

Sermon 6-13-2021

Ready for the Day #2 – I Thessalonians 2:1-12 – Methods and Motives

Intro: When it comes to sharing our faith in Christ – what is our motive and method

- Have you ever been tricked – manipulated by a salesman
- Rome --- arch of Constantine – group me and Catie – two young adults
- Guy came up – from Africa – engaged in conversation – so genuine and friendly
- Asked about family – He was good – giving out bracelets – put them on the young ladies
- It was that move – that I realized – this was a tourist trap --- he marked us and then asked for just a little something, a couple of euros --- one of our guys gave him a 20-euro note expecting change – but the guy pocketed and no change – I gave him a euro for the bracelet and moved us away. --- Rather embarrassed for being taken in – our new friend from Africa began working some other tourist.

When it comes to doing ministry – whether sharing our faith or teaching kids in VBS or leading YG or whatever way we are hoping to point other people to believe in Jesus

Not just about results --- our motive and our method need to be in line with Christ's ways

I Thess. 2 – Paul talks about how he conducted his ministry – how he had shared Jesus with the new believers in Thess --- specifically cites what he did not do

- As he does this --- saying in a way – you weren't tricked into this new belief in Jesus --- We were upfront about everything --- you came believe because God's work in your life

This morning:

Go through passage, and ask: what ways can our outreach, or ministry, or teaching go wrong?

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain.

In Vain --- it had results

But truth is you don't know going in – if this particular ministry – or conversation

Possible – they won't be interested

Jesus prepared his disciples --- if go to a town they are not interested – dust from feet

- We don't let their rejection sink us --- we have one Master to please

2 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.

Could face opposition and hostility

Paul cites how right before Thess was Philippi – night in jail – flogged – had to

So we trust in God's protection and leading –

Could have therefore been fearful – but instead boldness in our God

Confidence comes from knowing this is real – the word is trustworthy

3 For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive,

- Does not spring from Error or Impurity
- People will challenge what we say
- Will say that the things we believe are wrong – in the sense of not true
- Even more lately they will say wrong as in evil
- It is important that you learn the Word --- and grow in wisdom that you might answer
- When objections – don't get angry – listen closely – seek to understand the point of the criticism – then if need be, ask for time to think about it.

Not any attempt to deceive

- We are not to stretch the truth – or make up stuff to try to bolster faith somehow
- We do not need to “sell” Jesus to people – He can sell Himself.

4 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. 5 For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness.

Entrusted by God with the gospel message

- Tested by God --- How will God test us?
- Allow us to be challenged --- difficult times – will we keep going and be faithful in what the Lord has given us to do?

What will God test? --- our method and our motive

- Flattery – do we use manipulative techniques – to flatter and tell people what they want to hear so they respond how we want them to

Do we put pressure on people – get them to say Yes

Youth Ministry in small town – Cambridge – 3 day Revival

- *One night was specifically for teenagers – program aimed at them – I was on stage*
- *A group of good Christian kids – Baptist church --- had brought one friend to it*
- *I was watching – could see they were intent on getting him to come forward for the altar call --- they did the whole group went up with them*
- *The people running the revival were excited – saw group kids coming forward – I knew that only one was not actually already a Christian --- he did altar call – but truth be told not sure he ever came to church or YG after that... - peer pressured to it*

Love the enthusiasm – the boldness – but we want people to say Yes to Jesus because the Lord is doing a work in their heart – Jesus was pretty upfront – before you decide to follow you better count the cost and make sure you are ready to pay it --- Don't start building if you can't afford to buy all the materials to finish the building.

Pretext for greed --- Not just our Method but also our Motive

- Greed is insidious – it can sneak up on you

- I doubt too many go into ministry for the sake of getting rich - Start off serving the Lord
- But when they experience that success – God is blessing me – justify ever more luxuries
- They end up Serving Money instead of God – orienting their work & their teaching around the finances rather than their heart for God

Freely you have received, freely give! --- Trust God will provide your financial needs
Beware the desire to want more and more of what you already have enough of!

6 Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

A more common wrong motive – is glory from people

- Hypocrites – love to be seen by others praying

Want to be known as – or seen by people in a certain way

View witness as winning notches on our belt – Well I led this # to Christ how about you?

It is pride plain and simple

1 John 2 – 3 dangers that lead us astray

Lust of the eyes --- greed --- Lust of the flesh --- lust --- and the Pride of Life

- Paul mentions a sign of this pride --- Demanding
- Rather than coming as a servant of others for the sake of Christ
- Setting up rules – giving orders – lording it over others ----
- That is not how we are meant to operate --- Jesus said... it shall not be so with you.

Three Tests of Ministry

Paul contrasts the ministry of him and his team - Silas:

7 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. 8 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.

Shared Lives Not Projects

- The care that they had for the Thessalonians
- Goes so far to compare selves to nursing mothers caring for an infant

Textual variant: 2:7 – we were nepion vs. epion --- infants vs. gentle among you

- Not just a project
- Willing to share their lives
- Teachers --- That is the way to have a kingdom impact
- Your task is not just to share information ---- Zoom School – could pass on information but could teachers have the same impact without the personal interactions

9 For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God

Sacrificial Ministry Not Demanding

- Worked night and day – so as not to burden them
- They did a day job --- Paul was a tentmaker – so that they could provide selves

- Bivocational ministry – pastor friend – small church – Garbage man in Columbus

10 You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. 11 For you know how, like a father with his children, 12 we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

The High Calling of the Kingdom

- Exhorted to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into kingdom
- Challenging them to step up to the Kingdom
- But could only do that because --- v.10 – you saw us – how we lived among you
- Lives open to inspection – how we live matters
- We cannot lead someone beyond where we are – calling of the Kingdom.

Brothers and sisters – these ministry tests apply to us - Whether an ordained pastor – Sunday school teacher – or just hoping to share Jesus with a friend.

Convinced – Jesus is the best thing that ever happened to me

- I want people to know Him – Jesus is the one way to Life --- He pours out upon us the Living Water – that satisfies our souls
- Therefore willing to share my life

Called – You have been called into His service – and called to serve sacrificially

- He has a purpose for you and for your life
- Love the people he puts in your path... - You can't love everyone in the whole world but if God puts someone in your path – see them as sent from God
- Find and put into practice the role of service which best fits you. He brought you here to EGCC – He has a job for you here
- Joy of knowing – discovering the very reason for which you are made –

(By pastor Law I have to have a 3rd Point that starts with C)

Committed – Let us live up to the High Calling of the Kingdom

- We need to because people are watching
- College student --- signed on to be YL volunteer – sober realization that how I lived – the choices I made about sex and drinking and all of that could have a big impact on the teenagers I was working with at YL --- How could I stand and tell them about the Lord if I had totally got wasted that weekend? ---
- high calling – but not out of fear - But because He is worthy and calling us to Himself.
- And we trust that if we put our lives in His hands – No better way to live

Sermon Scripture Passage: I Thessalonians 2:1-12

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Scripture References:

Matthew 6:24 *“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*”

Matthew 6:5 *“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.*”

1 John 2:15-16 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.*

Mark 10:42-44 *And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.*”

John 4:13-14 *Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*