

In our study of 1 Thess, we are currently examining the missionary teams' gospel ministry in Thessalonica, 2:1-16.

W/in that larger category, we've been looking @ Paul's defense of their ministry.

➤ False accusations.

➤ Specifically, what their conduct was like, 7-12.

▷ Last, 7-9.

▷ Today, 10-12 (NIV).

➤¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ^{11a} For you know that we dealt with each of you ^{11b} as a father deals with his own children, ^{12a} encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, ^{12b} who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

In vs 10, Paul summarizes the team's conduct.

(NIV) You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.

➤ There is a considerable overlap of meaning between these 3 terms.

▷ All 3 terms refer to behavior.

▷ So Paul may not have been going for 3 individual types of conduct. 1/10

▷ He may have put them together for emphasis.

▷ He was emphasizing the irreproachable behavior of the apostolic team while in Thessalonica.

➤ Paul could not make these claims before the Thessalonians & before God if the claims were not true.

▷ Their accusers could say what they liked.

▷ But everyone knew that Paul, Silas, & Timothy had conducted themselves in a totally irreproachable manner.

➤ The team's impeccable behavior surely affected the Thessalonians.

▷ If the missionary team had shared the gospel message but had lived carelessly, their message would have had little impact.

▷ But they preached through both their words & their lives.

➤ And it had a great impact.

➤ Can't stress maintaining impeccable behavior in our evangelism & Christian life enough.

▷ 1 Pet. 2:12 (NET), And maintain good conduct among the non-Christians, so that though they now malign you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God when he appears.

▷ Peter's point here is an evangelistic one.

➤ His primary idea is that in the midst of people accusing us of doing wrong, some unbelievers, will come to Christ through the witness of our honorable lifestyle. 2/10

Vs 10, again, (NIV) You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.

➤ Now, even though the 3 terms combine to emphasize the team's irreproachable behavior, it might be helpful to look at the 3 words separately.

➤ This will give us a more detailed description of the team's impeccable conduct.

➤ This expanded paraphrase captures the idea here.

▷ The way in which we behaved towards you who believe was without anything wrong [holy]. It was just the way we should have acted as messengers of God [righteous]. And there was nothing that we should be blamed for [blameless].

The apostolic team behaved exactly the way messengers of God are to behave.

➤ Every believer, in one way or another, is a messenger of God.

▷ We have all been commissioned to proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ.

▷ Therefore, all believers are to behave exactly the way messengers of God are to behave.

We can look at this a little differently as well.

➤ In Phil., Paul says that 'our citizenship is in heaven.'

➤ Plus, we are temporarily dwelling in this world, to which we do not belong.

➤ As such, we have a responsibility to live differently than the people who do belong to this world. 3/10

➤ TPID, we are not natives of this world.

▷ So we are not to act like natives.

➤ We are to be governed by the directives of our homeland, which are spelled out for us in Scripture.

▷ E.g., Rom. 12:2a, Do not be conformed to this world [I.e., don't copy the behavior and customs of this world], but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

(Vs. 10) (NIV) You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.

➤ Whether or not Paul intended it, this description of the team's behavior connects with a significant truth.

▷ Specifically, it connects with the way the character and activity of God are described in other places in Scripture.

➤ God is holy, righteous, & blameless.

➤ Paul & his companions were the sort of people who not only proclaimed the gospel.

▷ They also embodied the character and image of the God who is its source.

➤ And by doing so, they reflected God's goal for his people.

▷ Namely, to be conformed to the image of his Son, as Paul notes in Rom. 8.

➤ This is a lifelong process, which will culminate when Jesus returns. 4/10

▷Phil. 1:6, And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

▷I.e., God will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

▷At that time, Paul tells us later in Philippians, Jesus will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own (NLT).

Now we come to last of Paul's defense re: how the apostolic team behaved in Thess.

Rather than throwing their weight around & being overbearing, Paul adds that they took on the role of loving fathers, 11-12 (NIV).

(NIV) ^{11a} For you know that we dealt with each of you ^{11b} as a father deals with his own children, ^{12a} encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, ^{12b} who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

In vs 11a, the phrase 'each of you' is emphatic in the Grk.

►It puts emphasis on the individual.

