

# The True Servant of Christ - Part 2

by Paul Washer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of gentleness, kindness, selflessness, and sustenance in a minister's life, as demonstrated by Paul's ministry in Thessalonica.*

**Duration:** 1:05:57

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 2:6

**Topics:** "Servanthood"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the incredible nature of the gospel, describing it as news that is so wonderful it makes one giddy and causes them to dance. He compares the gospel to the announcement of victory in a military campaign, bringing hope and relief to a desperate situation. The preacher encourages the congregation to approach sermons and worship with seriousness and to actively engage with the truths presented. He also challenges them to consider their blessings and use them to support and serve others, such as praying for those in chains and giving to missions. The sermon concludes by highlighting the importance of the gospel and its proclamation.

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## Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to First Thessalonians, chapter two. While you're turning there, I want to admonish you to never forget that when worship, when the worship songs that are chosen are biblical songs, the worship time is a time of expressing our love toward God. But it is also didactic.

And I find it very interesting that tonight didactic means that it teaches us. I find it very interesting tonight that we began with a song which informed us of truth. Then there was an exhortation.

In the next song, and then finally we ended in a prayer and a confirmation and a commitment. I don't know if that was purposed by men or whether God just in his providence was overriding the matter, but it was it was beautiful. And it brings a point to mind, do not listen to a sermon frivolously or lightly, but do not do not participate in worship lightly and make it both ways in that you are expressing yourself to God.

But also there was enough truth in the three songs that we have sung here tonight to last us a while. There was a lot of truth and we were reminded of great truths and how we ought to live. So remember to keep that in mind.

All right, first Thessalonians chapter two, we're going to. Begin in verse six, even though we taught verse six last week, we're going to begin reading their chapter to verse six, nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you or from others. Even though as apostles of Christ, we might have asserted our authority, but we proved to be gentle among you as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

Having so fond and 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. 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 proclaim to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behave toward you believers, just as you know, how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children so that you would walk in a manner worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Let's go the Lord in prayer. And please do pray, Father, I come before you knowing, Lord, that to preach your word is an impossibility, that Lord, all is vain. Unless your spirit is working among us.

Manifesting your kindness by teaching us truth. Father, I beg you to help. That we not only learn truth, but that it is applied to our hearts, brings great conviction.

A sense of duty and commitment and father, you know, my heart, you know, my mind. You know how weak. So, Father, I pray that you enable me to speak with clarity and boldness, Lord, the words may be stammering, that's OK, but let there be help to your people.

Let them grow in Christ. Let them demonstrate, Lord, the beauty of the gospel and help us as ministers, Lord. To live that out in front of them, Lord, I am so sorry for the times I have failed, Lord, I have great hope that you who began a good work in me and all of us that you'll finish it.

So help us, Lord, in Jesus name. Amen. Now, as I said in Chapter two, we learned something very important.

Paul is being accused terribly, terribly accused by the unbelieving pagans and the unbelieving Jews that are in Thessalonica. They are attacking him constantly. They're trying to drive a wedge between him, the other missionaries and the new converts that are there in Thessalonica.

And so Paul responds to their accusations. Paul is not defending himself for the purpose of his own reputation. But he realizes here that his reputation is bound up with the gospel.

And so he must make a defense. Now, in last week, we looked at two things that Paul set before us to demonstrate that he truly was a man of God. He truly was a messenger of the message of God.

His first evidence that he puts on the table is that he suffered. And the whole idea here is this, Paul is saying, listen, when I was in Philippi, they almost killed me when I came to Thessalonica, I preached the same message amidst much affliction. So don't you think if I was a charlatan like all these people are saying I'm a charlatan, don't you think I would have just changed my message? I mean, after it didn't give me as a charlatan what I would be seeking for, which would be fame and comfort and money.

But it gave me stones and stocks and prison bars, don't you think I would change the message? And so the evidence that Paul was genuinely a man of God is that he suffered and yet he continued on in the same message. How different are so-called men of God today who oftentimes use their prosperity and

ease of life as evidence that they're men of God? Then he goes on to talk about his exhortation, the type of preaching that he didn't preach himself and he didn't preach for gain, but that he was preaching a singular message that he refused to change. He refused to change it.

So those were the two evidences he laid before us last week, and now we're going to continue on. If you look in verse six, he said, 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. He said here, as apostles of Christ.

We may have had the right to demand from you unquestioned authority or, as Calvin says, unquestioned obedience or, as Calvin says, under our unqualified obedience that we could have taken from you and demanded from you absolutely anything. But he said we did not do that. We did not use our authority in that way.

