand how to deal with the basics of life: how to relate to one another, the purpose of work even with the return of Christ coming, sexual morality, and various other exhortations.

C. In this message, we will examine how Paul had to defend his ministry. His critics said the reason Paul left Thessalonica. **Paul’s enemies said he left town quickly because he was a self-serving coward. They said Paul was only in it for the money or the fame, not the people.**

1. My goal is to show you what a true minister looks like. There are some who are in it for money, fame, control, and the ego boost, while some are in it for God and people.

2. Example of Andrew Wommack in Charlotte in 2018 during Hurricane Florence. He stood out in the rain and prayed with and ministered to people on a Wednesday night for over an hour before service and then taught for an hour. He did this already having a large Bible School, the 3rd most watched TV program on Christian TV, and really nothing to gain by it.

II. Hallmarks of a True Minister

A. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Paul’s Defense of his ministry

1. **Verses 1-2** Paul counters the coward accusation. He said his coming wasn’t in vain because he preached the gospel to them in much conflict and they were converted. He also brings up his encounter in Philippi because he was bold there too in the face of being beaten and thrown in jail.

2. **Verses 3-5** Counters additional accusations against Paul. These include Paul was delusional (error), Paul’s ministry was based on impure motives (uncleanness), and Paul deliberately deceives others (deceit).

a. Approved by God. dok-im-ad'-zo; from [G1384](#); to test or approve. Paul’s faithfulness in earlier ministry approved him by God to take on additional responsibility. ex: Andrew Wommack, marriage.

b. Paul said he didn't flatter as cloak for covetousness. In other words he didn't butter them up to get influence/money.

3. **Verses 6-12** Paul reminds this church of His relationship with them. He was a Father to them and didn't require they provide for his needs. He worked all week long to supply his needs and then ministered on the weekend.

a. A true minister isn't in it for the money. Ex: Me and Ashley funded half of our launch budget and only took \$50/wk for the first few weeks even through we were approved to take more.

b. It's not wrong for a minister to be compensated. Paul just wasn't taking advantage of that right to bring offense. **1 Corinthians 9:14** *those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.* ex: Andrew Wommack

c. Paul nurtured this church like a parent would a child.

B. 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20 The Conversion of the Thessalonians

1. **Verses 13** The Thessalonians received the message not as the word of men, but as the word of God. That's the only way the word will really work.

2. **Verses 14-16** Paul then compares the Thessalonians to the churches in Judea (where Jerusalem was). These churches also suffered tremendously when the gospel was first preached (Peter and John jailed, Steven mattered, etc.)

3. The churches in Judea killed Jesus and their prophets. He compares the Thessalonian situation to that. That's harsh! He also reminds them of how the church in Jerusalem was told not to preach about Jesus.

4. **Verses 17-18** Paul demonstrates his Father's heart by reminding this church of how he wanted to come back to them. He loved them. He wasn't in it for the money or the glory. Unfortunately Satan hindered him through persecution.

5. **Verses 19-20** Paul tells the church that even though he can't get to them in person, he will be with them when Jesus returns. This church is Paul's glory and joy. He really loved these people.

III. Conclusion - What is the Hallmark of a true minister? His absolute devotion to God and people. A deceiver is about themselves and how big of a crowd they can get or how big an offering they can get. A true minister loves people and only wants a big crowd to reach people, not for control. He only wants a big offering to reach more people, not to get rich. A true minister will endure hardship as a soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Call Up Prayer Team

B. Pray Closing Prayer