

We Were Gentle among You as a Nursing Mother: 1 Thess 2

Dr. John Niemelä Grace Chapel www.mol316.com November 26, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Author of 1 Thessalonians: Paul

Recipients of 1 Thessalonians: A new church in Thessalonica comprised of new believers

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica: Acts 17:1–10: November 50–January 51 (cf. last week's message)

Dates of First and Second Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians: Early summer 51 (only about 8 months since Paul arrived in Thessalonica)
2 Thessalonians: Summer 51

Occasion of First Thessalonians:

After Paul left Thessalonica, the church there came under strong persecution. Opponents charged that Paul had fleeced & abandoned them. Furthermore, some within the congregation died. They feared that the tribulation had begun and about whether they would be reunited with deceased believers.

Thematic Statement: 1:9–10

<i>How you turned to God from idols</i>	(2:1–3:13)	The relationship between Paul & them
<i>to serve the living and true God</i>	(4:1–12)	Continue serving the Lord
<i>and to wait for His Son from heaven</i>	(4:13–5:11)	Expect the pre-trib rapture

Review of Chapter 1:

Paul prays thankfully because they apply the word in love, await the Lord's deliverance & are elect; specifically, his message had power & assurance by the Holy Spirit, which they perceived in Paul's demeanor among them; so they followed Paul & God, after receiving that message in affliction, so they became examples to believers in Greece & elsewhere, so others speak of their faith: specifically, of Paul's entrance to the Thessalonians who now serve God & patiently await the rapture

NEW EXPOSITION:

The Ministry in Thessalonica from Paul's vantage (2:1–12)

(2:1–2) Paul's entrance to the Thessalonians was productive: despite all of Paul's prior sufferings, he declared good news from God to them

(2:3–4) Paul's message did not originate in falsehood, but God entrusted Paul with the gospel, so Paul does not seek to please men, but seeks to please God, who will evaluate believers

**(2:5–8) Paul did not (as God can testify) use flattery to satisfy greed, nor did he seek from people (financial) glory befitting an apostle, but was gentle as a nursing mother with her own infant
(2:8) Paul was pleased to impart both the gospel and his very life for them, because he longed for them and they had become very dear to Paul**

(2:9) [How dear they had become to Paul is evident by how] Paul proclaimed the gospel to them while laboring night and day to avoid burdening any of them

(2:10–12) They themselves know how uprightly Paul behaved among the Thessalonian believers and they know that Paul exhorted, comforted, and implored them as a father would with his own children, so they would live worthily before God who calls them to the (Millennial) kingdom

The Ministry in Thessalonica from The Thessalonian's vantage (2:13–16)

(2:13) [Based upon Paul's sincere parental love for the Thessalonians] he thanks God that they received God's word from Paul (not as man's word, but as the Word of God—which works powerfully in them)

(2:14) Specifically, they imitated the Judean churches in that they have suffered persecution from their countrymen, just as Judean believers have from their countrymen

(2:15) [A summary of the persecution in Judea]: Those people (in opposition to God and to all men) killed Jesus and their prophets, and persecuted the apostles

(2:16) [At the same time as they killed and persecuted] they forbade the apostles from speaking to Gentiles lest they be saved, but (temporal) wrath to the end is certain for them

Out of Sight, Not Out of Mind; Paul's Attempts to Return (2:17–20)

(2:17) [Despite the persecution they faced in Thessalonica] Paul has, in the short time that he has been in other locales] has sought eagerly to return

(2:18) [In light of Paul's desire to return] he attempted to return several times, but Satan has hindered him

(2:19–20) [As proof of how much Paul wanted to return] his hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing will be to see them before the Lord in His parousia, because they are his glory and joy

The meaning of *parousia* is presence (*para* = beside; *ousia* = being)

CONCLUSION

They know that Paul's ministry to them was productive, that despite suffering, his exhortation to them originated in truth as God (who evaluates believers) entrusted him w/ the gospel & did not greedily seek gain, but gently & selflessly ministered as a nursing mother or a father to their own children that they would walk worthy of the God who calls them into the Millennial Kingdom (2:1–12)

They received the word of God as the word of God, as evidenced by them imitating Judean believers in that they faced extreme persecution by their countrymen, just as the Judeans did (2:13–16)

Paul tried several times to return to Thessalonica, but Satan hindered him; he looks forward expectantly to being with them before the Lord in His parousia (2:17–20)