Now we get to verse seven and he's uses the word again, but it's a very strong adversative in the Greek language. And what it does is it creates a contrast. He's saying they said this about me, but now I'm going to tell you the contrast.

I'm going to tell you the truth. And this is what he says. We proved to be gentle among you as a nurse, nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

Now, look, we proved now this is very important and we've seen this word before. It's actually the word genome, which is we became we became gentle in the midst of you. Now, that doesn't mean that when he got there, he wasn't gentle.

But as he was going on, he became gentle. No, that's not what he's saying. But what he is saying is extremely important.

He's saying when we got there, you first didn't know about us. You didn't come to any rapid conclusion, oh, these are gentle men founded upon no evidence. No, as we walked among you and lived among you, you watched our lives and in your eyes we became gentle, we became deserving of the title.

That's what you saw that we were. You saw it in us. And remember, we go back constantly in chapter one and in the beginning of chapter two, he's always using the Greek word Oida, which is, you know, which means, you know, by perception, by observation, what kind of men we are.

Now, let's just stop for a minute and think about this. Isn't this amazing and wouldn't we want this to be part of our life, not just in a pulpit, you watching a preacher in a pulpit or someone watching you when you're front and center on a stage? No, but if someone were to follow you around in your daily life and after months and months of watching you in every activity, they said this is a gentle man. This is a gentle woman.

Isn't that what we want? Now, don't hang your head on me, because if anyone has the right to hang their head, it's me. I'm not particularly given to gentleness. I'm kind of like a bull in a china shop.

But we can become this. They cast the robes at Paul's feet when they stoned Stephen, he was not gentle, he would tear your eyes out over the tiniest thing of the law. But now look what Jesus did to him.

He's gentle, not just among believing Jews, he's gentle among believing pagans who know nothing about the one true God. He said, this is what I am. He says, I proved in front of your own eyes that I am gentle.

And so did Silas and so did Timothy and the other men. Isn't it amazing? It's not exclusively Paul. It's not Paul because, well, Paul's an apostle.

The other men that were with him were also transformed. You say, Brother Paul, why am I not transformed? I sometimes say this, why am I not? And do you really desire this? Do you really seek this in your life? If you and I truly did, then we wouldn't buck up and get angry every time things don't go our way, every time someone doesn't act the way we want them to act. We would see it as God using his rasp to change us and to make us different.

Paul said, he said, we proved to be gentle. Now, the word gentle here can also be translated kind. It also denotes the idea of of mildness.

And I want you to hold your place here in First Thessalonians, and I just want you to go over for a second to to Second Peter, Chapter two, Second Timothy, Chapter two. Verse 24, the Lord's bond servant must not be quarrelsome. Now, we must quarrel sometimes Paul quarreled when truth was at stake, but he wasn't a quarrelsome person.

He didn't see it as his ministry to go around contradicting and quarreling. It was his ministry to proclaim truth. He's not to be quarrelsome, but to be kind.

It's the same word that we have over here, meaning gentle and so gentle is also the opposite of someone who's just always quarreling. One of the things, dear friend, that you never want to get into is just saying, well, that's just my personality, because every time you say that you're wrapping a chain around your neck to put you in further bondage. All right, he says the Lord's bond servant must not it's a requirement must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all to even the most difficult.

To the person who literally should have the name Splinter just constantly irritating, he says he must be kind to all, it's not an option, he must be able to teach patient when wrong. Now, I want you to look at something. This idea of kind and patient.

Both of them sandwich something else, be able to teach. Do you realize he's putting it as on the same status of a requirement for a man of God, you wouldn't think of a man of God who wasn't able to teach. And yet Paul is putting beside that, yeah, he's got to be kind to and I'm putting it on the same level.

Do you see that? You may know all about truth, you may be able to proclaim it, argue it, all kinds of things, but the other requirement here is kindness, it's gentleness. So back in First Thessalonians, he says, but we prove to be gentle, gentle, what a beautiful world. Now, look at look at what comes afterwards.

But we prove to be gentle among you, literally in the midst of you. And what does that tell us about Paul? He was an apostle, OK? Prior to being an apostle, he was a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Jew of Jews, a Pharisee of Pharisees. He was above all his contemporaries as a Pharisee.

He is converted and he becomes the Christian scholar, the preeminent Christian scholar and apostle. This man has always been the highest on the podium. He's always been first place.

But he says as an apostle of Jesus Christ, as a herald of God, I was in the midst of you. He didn't make a separate category for himself. He didn't see himself as higher.

His ministry wasn't aloof. It wasn't impersonal. He didn't come strolling in on a robe and preach to the people and then leave.

