

# Boldness Amid Opposition

## 1 Thessalonians Chapter 2

### 1 Thessalonians Outlined

Chapters 1-3 Reflections on the Thessalonians (Looking Back)

Ch.1 – A young Church, in a short time, becomes an “Example to All Believers”

Ch.2 – The Church and the apostle Paul share the same “Boldness Amid Opposition”

Chapters 4-5 Instructions to the Thessalonians (Looking Forward)

What is Paul’s greatest Sermon? Athens? Ephesus? Crete? Perhaps I may suggest the one preached in Thessalonica. You may say there is no record of his word there. This may be true but the great sermon was preached by his life. A life that those observed had heard quite loudly.

1Th 2:1 **1) Bold Christianity** vs 1-12

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,

1Th 2:2 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.

- In this chapter, Paul is going to teach / encourage the Church in Thessalonica by using his visit as an example for them to imitate.
- He begins by having them recall the circumstances of his arrival.
  - **Not in vain** (could speak of the RESULTS, but probably better referring to the CHARACTER of Paul’s ministry)
  - **Previously mistreated** (mistreatment would refine my message / if suffering is one of the results then Paul would want to be sure the message is correct and important)
  - **Didn’t shrink back. But had Boldness.**
  - **Boldness in God**, not in his ability, or not in his audience.
  - **Boldness Amid Opposition.**
- Paul is not teaching so that he is exalted because of his boldness, but his purpose is to show that Christians are to have Boldness and this is what it looks like. (see verse 14)

1Th 2:3 For our exhortation does not {come} from error or impurity or by way of deceit;

- #1 Without Error - (KJV = deceit) *gk “planē”* means to stray to error from truth
- #2 Without Impurity - (KJV = uncleanness) *gk “akarthesia”* means to have impure motives
- #3 Without Deceit - (KJV = guile) *gk “dolos”* to bait, or snare, to deceive or to craft, to manipulate
  - **John 1:47** - Philip came to Nathaniel to tell him they had found possibly the Messiah. Nathaniel replied can anything good come out of Nazareth? When Philip and Nathaniel were approaching Jesus, Jesus said, *“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”*

1Th 2:4 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.

- A) Paul’s boldness is from and Approval and a Trust from God
  - **Galatians 1:11-12** *“For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but {I received it} through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”*
  - **1 Corinthians 4:1-2** *“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.”*
  - Paul had received a gospel and a mission from God. The source of his boldness was not from within himself nor was it from a man made agency. This mission was allowed/authorized by God.
  - Paul knew that he was entrusted with this mission. ENTRUSTED = to place a confidence because of a proven fidelity.
  - **Matthew 25:14-30** Talents were entrusted to various servants. One received 5 another 2 and another 1. All were entrusted to use talents create an increase. All did but one. Two who did were commended. The one who didn’t was condemned.
- #4 Not Seeking Men’s Approval (pleasing men) – the gospel is a strong message and in many ways does not please men. Paul tries to present the gospel in an acceptable way but he does not compromise critical issues like: Man’s Sin; Judgment; The Cross; The Blood; Sacrifice; Repentance; Grace; Resurrection; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming
- God Examines our hearts to see if we are to be Entrusted, not our degrees or talent or resume.

Tony Clark  
speaking on3  
boys in a furnace.

“Better to be in  
the fire and the  
will of God than  
to be in comfort  
and outside the  
will of God.”

1Th 2:5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed--God is witness--

- #5 Not Flattering - words produce pleasure in the hearer but that are given with self interest motive.
  - Psalm 12:2 " They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: [with] flattering lips [and] with a double heart do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, [and] the tongue that speaketh proud things:"
- #6 Not For Greed / Covetousness - this is pure self interest. The KJV put it this way "nor a cloak of covetousness" This cloak may be noble sounding words but covetousness is the complete disinterest in others.
- Calvin said " Where greed and ambition hold sway, innumerable corruptions follow, and the whole man turns to vanity. These are the two sources from which stems the corruption of the whole of the ministry."

1Th 2:6 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.

- #7 Not For Glory - Paul didn't preach for Fame, Name or Emotional Gain. Paul understood his acceptance was found in Jesus Christ and His approval.
- As an apostle Paul could have projected authority which comes with an honor.
- "Honor follows men; Men are not to follow it"

<u>Bold Christianity</u>	
It Isn't:	It is:
#1 - From Error	A) Approved by God and Entrusted with gospel
#2 - From Impurity	
#3 - From Deceit	
#4 - Doesn't Seek Man's Approval	
#5 - Flatteries	
#6 - For Covetousness	
#7 - For Glory	

1Th 2:7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing {mother} tenderly cares for her own children.

