

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Thessalonians 2:3-12.**
- B. One of the best ways to get ready for the coming of Christ is to keeping maturing and growing in the word of God.
- C. In this section of Paul's letter to the brethren in Thessalonica he reminds them of his nurturing care of them as young Xians. We can gain much insight to our role in helping one another by following Paul's example here.

I. THE FAITHFUL STEWARD.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 2:1-6.
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. **5** For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed-- God is witness-- **6** nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.
- B. Paul's message was not one that had been "made up" rather it was from God (Gal. 1:11-12).
For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. **12** For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
- C. But a steward owns nothing; he/she is but a caretaker of that which belongs to someone else. The gospel is a treasure that has been entrusted to us (2Cor. 4:7). We must not change it (Gal. 1:6-9) but as a steward be faithful (1Cor. 4:1-2).
(2Cor 4:7) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;
(Gal 1:6-9) I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; **7** which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. **8** But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. **9** As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.
(1Cor 4:1-2) Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. **2** In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.
- D. Notice three important things about Paul's ministry in 2:3-6:
 - 1. The message was pure; "not from error."
 - 2. The motive was pure; "not from impurity."
 - 3. The method was pure; "not from deceit, flattering speech, or greed."
- E. We are not to try to win souls with our egos or flattery. The apostle did not use sensationalism, scare tactics, or hype. Paul said "as you know" 5 times in this letter (1:5; 2:1, 5, 11; 3:3-4; 4:2; 5:2) meaning that even though some may try to discredit him, the brethren in Thessalonica knew better.
- F. The faithful steward will conduct him/herself in a way that is befitting (Phil. 1:27).
Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

II. THE LOVING MOTHER.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 2:7-8.
But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children. **8** Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.
- B. While the image of a steward is *faithfulness*, the image of a mother is *gentleness*. This gentleness is seen in four ways:

1. Sacrifice. Paul did not turn over his converts unto “baby sitters” but rather made sacrifices for them so that they might grow.
2. Patience. Children do not grow up instantly, and neither do baby Xians. We must exercise great patience while they experience growing pains and encounter problems.
3. Giving nourishment. Paul nourished them. One cannot be a nursing mother and turn their child over to someone else for feeding. As the nursing mother eats food and then transforms it into milk for her newborn; the mature Xian feeds on the word of God and then shares the milk of the word with those who are new in X (1Pet. 2:2).
...like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,
4. Protection. Being willing to give of one’s life (experiences and spirit) means an extra level of care for those who cannot totally care for themselves. As babies need great protection until they can protect themselves, so do young Xians need protection from Satan until they more fully understand their spiritual adversary.

III. THE CONCERNED FATHER.

A. Scripture text: 1Th. 2:9-12.

For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, *how* working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. **10** You are witnesses, and *so is* God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; **11** just as you know how we *were* exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father *would* his own children, **12** so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

- B. The father is the one who is responsible for the spiritual and material well-being in the home. In this passage Paul calls himself the “spiritual father” of the Thessalonian brethren. While it is true that Paul had a role in begetting this folks into the church, he now has the responsibility of seeing that they are cared for.
- C. Paul carried out this responsibility in three ways:
 1. His work (2:9). He was a hard worker as to not be a burden.
 2. His walk (2:10). He lived in a blameless and upright way.
 3. His words (2:11-12). He instructed, encouraged, and begged them on how to live.
- D. As we ready ourselves for the second coming of Christ (whenever that might be), we do so by helping one another mature and grow in their relationship with the Lord.

IV. GROWING UP.

A. First, **God’s word within us** (2:13).

And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God’s message, you accepted *it not as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1. We are to *receive* the word of God as it is delivered to us.
2. We are to *appreciate* the word of God--because that is what it is!
3. We must recognize that the word is active, *working* in us! (Heb. 4:12).

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

B. Second, **God’s people around us** (2:14-16).

For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they *did* from the Jews, **15** who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, **16** hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

1. Unfortunately Xians will suffer hardship and persecution (2Tim. 3:12).
And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
2. By placing yourself around brethren, or the brethren around yourself--you can find it easier to stand firm.

3. Paul mentions those who were persecuting the church much like the Jews persecuted the prophets. These people are only repeating the sins of their fathers. Instead of drawing strength from God's people then were intent on causing harm.
4. There are many "let us" passages in the book of Hebrews. See 4:11; 4:14; 4:16; 6:1; 10:24; 12:1; 12:28-29; 13:15.

(Heb 4:11) Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through *following* the same example of disobedience.

(Heb 4:14) Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

(Heb 4:16) Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

(Heb 6:1) Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,...

(Heb 10:24) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,...

(Heb 12:1) Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,...

(Heb 12:28,29) Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; **29** for our God is a consuming fire.

(Heb 13:15) Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

C. Third, **God's glory before us** (2:17-20).

But we, brethren, having been bereft of you for a short while-- in person, not in spirit-- were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. **18** For we wanted to come to you-- I, Paul, more than once-- and *yet* Satan thwarted us. **19** For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? **20** For you are our glory and joy.

1. Even midst troubles and problems Paul remained positive about the future.
2. He wanted the brethren to keep their hope fixed not on the riches of this present world but on the hope and joy that comes with being fitted with the eternal crown of exultation.
3. There is nothing greater than being faithful in Christ at the time of His coming!

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. How does Paul encourage us concerning the second coming of Christ in this chapter? By:
 1. Being a faithful steward of the gospel (and spiritual things).
 2. Being a loving mother caring and nurturing her children.
 3. Being a concerned father who sets a good example in all things.
- B. We can be encouraged to stay faithful to end (the coming of X) by; God's word, God's people, and God's glory.
- C. Are you ready for the coming of X? Are you a member of His church?
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.