He was in the midst of them. And of course, how could they know anything about his character if he wasn't in the midst of them? How can anybody know anything? About the character of anyone, unless we're seeing it and not when it's wrapped in religious cellophane and all pretty and sitting on a table, but in our daily lives and our work and everything else in the midst. In the midst, I want to quote something from Hebert here, who I think is the foremost scholar on First Thessalonians and a lot of other books.

He's a great Greek scholar. Listen to what he says. The missionaries had held the position of a gentle teacher surrounded by his eager students, far from ascending a lofty pinnacle and speaking down to their followers.

The missionaries freely mingled with them. Now, don't get me wrong. I do believe we have elders in this church.

I'm not one of them. So I can say this. We have elders in the church.

Some respect is to be given to them. Honor is to be given to them. Yet at the same time, and we do see this in our elders, we see them mingling among us so that we can watch their lives.

And that's what Paul is doing here, and I think this is so precious. I think the word that I would use was personable, maybe incarnational, maybe he's right there. You can see him.

You know, John, in his first epistle, he says we touched him. We saw him. We actually we meditated.

We contemplated him as he was in our midst. You see that? And that's what we need today. Not only Christians in the world, incarnationally, but also in the body.

Don't think that you're being an obedient Christian and a good member of this church if you show up every time the doors are open in order to listen to a sermon. But you're part of this incarnational life, you're to be in the midst of the people so that they can know the Christ in you. Now he goes on and he says this, but we prove to be gentle among you.

Now he's going to give us a metaphor which for some of us men may feel a little bit uncomfortable, but it's an excellent metaphor. He says we prove to be gentle among you as. A nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

Now, what's communicated here? Well, love, I think you would be very hard pressed to find a more beautiful manifestation of human love and tenderness than a nursing mother. There's there's something there, there is a bond, there is a oneness, and that's what Paul is saying, that's the way he was among the people. But there's something else that I want you to see here that I think is very important and it communicates the idea of love and tenderness, but also this selflessness.

Selflessness, and what does that mean? The nursing mother receives nothing. From that baby. That baby is not giving her anything.

Do you see that the mother is pouring out everything into this child, the child is unable to give anything back in return, but the mother does it. For the joy of the love that she feels for that child, and Paul is going to go on and say the very same thing in the next verse, she receives nothing, she doesn't. Why? Because

she is just so motivated by love, she doesn't need it.

The act of giving herself. Brings the joy and brings the satisfaction. Now, how often you and I, our love, if you can call it that.

Now, this is not only for pastors, Christians, for parents. Homeschool moms, husbands, wives. Our love, sometimes I don't even want to call it that, because what is it based on? Well, it'll flow for a second until the.

The appropriate response we're waiting for is not given to us, and then we cut it off. We cut it off, but not Paul. How much did he suffer inside, at least at the hands of young believers because of their disobedience, because of their impurity, because of all the things that they fell into, yet he just kept loving.

So selflessness, also the idea of self giving. I want you to think about this. This woman is not going to the grocery store and buying some for the child to give the child.

It's not something external. She is giving the child herself what flows from her. Her very life is flowing from her into that child.

Paul's going to say that about himself also, that he imparted to them not only the gospel of God, but also his very life. You know, Albert Schweitzer in seminary, I remember reading this and it stuck with me. He wasn't the most conservative theologian in the world, but he was an amazing man.

This stuck with me. He was he was a philosopher, theologian, doctorate in that he was a medical doctor. He was a concert organist, I think, or pianist.

He was brilliant. And he said this, he said, I will spend the first 30 years of my life somewhere around there. Becoming everything I can be to spend the next 30 years of my life pouring out everything I have for the benefit of others.

And he did that. He did. He left everything, lived in poverty, serving people overseas.

He gave a lecture one time, and I remember this, too, from from the writing, I can't quote it verbatim, but he looked at seminary students in this writing. I was reading and he said, I don't know what you're going to become. I don't know what you're going to do, but I know this.

The happiest. Among you. Will be the one who gives his life away.

Becomes the servant of all, give your life away. Have you not had the greatest joy when you have imitated this and given your life away and haven't you felt like you've eaten a rotten animal when you've been selfish, you know, in your gut makes you sick of yourself and everything else takes away your joy. So there's also there is a sense of selflessness here and self-giving and then also sustenance.

Look, she's not just doing this for fun. She's not just doing this to create bonding. Do you know what's going on? The life of that child depends upon that mother's milk.

