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1 Thessalonians 2:9-12, Acts 18:8-9

On this week's episode of Chosen and Cherished, we talked about the courage of faith as we continued our study in the book of Philippians. If you'd like to listen to the episode, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Today, we start looking at another aspect of being a Kingdom Outpost, a church that faithfully represents Jesus. We want to be a Kingdom Outpost with a Worthy Witness. What makes our witness for Christ worthy? O Lord, as I look at 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12 and Acts 18:8-9, please teach me to be a worthy witness for You.

1 Thessalonians 2:9-12 ~

Vs. 9 ~ A worthy witness puts the gospel over comfort. "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."

Paul did not come as a leader who demanded that they serve him because of what he had to offer them. He came with a servant heart, working night and day to proclaim the good news of the gospel and not be a burden to these believers.

Why would he avoid being a burden? Perhaps he wanted to make sure they never questioned his motives. If he put an expectation on them to provide for his needs, maybe they would have accused him of being on the take. He must have been onto something, because later, the Corinthian Church did accuse him... not because he had done anything wrong, but because they didn't like him calling out their sin.

Vs. 10 ~ Paul wanted to make sure that nothing hindered the message and hope of the gospel.

He said, "You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers." His behavior toward them, in the sight of God Himself and in their own experience, was...

- *Holy ~ pure motives, not unholy selfish motives.*
- *Righteous ~ always treating them in alignment with what God loves and what He hates, never doing anything deceptive or for selfish gain.*
- *Blameless ~ even if someone searched for something to attack Paul with, no accusation would stick. The truth would be clear that he was serving the Lord and proclaiming the truth of the gospel to them in love.*

Vs. 11-12 ~ "For you know how, like a father with his children, 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."

It's interesting. In vs. 7, Paul spoke of how he cared for these beloved believers with the gentleness of a nursing mother... pouring mercy on them. Now, he said he cared for them like a father exhorting, encouraging, and charging them to walk in a manner worthy of God... speaking truth without apology.

He had both gentle mercy toward them, and uncompromising truth with them. Mercy and truth in wonderful balance. To show only mercy and no truth often leads to enabling people in their sin. Not healthy. To speak only truth and no mercy often leads to domineering over people and crushing their spirit. Also not healthy. Paul was both mercy and truth... following in the footsteps of Jesus. Most people veer to one side or the other.

It's important for me to know which side I veer to so that I don't assume the way I'm naturally handling something is the way Jesus would. I tend to veer to the side of truth, so I need to be careful that I don't speak too flippantly or forget that the person I'm talking to is a human being with feelings who needs to know I care. I need to actively pray for the Lord to help me to be more compassionate. Praise God, He answers those prayers!!! The person who naturally veers to the side of mercy needs to be careful not to let her mercy take precedence over truth. Godly compassion never compromises His truth.

What did the truth side of Paul focus on as his mercy side approached the believers with compassion? He exhorted, encouraged, and charged them to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

He exhorted them... calling them and urging them to walk worthy of the Lord.

He encouraged them... consoling and comforting them in this walk because he knew it could be hard... but so worth it.

He charged them... testifying to the gospel and imploring them that walking in a manner worthy of the Lord IS the best way to walk.

What is a manner worthy of the Lord? Ephesians 4:1-3 tells me that a worthy walk is walking in "humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." I could see why I would need to be urged, encouraged, and implored to do this. That sounds hard! 1 John 2:6 makes it really easy to understand... "Walk in the way Jesus walked." Yes, I need to be encouraged and urged to do that, and not give up.

But Paul gives me a really good motivation for this... God has called me into His own eternal kingdom and glory. I'm going to be with Him forever. Without His help, my walk will absolutely be unworthy of Him. I know this because I've proven it over and over again. Let my walk align with the one who walked to the cross for me, and who will call me home to eternity with Him when the time is right.

Acts 18:8-9 ~

"Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent.'"

Paul never did stop speaking mercy and truth, just like Jesus. The Lord gave him tons of encouragement to keep going, to not be silent for Him. And the evidence of the faith of the people who believed the word of God was that they took a stand for Jesus. They believed in Him, and then they were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a symbol of our choice to stand with Jesus in obedience. It's a step of our walk that's worthy of the Lord. It's saying, "In the presence of all who hear, I testify that I love Jesus more than life and I stand with Him."

Lord, I want to follow Paul's example. I want to work hard, serve faithfully, show mercy, speak truth, and walk as Jesus walked... always with my mind set on the one who has called me to His kingdom and glory. I can't do this without Your help. This is a supernatural calling that can only be done by Your supernatural strength. I praise You that if You've called me, You will sustain me.