

I Thessalonians 2: 1-4

*The Message
of the Gospel
was not
in Vain*

HHBC



Missions—Foreign

409 ST. MICHAEL S. M. The Geneva Psalter, 1543 (L. Bourgeois)

1. How beau - teous are their feet, Who stand on Zi - on's hill;
Who bring sal - va - tion on their tongues, And words of peace re - veal! A - men.

2 How charming is their voice; How sweet their tidings are! "Zion, behold thy Saviour-King, He reigns and triumphs here."	Prophets and kings desired it long, But died without the sight.
3 How happy are our ears That hear this joyful sound, Which kings and prophets waited for, And sought, but never found.	5 The watchmen join their voice, And tuneful notes employ; Jerusalem breaks forth in songs, And deserts learn the joy.
4 How blessèd are our eyes That see this heavenly light;	6 The Lord makes bare His arm Through all the earth abroad: Let every nation now behold Their Saviour and their God.

I. Watts, 1707



I Thessalonians chapter 2: 1- 4

Today's passage:

1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, **2** but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. **3** For our exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or by way of deceit; **4** but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey



I Thessalonians 2: 1

1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,

FROM LAST WEEK: “We will look more into Paul’s reception in next week’s (Chap. 2:1-4) lesson” . . . And here we are again:

1) Receiving Paul (from last week)

- a) Receiving = **eisodos** = exact opposite of exodus. (the way in vs. the way out)
- b) ‘our coming to you’ = **eisodos** – again; in Vs. 1: hence Paul’s reception

2) Not in vain

- a) Meaning: not a fruitless endeavor, but also not done aimlessly
- b) Paul: was an expeditionary (military term) missionary. He was sent by the LJC to accomplish a military-like goal. In this case the gospel message sent to Europe.



I Thessalonians 2: 1

1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,

2) Not in vain continued . . .

- c) Paul was on the run from Philippian Jewish officials. They most likely sent word to the Thessalonian synagogue that Paul was preaching contrary to the law and Jewish customs.
- d) Looking past Thessalonica: he was booted from this city as well. The Jews here hired the city's ne'er-do-wells to riot and stir up unrest to frame Paul.
- e) They even took a hostage, Jason as security. If Paul were to continue in Thessalonica, Jason would pay for it.
- f) All of this: was in God's hands. Was it to keep Paul on the move to new cities spreading the gospel?



I Thessalonians 2: 1

1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,

3) Paul's Systematic Method in Introducing the Gospel to a New City:

- i. Go to the synagogue and start with the Gospel to the Jews
- ii. His method is described in Acts 17:2-3 – which happens to be the Thessalonican account:

And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."

- iii. This involves 3 elements: 1. **Reasoning**: engaging in dialogue, debating and employing dialectics (*formal arguments; putting forth propositions; rebutting arguments in the synagogue*), 2. **Opening**: the scriptures and explaining and expounding the O.T. scriptures, 3. **Alleging**: putting forth solutions to problems, giving his hearers a body of doctrine.*

(*) I, II THESS.-THE PROSPECT OF GLORY; ACCENT ON LIFE BIBLE CURRICULUM; ACCENT B-P PUBLIC. DENVER, CO



I Thessalonians 2: 1

1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,

3) Paul's Systematic Method in Introducing the Gospel to a New City, *contin.*:

iv. The Passages of the O.T. Paul used to preach (reason, open, allege) were in 2 Parts:

PART I: The Messiah must: **1) Suffer, 2) Die** (using Ps. 16, 22 & Isa. 53)

For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.
You will make known to me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are
pleasures forever **PSA 16**

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?
Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.
O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer;
And by night, but I have no rest. **PSA 22**

Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately* form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. **ISA 53**

PART II: ***This man, Jesus*** suffered and died and rose from the dead, He is the Messiah!