Paul, in the same way, was providing sustenance in his ministry for these young believers. We hear from the writer of Hebrews, we hear it from Peter himself, the milk of God's word until they're able to receive more solid food. Nursing mother is often so many times and I won't criticize her for it, but she'll say, oh, I can't wait to this child is weaned.

Go on to more solid food, ministers carry the same burden. Oh, when will these children grow up? When will they just stop requiring milk and go on to more solid things with regard to the gospel of Jesus Christ? And so he says, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for his own, her own children, so he did. Now, I want you to look at the word, the phrase tenderly cares.

It means literally to warm. Or to impart warmth, it is a very, very important statement now back in Deuteronomy, there's some laws given there with regard to birds and eggs. And it says, if you're walking through a place in the wilderness and you see a mother and literally sitting upon her eggs are sitting upon her young, you're not allowed to take both of them.

Now, the Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. And when they decided to translate that Hebrew verse into Greek. They use this same word.

And the idea is not that a mother bird just sits upon her chicks in order to squash them. But what does she do? She sits and she positions herself very carefully, and then she starts ruffling her feathers and moving out her wings until she does what she covers them. And why is she covering them? She's covering them to warm them.

Why? That they might grow. She's covering them also to protect them. And that's the same idea here that the minister with the new believer, that's what he is supposed to be.

Excuse me, I think I'm losing this. The minister with the new believer, this is what he does. He's constantly thinking, protecting, warming, encouraging we as husbands.

I hate even to say this, but the same idea, because we're dealing with authority here. How does biblical authority act? And this is the way it acts. I told my wife I can't stand studying this passage.

It's hurting me. I hope it's hurting you. The idea of protection, of gentleness.

Albert Barnes, if I remember correctly, in his commentary in Ephesians 5 on marriage, he uses this terminology that Paul is using exactly the same way. Matter of fact, he brings in this text and he says to the husbands with regard to your action and authority, instead of choosing to exercise your authority, try being. And I know this metaphor is a little difficult, like Paul, gentle, like even a nursing mother would tenderly care for her child, so care for your wife.

Now, we can take this to any degree, can't we? Your own brothers and sisters in Christ. How should you treat them? Yes, there's a time for rebuke. Yes, there's a time to tell people they're wrong.

Yes, there's a time to stand for the truth. But at the same time, this ought to be in our life. This ought to be evident in our lives.

I remember a scholar and two of his friends were walking, I think it was in Washington, D.C. at one of the museums or something. And and the scholar began to talk with the lady there who was showing them around, who was obviously an unbeliever. And as they started talking, the lady made a statement that that scholar could have just crushed.

Could have crushed, I mean, he had her. Apologetically, he had her around the neck, he didn't do anything. He didn't advance, he didn't take it.

And when they walked away, his friends go, what was that about? You had her and you dropped the ball. Why didn't you go ahead and go ahead and make the argument? He said that wouldn't have been very Christian, would it? Well, that wouldn't have been very gentle. Yes, there are times in which we must come like something like a hammer.

Be very careful and very discerning, especially when you're around the people of God or anyone in your life over whom you have authority. Over whom you have authority now, he says, but we prove to be gentle among you as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Now, women by nature, by nature, have a bond or at least most women have a very strong bond with any type of child.

You know. So the guy said, you know, my my wife, she knows every child's name, birth date, when they get their shots, everything. And me, the only thing I know is there are a lot of little people in my house.

So mothers by nature, they have this idea of children, but then when you talk about their own children, what kind of stories have we heard in history of women who have starved themselves to death to keep their babies alive, women who have fought off multiple assailants? I remember a story once years ago where a lady was driving in her car, it turned over on her, she was thrown out. She wakes up. The car's on fire.

The baby's inside. She runs to open up the door. She can't open it.

It's jammed. She rips it off the hinges. So if you think that this metaphor of a tenderly a tender mother nursing her child is not about protection, you've got another thing coming because you try to take that baby from that woman and you see what happens the same way with a bird.

You say, what protection can a bird give? Obviously, you've never lived on a farm. I had this friend of mine who who he was always getting me in trouble. He was older than me and he was always telling me to do really stupid things that I did.

What that says about me, I don't know, but he he said he goes, I dare you to go up there and touch that blue jay's nest. I was just a blue jay. I touched it and then I ran for I don't know how long while that blue jay and its mate were pecking me on the back of the head, down the neck and everything else.

You see, love is tender, but it's tenacious, it's fighting. It's why Jesus, when he says blessed are the peacemakers, he's not talking about someone who's just a pacifist that sits back and allows evil to flourish, but it's someone who will fight, even die for peace in the same way. Here we have this idea of this apostle coming to this church, coming to this group of people with a tenderness and yet at the same time, a tenacity.