As a Mother

- B) Bold Christianity is gentle - The care was directed for the nurturing of the Thessalonians not for Paul's benefit.
- This gentleness is illustrated as a nursing mother TENDERLY cares for her own.

1Th 2:8 Having so fond an 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.

- C) Bold Christianity is a sacrificial love.
- This love for the Thessalonians was so tangible that they were please to give their life for them.
- John 15:13 " Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

1Th 2:9 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.

As a Brother

- D) Bold Christianity works to relieve burdens.
- Paul and his team worked to provide an income for themselves so the people would not be burdened and that the gospel would be more readily received. Many false teachers/prophets would pass through a region proclaiming a truth only to relieve the people of their money.
- Worked Day and Night - it seems those who are in ministry do work all hours to accomplish secular jobs, raise a family and prepare and perform their ministry.

1Th 2:10 You are witnesses, and {so is} God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

- E) Bold Christianity is Devout, Upright and Blameless.
- It shouldn't be amazing to Christians that Paul could say he is upright and blameless. Unfortunately most Christians could not say that about their lives. They could not say " Look at me. Watch how I live." We all should be able to say that. This is Bold Christianity.

- Paul has stated this same thing elsewhere.
  - 1 Thessalonians 1:6 "You also became imitators of us and of the Lord"
  - Philippians 3:17 "Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us."
  - 1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."

1Th 2:11 just as you know how we {were} exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a **father** {would} his own children,

1Th 2:12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

- F) Bold Christianity expects Bold Christianity from Christians.
- Paul Exhorted, Encouraged and implored. It doesn't sound like he Yelled, Argued and Threatened. The message of the gospel is a strong message (sin, judgment, repentance) and can offend. The preacher doesn't have to go out of his way to be offensive.
- **Exhort** - to bring along side
- **Encourage** - to cheer on
- **Implore** - to give a charge
- Paul expects the Thessalonians to "WALK IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE GOD WHO CALLS YOU"
- That manner is Bold Christianity.

It Isn't:	<u>Bold Christianity</u>
#1 - From Error	A) Approved by God and Entrusted with gospel
#2 - From Impurity	B) Gentle (tenderly cares)
#3 - From Deceit	C) A Sacrificial Love
#4 - Doesn't Seek Man's Approval	D) Works to Relieve Burdens
#5 - Flatteries	E) Devout, Upright and Blameless
#6 - For Covetousness	F) Expects Bold Christianity from Christians

1Th 2:13 **2) Opposed Christianity** vs 13-18

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, 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.

- These Thessalonians would receive the Word of God; then they would accept the Word of God.
  - Romans 10:17 "So faith {comes} from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
- It may sound like letters or preaching from men but it is actually what it is: The Word of God.
  - 2 Timothy 3:16 "All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"
  - Some people do not receive the Word of God as truth. This reflects on them not on the message.
- The Word of God performs a work in you. (You who believe)
  - Isaiah 55:11 "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."
  - The New Living Translation "It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it."

1Th 2:14 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,

1Th 2:15 who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men,

1Th 2:16 hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

- Opposition by your own People (Family, Friends)

- Opposition by Other People (Jews didn't want Gospel Preached to Gentiles)
- Why??
  - Because their lives are not pleasing to God. So they do not want yours to.
  - Because they want to have their sins complete without your life confronting theirs.
- Paul is comforting these Christians with the knowledge that Opposition / Persecution is common for Bold Christians and that God's wrath will be upon those that persecute them.
  - *John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;"*

1Th 2:17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while--in person, not in spirit--were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.

1Th 2:18 For we wanted to come to you--I, Paul, more than once--and {yet} Satan hindered us.

- Opposition by Satan
- Even the best of us can be hindered. Paul was hindered by his countrymen and by Satan.
  - Even though Paul was hindered it wasn't a satanic Victory.
  - Paul worked to eventually pass through the region again.
  - If Paul couldn't go he would send Timothy and Silas
  - Scholars believe this letter is one of Paul's earliest. If Paul couldn't get there personally he would begin writing letters. This began a ministry that would continue the rest of his live and prove to be effectual even to you and me.
- Bold Christianity isn't without opposition and hindrances.
- Hindrances are many times redirects by God to accomplish purpose outside of the box.

1Th 2:19 **3) Rewarded Christianity** vs 19-20

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?

1Th 2:20 For you are our glory and joy.

- Paul announces His reward. It is this: that on the day the Lord Jesus returns, each of these Thessalonian believers will be right there with Jesus, with Paul, with all the saints.
- Again the chapter ends with the Hope found in the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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