

## WALKING OUT HIS WORD EACH DAY

### The I Thessalonians Series #4

January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**TEXT:** I Thessalonians 2:1-12

**CONSIDER THIS:** Have you ever been lied about, been misrepresented by someone or had your motives maligned? Of course you have, and it is always an unpleasant experience, and sometimes it is damaging to relationships (which is why we must never lie about others or listen to gossip/slander about others). In today's passage we find a treasure trove of wisdom and instruction for WALKING OUT HIS WORD EACH DAY. Here is what we will be inspired to do: Live in such a way so that only lies can discredit you and so that the truth will always vindicate you ... and do this in order that the name of Jesus Christ is honored through your life.

### PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS REPUTATION (and why it matters to us!)

#### I WHY IT MATTERED TO PAUL

- A) I Thessalonians 2:1-2 harkens back to the very birth of the dynamic church in Thessalonica, shortly after the events in Philippi recorded in Acts 16:19-24; 17:5-10.

Christian, it is tempting to keep quiet about your faith and safely fly "below the radar". Don't give into that!  
Live for Christ! Love the lost! Eternity is near!

- B) There is no evidence that Paul was being attacked by "Christians" from within the Thessalonian church. Paul was defending his ministry from external attacks in order to:
1. equip the church so they too could rebut the lies
  2. reassure new believers being added every week who had not been there to hear and know Paul personally
  3. protect his relationship with these dearly loved people (2:5-11)
  4. instruct and inspire the Thessalonian Christians to also live lives that were above reproach and honoring to God (2:12)
  5. to protect the gospel from being hindered.

For over 1,900 years Pastors have read I Thessalonians 2 and been challenged to examine **their own** motives, methods and ministries. This chapter is not just autobiographical for Paul, it is instructional for the rest of us.

C) Spiritual warfare, as described in Ephesians 6:10-13, is very real. Satan does not want people to be set free by the gospel. He does not want people to know the truth (see I Thessalonians 2:18; 3:5).

1. Satan wants to discredit the gospel and will use people to do this (Acts 16:16-18).
2. Lies are not Satan's only weapon, but every one of his weapons makes use, at some level, of lies.

For the sake of the gospel in Thessalonica, Paul wanted his character and his ministry to be above reproach = "*approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.*" (I Thessalonians 2:4).

Satan does not want the gospel to spread in Fayette County. He wants to destroy families, marriages, children and churches, and he especially wants Christians to bring reproach upon the name of Christ. Christian, Satan wants to destroy your reputation. It is one of his favorite strategies. Don't make it easy for him. And whatever you do, don't attack the reputation of other Christians!

## II WHY IT MATTERS TO US

**KEY:** If your concern for your reputation (your "good name") is due to pride, you are missing the point. The reason for caring about your reputation is because, humanly speaking, it is Christ's reputation that is at stake.

- A) We imitate Christ by imitating Paul (I Thessalonians 1:6; 2:10-12).
- B) The only way the enemies of the gospel could discredit Jesus and Paul was to tell lies about them (see Matthew 5:11; 26:59-60; Acts 24:1, 5-9).

Live in such a way that the truth does not discredit you.  
If your reputation is going to be negative, let it require lies to damage you.

**NOTE: IT'S NOT TOO LATE!** Peter's failure in Antioch, as described by Paul in Galatians 2:11-14, could have permanently disqualified Peter from representing Christ. But years later he was still leading the church and witnessing for Christ. See II Peter 3:13-16. How was this possible?

1. Repentance = Don't minimize your sin, don't excuse it or blame others; **own it.**
2. Confession
3. Restitution
4. **"Let me tell you my grace story".**

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