A protection. A guard. That's a true man of God.

Always putting himself in the way. Of whatever harm is coming toward the people of God, but that's a true sign of a Christian, the true sign of a father, the true sign of anyone who has authority. Now, let's go on.

He said, but we proved to be gentle among you as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children, and then he goes on in verse eight and he says, 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. Now he says, having so fond of affection, this phrase literally means a yearning, an earnest desire, a longing. And let me ask you a question, you know, we can use the word of God to tell how mature and

how right our hearts are.

Now, do you have a yearning, an earnest desire, a longing for the people of God? Now, I'm talking about the people of God globally. I'm talking about the people of God in this church. This is the way a minister of Christ should be.

But in the other sense, this is the way all of us should be. We should have a yearning, a longing, a desire for the people of God. And Paul goes on, because it's associated with verse seven, Paul is saying, having so fond of affection, what he's meaning is this, I have such a yearning and fond affection for you, like a woman who is nursing her own children.

Now, because of this, because of this yearning, this fond affection, this earnest desire that I have for you, what does he say? We were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our lives. The word well pleased means that he did it with great joy. He did it voluntarily, freely and was not under any sort of coercion or thinking that he must do it because it's demanded of him.

You see, here's what's going on. He had such a love for the people of God that he says, I delightfully, joyfully counted a privilege to give my life away. And why do we not do that? Is it not true that the greatest sin among us is lovelessness and that lovelessness is rooted in self-centeredness? Do you see that? See, Paul wasn't getting up in the morning and getting a cup of coffee and going, oh, another day I got to deal with these people.

It was his fond affection toward them. That led him to give his life away, as he told the church in Philippi, to lay down his life like a drink offering. Like a libation.

Now, I want you to look at verse eight, he says, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives. The word there for lives is *Pesuche*, soul, our own souls. So now what is he talking about? He's saying the very depth of me, everything that I am.

I'm not talking about some external service that I give to you out of duty, but I give you not part of me, but all of me. Now, remember this. Remember this.

Paul is telling them over and over, you remember this. You remember this. You remember this.

You saw this. You saw this. Now, let me ask you a question.

Can people see that in us? Would they see that it is a delight for us to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ, if we're pastors and leaders, would people see that we're doing this because of fond affection? Not because we are hirelings, not because of coercion, not because of some need on our part. Now, let me ask you as parents. Duty is a good thing, doing what is right.

But the Christian life is not just doing what is right. It's not. You can train robots to do what's right, but it's doing it out of joy and joy, motivated by fond affection, by an earnest desire that flows forth from the fact that we are selfless and no longer thinking about ourselves and no longer thinking about the response that we're supposed to get from anybody.

We just do it. And when we do it, what are we like? We're like the Lord Jesus Christ. We're like God.

We're imitating our father now, do you see that? This genuine love that breaks forth in obedience now, he says here, 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. Now you had become literally beloved to us. We loved you, you were beloved.

Remember when God said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, Paul said you have become my beloved. Now, here's what I want you to see in the middle of verse eight, we have someone who is giving their own soul for the sake of God's people. But that act of sacrifice is sandwiched between two things.

And what is that? Having so fond of affection for you and because you had become very dear to us. What are we seeing here, the two main motivations in the Christian life, what are they? Love and love, that's what they are. Love and love, this is why we do what we do.

Love now again, do not sit there with your head down, I know, I hope that the Holy Spirit is dealing with you. But let him deal with you, but then also see what this is about, we can change, we can be different. You say, Brother Paul, how can I learn to love like this? I just want to prescribe two things.

First of all, by looking at the character of God's love toward you in the gospel of Jesus Christ, why do we not love people or why do we withhold our affections? Isn't it always because they don't respond properly? They don't give us what we want. They don't do what we want. They're not like what we want.

They let us down. Well, let me ask you a question, would you really want that type of thing to be transferred over to your relationship with your heavenly father? I can no longer love because they don't give me what I deserve. We might say, and when have we given God what he deserves? When have we done anything? But fail in many ways, think about that, and yet what his love remains constant, I believe that the more we look at that in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the more we will be transformed by it.

I do believe that I must believe that another thing that I must say is this is this kind of love is a supernatural love. When you look at Ephesians five, it's a supernatural marriage. When you look at Proverbs 31, she's a supernatural woman.

When you look at first Timothy three, he's a supernatural elder. And where does it all come from? From crying out to the spirit of God, relentlessly waiting at his door with faith. So it's looking at the example of love that is manifested in the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and it's crying out because you know that this is a supernatural thing.

