

Lessons From I Thessalonians

A Preacher Worthy Of Duplicating

(I Th 2:1-12)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Afternoon,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of “Lessons From I Thessalonians.”
 - a. Last week we examined “An Example To The Rest.”
 - i. Therein we noticed that the church at Thessalonica was an example to the rest of the churches of Christ.
 - b. Today we are going to look at how Paul is “A Preacher Worthy Of Duplicating.”
 - i. **I Th 2:1-12** “For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. 3 For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. 5 For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. 8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. 9 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. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. 11 For you know how, like a father with his children, 12 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.”¹
3. Here we see a heartfelt expression from Paul on his time with the church at Thessalonica.
 - a. There are two things Paul points to as an example for modern preachers today.
 - i. His Preaching
 - ii. His Life
4. With that in mind let us look at our lesson today.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

Lessons From I Thessalonians

I. Paul's Preaching

- A. He preached with boldness (1-2)
 1. Even though...
 - i. Previously Paul had been persecuted in Philippi for preaching.
 2. This boldness was not easy for Paul or Timothy
 - i. **I Co 2:3** "And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling"
 - ii. **II Ti 1:6-8** "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God"
 3. His boldness came from God not his own natural moxy.
 - i. He had others pray for him to preach boldly.
 - a. **Ep 6:19-20** "and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak."
 4. Preachers preach in boldness when they look to God for their courage.
- B. He preached with truth & honesty (3)
 1. It is not enough to preach the truth, it must be preached with honesty.
 2. It is not enough to simply be honest, we must speak the truth.
 - i. Why, because preaching is done before God Almighty!!!
 - a. **II Co 2:17** "For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ."
 3. Preachers must strive to have both truth & honesty.
- C. He preached to please God not man (4)
 1. Paul knew full well that God had trusted him with the gospel.
 - i. It was an expression of grace given to him.
 - a. **Ep 3:8** "To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ"
 - ii. It was an example of mercy and longsuffering.
 - a. **I Ti 1:11-14** "in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted...13...I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."
 2. That is why Paul sought God's approval over mans.
 - i. It is God who judges the heart.
 - a. **He 4:13** "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

Lessons From I Thessalonians

- ii. It is God who is the Master of all.
 - a. **Ga 1:10** “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”
 3. Preachers must be concerned with pleasing God, not gaining the popularity of men.
- D. He preached not to flatter & without covetousness (5)
1. Paul didn’t resort to “flattery” just to win men over to the gospel.
 - i. He knew this was dangerous.
 - a. **Pr 29:5** “A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet.”
 - ii. Flattery is a tool used by false teachers.
 - a. **II Pt 2:18** “For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error.”
 2. Paul didn’t resort to “covetousness” to persuade men over to the gospel.
 - i. Covetousness is a tool of false teachers.
 - a. **II Pt 2:1-3** “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”
 - ii. Paul made sure he did not take advantage of his brethren.
 - a. **Ac 20:33, II Co 11:9; II Co 12:17**
 3. Preachers need to win souls to Christ through truth without flattery and they must avoid taking advantage of brethren so as not to be persuaded to preach something other than the Word of God.
- E. He preached without seeking glory from men (6)
1. This would have been easy to fall into.
 - i. As an apostle many looked up greatly to Paul.
 - ii. He could have easily abused his authority, but he was careful not to.
 2. Any such glory would have been vain glory.
 - i. **Pr 25:27** “It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glorious to seek one’s own glory.”
 3. Preachers must seek being glorified by God as good and faithful servants rather than by men.