▷Paul, Silas, & Timothy were not just interested in crowds.

▷See from Acts, Paul's pattern of instruction was both corporate & individual.

▷Acts 20:20, (NIV), You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

►Paul & the others were concerned about the spiritual well-being of the individual members of the Thessalonian church and not only the church as a whole. 5/10

▷ Individuals were important to them.

▷ The apostolic team connected with each believer in Thessalonica.

▷ They gave attention to the individual spiritual needs of these new believers.

▷ Sad & tragic when a church's leadership & congregation is more into numbers than individuals, or simply treats new converts as statistics.

▷ We, here at NHCC, need to make sure we are following Paul & his team's example.

➤ Need to understand.

▷ God does not measure the spiritual success of a church's ministry by numbers.

▷ That's the world's standard.

▷ The Lord has other indicators by which to judge spiritual success.

▷ Both in a church and in an individual believer's life.

➤ The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart (NIV).

➤ Micah 6:8, He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

➤ & 1 Cor. 4:2, Moreover, it is required of stewards [referring to sp. leaders] that they be found faithful.

▷ These are the kinds of indicators God uses to judge spiritual success. 6/10

In vs 7, Paul likened the conduct of the missionaries to the loving, unselfish care of a nursing mother.

Here in vv 11b-12, he compared their behavior to that of a father.

➤(NIV) ^{11a} For you know that we dealt with each of you ^{11b} as a father deals with his own children, ^{12a} encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God [i.e., conduct that pleases God], ^{12b} who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

▷Vbs = Continual action.

They were continually encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God.

➤1st, they were continually encouraging the Thess believers.

▷In Acts 14, we read that Paul & Barnabas were revisiting churches.

➤And in Acts 14:21b-22 (NIV), Luke writes,

→Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. 7/10

▷ It may be that is the type of encouragement we find here, in [vs 12a](#), considering the these new believers were undergoing persecution.

▷ I.e., ap. team was strongly urging the Thess believers to remain loyal to Jesus.

‣ And also encouraging them to persist in their confidence which they have placed in the grace of God revealed in the crucified and risen Jesus.

▷ This is what we need to be doing, encouraging each other to persevere in our commitment to Christ.

▷ And the reason for this encouragement?

‣ Before we enter the Kingdom, we will go through many hardships.

‣ Hardships, means an oppressive state of physical, mental, social, or economic adversity.

‣ 2nd, the ap. team was continually comforting these believers.

▷ To alleviate sorrow or distress; give emotional strength to.

▷ Specifically, Paul's most likely referring to the comfort the team gave them in the social hardships they faced as a result of their conversions to the Christian faith.

▷ We will need comfort throughout our lives.

▷ Later in 1 Thess, Paul will tell us to comfort the discouraged.

‣ & 3rd, Paul, Silas, & Timothy were continually urging these believers to live lives worthy of God. **8/10**

▷Paul does not mean that believers should behave so well as to become worthy of God's love or his gifts.

▷Impossible for us to achieve.

▷One could read it as, *We were continually urging you to behave like people who belong to God.*

→Or, *We were continually urging you to live godly lives.*

▷Peter states it this way, *1 Pet. 1:14-16.*

→*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

▷Paul says, *we were continually urging you to behave like people who belong to God.*

▷Grk wd for urging = to urge something as a matter of great importance.

▷To lead a godly life is a matter of great importance for believers.

→Why?

↳For one thing, it's for our spiritual well-being. ↻ For evangelism

▷So we will continue urging you from the pulpit to live godly lives.

▷And in general, all of us are to continue urging each other to live godly lives. 9/10

Then in vs 12b, Paul reminds us that *God has called us into his kingdom and glory.*

➤ Note of great encouragement.

➤ Kingdom and glory is a figure of speech = glorious kingdom.

➤ God's kingdom began when God himself entered human history as a man.

➤ Today Jesus reigns in the hearts of believers.

➤ But the kingdom will not be fully realized until all evil in the world is judged and removed at the 2nd coming of Jesus.

➤ Then God will reveal his kingdom to those who have been called to join it.

▷ I.e., all who have accepted Christ as Savior have been called by God to be part of his glorious kingdom.

➤ Not only saved, but also called into his kingdom.

Well, much to think about this week. 10/10