Supernatural. Now. He says we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives.

And I have to stop here because, well, we just need to stop for a second and I need to explain this grammatical structure. I mean, just look at it down at your Bible. We were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives.

Now, when you have a. A grammatical construction like that, then usually. The latter thing offered is greater than the former thing offered. Let me give you an example, if I walk up to you and I say, I know it only gave you my car.

I gave you all my possessions. That's usually the way it goes. If you're a reasonable human being, it means I not only gave you this, but I gave you something far greater than this.

Now, when we read this, I don't want you thinking that Paul is saying I gave you the gospel of God, but not only that, hey, now really listen, I gave you me. That's not what he's doing. But what he's saying is this, I gave you the gospel of God.

And along with that. I gave you myself. As a servant to lead you in.

To a greater and greater reality of the gospel of God. And. This message is so great, the greatest treasure that can ever be given to a man, I gave it to you, but it is so important I came along with it to make sure that you fully understood it, that you keep growing in it and that no one take you away from it.

He had seen the devious work of the false prophets. In Galatia. He was bewildered that they said could so quickly depart.

Paul was not going to let that happen here, I gave you not only the gospel, I gave you myself, then there's another way of looking at this, I'll never forget one time I was witnessing on the campus of the University of Texas, I was a believer for about a year. I was going around witnessing, handing out tracts, people were laughing at me and. And.

I walked up this guy and I said, can I talk to you about the gospel? He goes, sure. And so I talked to him about the gospel, he said, you done now? And I said, yeah, he said, well, I guess you can go. And I go, what do you mean? He goes, you just want to share with me the gospel.

You just want to earn your brownie points before God. You did your thing now go, because you really don't want me in your life and you're really not giving me you, you just want to witness to me and win me. But are you giving yourself to me? A hard lesson.

A good lesson. See, it's so easy to stand in this pulpit because then I can go home, but when I like work down at the mission or are there in the street ministry in Fort Worth and everything, it was much different. Why? It was messy.

Why was it messy? Children everywhere. I'm talking about immature believers and unbelievers and a congregation. And it was just messy.

We don't want people into our lives because they're messy. We don't want to give ourselves to people because they're messy. We'd rather do good theology.

But that's not what we're about, at least it's not what we should be about because it's not what Paul is about. Look, I've seen the full course of Christian ministry for ministering. And no one even cares to know your name to ministering and a lot of people know your name.

It's not about that. And as you some of you going to be ministers one day, you need to understand that it's about people and people are always messy. And if you're going to be a true minister of Christ, your life's going to be messy.

Messy, messy. But real, but real, he says. We gave you our lives because you had become very dear to us.

I want to quote again from from Hebert, I want to give you two quotes that I think are very important when we come to the phrase, we also gave you our lives. Hebert says it sets the true standard for pastoral service and is the key to vital ministry. Such a ministry is costly.

But it is the antidote to the blight of professionalism. Just come in and give you a sermon, come in and give you some some marvelous truth or antidote. No, come in and pour out our lives and then coming in, staying in, staying in.

When all the glamour is gone and everything is finished and the newness is wore off. Paul was there. Another thing that Hebert says, he said, because you had become very dear to us and Hebert says love was the inducement of this costly ministry.

The missionaries proclamation of the glad tidings of God's salvation was impelled by the energy of a passionate love. People always say, where does energy for ministry come from? Well, I know the proper source. It's love.

Where does that come from? The imitation of Christ, reflecting upon Christ, reflecting upon gospel and the aid of the Holy Spirit. So on one hand, it's you looking toward Christ in the scriptures to catch greater and greater glimpses of him. It's on the other hand, you on your knees crying out that you can't live this thing that you have seen.

Apart from God working in your life. Now, let's go on, we're running out of time. Verse nine.

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 proclaim to you the gospel of God. He says now for you recall. Now look at this again.

He's saying, you remember. Don't you remember? Let me say this. I think it'll be helpful for all of us.

An ignoble man, an ungodly man. He hopes that everyone will forget his actions. A righteous man summons men to remember them.

Never forget that. And that's what Paul is doing here. Here we just see credibility and character.

You know, we work in missions at heart. Cry. Do you know every one of our problems? Every one of our problems goes back to a lack of character on the part of somebody somewhere.

But here we have Paul beaten down. Some said man of whom the world was not worthy. Others who said the man is not worthy to live, called himself the drag, the scum of all the earth.

And yet here we see an integrity and a boldness in that integrity. So great that he can say, remember how I lived when I was with you. Hopefully as fathers, we can tell our children one day we can look at them and say, you remember the way I lived before you, that even when I failed, I came to you and asked for forgiveness.