Lessons From I Thessalonians

- F. He preached with gentleness & affection (7-8)
1. Paul was gentle like a nursing mother.
 - i. This is how Paul instructed Timothy to handle those in error.
 - a. **II Ti 2:24-25** “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth”
 - ii. This is how Paul instructed the spiritual to handle those who needed restoring.
 - a. **Ga 6:1** “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”
 2. Paul had great affection for the brethren.
 - i. He was a preacher that loved the brethren.
 - a. **Ph 1:8** “For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.”
 - ii. He was a preacher that joyfully sacrificed himself for the brethren.
 - a. **Ph 2:17** “Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.”
 3. Preachers must preach with gentleness and have a visibly great and deep love for the brethren.

II. Paul’s Life

- A. He labored day & night (9)
1. Paul did not want to be a burden on any young in the faith congregation so he always worked to support himself until his support arrived from other more mature congregations.
 - i. This allowed him to show a young congregation the importance of being a good steward and servant.
 2. This has led some to believe that God would rather have it where a preacher works in a secular since to help with his support, however this is not God’s divine plan for the preacher and his support. Notice what Paul wrote to the Corinthians having done, for a time, the same labor there.
 - i. Preachers have the “authority” to be sustained in their work.
 - a. **I Co 9:4**
 - ii. Preachers families have the same right to that support.
 - a. **I Co 9:5**
 - iii. The preacher “should not” be required to labor at his “own charges.”
 - a. **I Co 9:7**
 - iv. The O.T. foreshadowed God’s “care” for his preachers.
 - a. **I Co 9:8, 10, 13**
 - v. Those who sow in the spiritual realm “should be able” to reap in the physical realm.
 - a. **I Co 9:11-12**

Lessons From I Thessalonians

- vi. The support of faithful gospel preachers is “ordained” of the Lord.
 - a. **I Co 9:14**
- 3. Paul only labored in the secular realm as to not burden a “young in the faith” congregations. Of the mature congregations he expected support.
 - i. He even stopped secular work in Corinth after his support came in from other mature congregations.
 - a. **Ac 18:5; II Co 11:8-9**
- 4. Preachers might have a situation where they have to labor in the secular world, though this is not God’s ideal plan, however this should not affect his preaching as he is a servant of God not a hireling of any.
 - i. Wayne Jackson apply wrote, “It is my judgment that when a congregation loves its preacher, and treats him with dignity and honor, he will repay them tenfold in dedication. On the other hand, a preacher should work so steadfastly that no one can call his dedication into question. His efforts should be such that the brethren could not afford to pay him by the hour!” (<http://goo.gl/5gPjJI>)
- B. He lived devout, just, and blamelessly (10)
 - 1. Devout depicts the nature of Paul’s service.
 - i. Holy (NIV)
 - ii. Pure (NRSV)
 - 2. Just describes his dealings with his fellow man.
 - i. Upright (NRSV)
 - ii. Righteous (NIV)
 - 3. Blameless reflects his carefulness to be above reproach.
 - i. This Paul was always careful of.
 - a. **Ac 24:16** “So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.”
 - b. **II Co 6:3** “We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry”
 - ii. Paul was careful of this even before he became a Christian.
 - a. **Ph 3:6** “as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.”
 - 4. Preachers must live a devout, just, and blameless life.
- C. He lived fatherly (11-12)
 - 1. Paul was like a father to the Thessalonians.
 - i. He exhorted and comforted them.
 - a. **I Th 4:1** “Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.”
 - ii. He trained them.
 - a. **II Th 3:6, 12** “Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us...12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.”

Lessons From I Thessalonians

2. He did this because he was concerned for their spiritual walk with Christ.
 - i. They had been called into the kingdom and needed their walk to be worthy of God.
3. Preachers must live as fathers toward everyone in the congregation, not as pastors but spiritual fathers.

CONCLUSION

1. There can be no doubt that every preacher would do well to duplicate Paul in his service to the church.
 - a. How much stronger would the church of Christ be today if everyone served one another as Paul served his brethren?
2. Question: Are you willing to strive and duplicate the service Paul had for the church?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation²
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**

² This lesson relied heavily upon Mark Copeland's sermon titled "A Preacher Worthy Of Imitation."