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I Thessalonians 2:2

2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition

1) The Philippi account:

- a) Paul, Silas & Timothy arrive in Philippi after docking in Neopolis. They go to the riverbank supposing that there people are gathered to pray. Paul preaches to an audience of women gathered there;
- b) Lydia is the first European convert to Christ
- c) A slave girl has been following Paul and Silas around for many days, possessed by a demon who is taunting Paul, although the demon's proclamation is true and correct. Paul commands the demon to leave the girl.
- d) This whips the girl's masters into a heated anger that their money-making-fortune/future-telling slave girl now has no powers.
- e) The masters drag Paul in front of the city magistrates saying he and Silas are throwing Philippi- a Roman city- into confusion, basically saying they are encouraging Roman citizens to sedition.
- f) Paul, Silas are beaten with rods and thrown into prison. Their feet are put in stocks. They give a gospel concert that night to the other prisoners that brings down the house, literally. (H.A. Ironside)



I Thessalonians 2:2

2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition

1) The Philippi account, *contin.*:

- g) The Philippian jailer is saved
- h) The next day the jailers want to release Paul and Silas quietly under the radar, but Paul is incensed at their treatment of him. This comes through in Vs. 2 above.
- i) Paul pulls out his Roman citizen card. He does this from time to time. He is proud of his Roman citizenship: ***“But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.”***
- j) Why does Paul want the chief magistrates to formally and publically release them?
- k) Ironside says: “so that no dishonor might be connected to the gospel message”
- l) Paul used the citizenship card to get out of a beating in Acts 22, and to get his case tried before ceasar instead of Jerusalem in Acts 25. . .
- m) It is amazing that Paul is able to endure Philippi and then go directly to Thessalonica and do the exact same gospel mission, knowing that he will suffer the same mistreatment in most cases



I Thessalonians 2:3

3 For our exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or by way of deceit;

- 1) **Paul's motivation for preaching the gospel and his Apologetic for that motivation:**
 - a) McCalley: this verse is Paul's apology to the Thessalonian believers regarding the reporting of malicious lies about his team's motivation, spread by the Jews
 - b) In Berea, Thessalonian Jewish officials followed him there, agitating the crowds. The Jews who did this were **'like small malignant spirits set to dog (Paul's) tracks',^(*)** from city to city
 - c) The word 'exhortation' in the Greek is **paraklēsis** (to call; to bid alongside) closely related to Christ's description of the Person of the Holy Spirit **'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper...'** Someone summoned, called to one's side, esp. called to one's aid

(*): FROM JAMES AGEE, 'KNOXVILLE SUMMER OF 1915' ESSAY



I Thessalonians 2:3

3 For our exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or by way of deceit;

2) Paul's motivations as to being without deceit is best said in his own words:

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. I COR. 2:1-5

Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? I robbed other churches by taking wages *from them* to serve you; and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so. II COR. 11:7-9



I Thessalonians 2:4

4 but just as we have been **approved** by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who **examines** our hearts.

1) Paul's Qualifications

- a) Paul has been approved, *dokimázō* (examined; tested like a metal through fire & approved) for his stewardship of the gospel [Perf. Passive Indicative]
- b) After the call on the road to Damascus, he had an approx. 8 year approval process, including 3 years with the Lord in the Arabian desert
- c) Paul never uses cajolery or flattering speech to preach the gospel
- d) At no time did he promote himself, offers the gospel free of charge [I COR. 9:18]
- e) He did not ingratiate himself on his hearers
- f) Interesting that God approved Paul once for all in the past, and the end of the verse, God is presently here continuing to *dokimázō* (*Pres. Act. Part.*) Paul's heart as he goes along



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4 but just as we have been approved by God to be **entrusted** with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.

2) Paul's Stewardship of the Gospel

- a) God places ***pisteuō*** (*trust, confidence, faith*) in Paul and his team. Paul has a fiduciary responsibility to preach accurately and fully convey God's message of salvation to both Jew and Gentile.
- b) He has (passive) been entrusted with a stewardship
- c) And he is compelled to do so, willingly or not:

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. I Cor. 9: 16-17