That we can make those kind of statements as leaders, as pastors, as fathers, as mothers, as wives, as husbands, as Christians, remember. Remember, the thing about the righteous is they can call people to remembrance, the thing about sinners. As they're always hoping someone will forget.

Now, let's go on, he says, for you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, topos matros kind of rhymes, doesn't it? It's just like we would say toil and trouble. Toil and trouble, that's exactly what Paul is doing, almost had that kind of a ring to it even. And so he says, you recall, brethren, our labor and our hardship, labor, topos.

We've already studied this word. It has the idea of not just labor, but something that demands energy, that fatigues, that exhausts and hardship is maybe referring to the things that Paul had to deal with that caused him to have to labor to exhaustion. This was his life, toil and trouble.

It is the minister's motto. It is the missionary motto. It is the godly father and godly husband and godly wife and godly mother's motto.

The problem that we have for people in the ministry and the problem that we have in the family is that we think that life is supposed to be like we see in the cinema, that everything is just supposed to flow. No, if we are in a fallen world and we are godly people and we are seeking ourselves to be something that at this moment we are not. We are going against the grain, swimming against the current all the time, there is going to be toil and trouble, and when it happens, don't think something unusual is going on or running around trying to get pity from everyone.

We toil in trouble and we await that great day for our Lord. It is the difficulties caused by love in our hearts that causes us to wait for the coming of Jesus Christ and that great deliverance. It's when we forget about love and sail through life thinking only about ourselves and not worrying about the needs of others that we have no need to look up.

And so he says toil and trouble. And then he says how working night and day. This is not a hyperbole.

It's not an exaggeration on the part of the Apostle Paul. The word working here is used oftentimes in ancient Greek as referring to working for manual wages for labor. Paul is probably here talking about his tent ministry.

He said, I got up early in the morning and worked long hours. I worked long hours into the night. And why did I do that? He says here, so as not to be a burden to any of you, to not be a weight.

To any of you, Paul burdened himself so that others would not be burdened. A burden bearer, this is just I mean, it just goes on, doesn't it? Pastors to be burden bearers, husbands, burden bearers, wives, burden bearers. Believers bearing one another's burdens.

Do you see that? Paul said, I bore the burden so that you wouldn't have to. And why did he do it again? It goes back to love. To love.

Now, I want you to look and we're closing here quickly, it's working night and day, so as not to be a burden to any of you. And then he says, we proclaimed the gospel to you. We proclaim to you the gospel of God.

Kerygma, Keruso. That's the word he's using for proclaimed, and it refers to the proclamation of the herald. And by and large, it is an official, authoritative proclamation from an appointed messenger.

There's hardly any way I can communicate to you the sense of importance that this messenger would have. The importance of his message, he is a herald, he has been chosen by a king to take a message. He must be extremely faithful.

He must be brave. He must make a stand. He, when he returns to the courts of the king, is an extremely important individual.

Now, I want you to look at something Paul says in verse six as an apostle of Christ, an apostle of Christ. I have authority. I did not use it for my own advantage.

And then he comes down here as a herald of God Almighty. I could have been a burden to you. I could have said, take care of me, but I denied that right.

And I bore the burden so that you wouldn't have to now again, as I've said before, there is it is right for us to support our elders. It is it is right for us to take care of missionaries and things like this. What I want you to see is this.

Paul sometimes received gifts from other churches, but whenever. Paul saw that it was necessary to make a sacrifice either for the advancement of the gospel, the protection of his reputation, reputation or the benefit of the young believers, he would make that sacrifice. Now, I want to say something here.

Also, I sometimes hear Americans say, well, you know, we live in America, we don't have to suffer. We'll then choose to suffer. You're not in prison.

Dedicate a few hours a week then to interceding for our brothers in chains. You've got plenty of food. Maybe you ought to think about giving more to missions.

You could buy that new car. And maybe sometimes it's right, I'm not I don't want to judge anyone on this, but but also you could buy maybe the used one. If you don't have to.

You can choose to. And choices are important, my friend. Very important, very important.

Now, I want to end by saying this, just just look at this. We proclaim to you, verse nine, the gospel of God. Now, we've already touched on this phrase three times in this chapter.

But here's what I want to point out to you. First of all, gospel. Now, I'm not going to preach to you the gospel tonight, but here's what I want you to see.

When you think of gospel, Evangelion, you think of good news, good tidings, and that's what it is. But that just is just too mild. It is news that is so wonderful, it makes you giddy.

It is so wonderful, it causes you to dance. It is so wonderful that it caused you to fall on the ground in the greatest joy and relief. It is amazing news.

It was oftentimes used with regard to military campaigns. Almost always. To military campaigns now, in what way? Well, in this way, let's just create a scenario.

Let's say that this is we live in Radford and it is a little country, a little kingdom of Radford. OK, let's say there's 50,000 people all around in our little kingdom of Radford. And we.

Received the news that outside of our tiny borders is an army of somewhere around 100,000 trained soldiers. And they have already wiped out everything in their path, slaughtering men, women and children with no mercy. Now, most of us have never been in a war, but that would be terrifying.

There's no way to describe how terrifying that would be right on our borders. There they are. They're coming and they're going to kill us all.

And we send out this army, the only army we can send out, we send it out and we watch it as it marches away and as it marches away, we all huddle together behind the walls of the city. We want to hear news as each day goes by. We want to hear news.

And yet at the same time, we don't want to hear news because there's just no way this enemy can be defeated. There is no way we look at our wives, we look at our children, we touch their faces. We realize we're all going to die.

There's just no hope. This army has destroyed armies even bigger than itself. And then all of a sudden, someone standing on the wall says someone approaches and they're running and we think over that hill is coming the invading army.

We're dead. We grab our children. We grab our wives.

We hold them close. We look. This is our last moment.

And someone says, no, it's one of ours. And then we think it's the last man and still the army, the enemy army is coming. And then all of a sudden we hear out of his mouth, gospel, gospel, gospel, good news, good news, it's been defeated.

It's been defeated, we're free, we're safe. That's what we're talking about here. And then there was a reason why, when someone won a battle, that people got around the general and were like, let me go.

We even find that in the Old Testament, don't we? Let me go. Let me go tell the news. Let me go tell the news.

That's what we're talking about. And that applies to us, but it also applies to the way we share the gospel. It's good news.

Don't walk up to some some guy half drunk out of his mind or some some young lady scantily dressed and start talking about morality to them, talk about the gospel to them. Good news. You don't have to do this anymore.

Good news. Good news. Now.

Just look at this, the phrase gospel of God is used three times in this in this chapter and each one, I want you to see something extremely important. Verse two, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much. What does it say? Opposition evangelism.

You catch that evangelism, then I want you to look at verse eight, having so fond and affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, pastoral care. What's the center of it? The gospel of God. Then he goes down to verse nine, 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 proclaim to you the gospel of God, his pastoral teaching ministry.

Now, here's what I want you to see. What is the very center of all evangelistic missionary efforts and its message, the gospel of God? What is the center of all pastoral ministry, the gospel of God, and what is the center of all preaching within the church, the gospel of God? And I submit to you, this is one of our great problems in the church today. We think the gospel, which we don't even understand in its context and evangelism, we need the gospels for evangelism.

The gospel is to be the center of evangelism. The gospel is to be to be the center of all pastoral ministry and the gospel is to be the center of all types of teaching and preaching. Now, notice gospel of God.

It's a genitive. We're going to genitives. There's many different forms of genitive gospel of genitive God.

But I want to give you three, there's a genitive of source gospel of God, the gospel flows out from God. He's the source of it. He's the author.

He's the one behind its power, the gospel of God, of source possession. It's his gospel. It's not our gospel.

It's not in the church's gospel. It's God's gospel ultimately. And I would submit this to you, especially some of you young ministers here tonight.

Paul, the apostle, would have sooner touched the ark of God and died like Uzzah than he would have altered one jot and tittle of the gospel of Jesus Christ to make it more palatable to his contemporary scene. I'm telling you, young men, you listen to me, all these preachers out there, they say I'm not changing the gospel. I'm repackaging it.

It's not your gospel to do that with. It's God's gospel. You preach the same gospel the apostle Paul preached and you'll do well, you change one jot and tittle and you are in danger of losing your soul.

You see that he's the possessor of that gospel and finally, a genitive of descriptive description, that gospel is all about God. It's all it begins and ends with God. If you're here tonight and something has cut your heart good.

God's one thing the devil will try to work whenever there's conviction to the soul is he will cause you to try to hide from God, to run away from God. Your sin has been exposed. God does not want you.

That is the biggest mistake of the believer. If any sin has been exposed in your life, as it has been in mine all week, as I've been studying this passage, run to Christ. Run to Christ, or if you're here and you don't know that gospel, that reality of that joy of salvation is not in your life, run to Christ and furthermore, come to one of the elders, one of the ministers, one of the men here.

And say, it's not right with me. I want to know him, I want to be saved and do that, do that, my friend. Do that, do that, let's pray.

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