Delivering the Gospel

I Thessalonians 2:1-12

Introduction:

I. The Paul’s Dedication – 2:1-2

1. Paul’s Coming – 2:1

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

Paul calls on them to think back to his coming. They had seen pagan philosophers come to town with persuasive speeches and take advantage of the gullible. (motivational speakers) His work among them was not in vain, i.e. not a failure.

Success belongs to God. Failure belongs to man:

* To Paul if he failed in content or conviction.
* To the Thessalonians if they failed in faith or follow-up

But Paul said, “I did not fail.”

B. Paul’s Circumstance – 2:2

1. They Saw his Body – 2:2a

“But ﻿﻿even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at ﻿﻿Philippi,”

Note: Paul went almost directly from Philippi to Thessalonica. Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to ﻿﻿Thessalonica. He still had some scars from their treatment.

1. They Saw his Boldness – 2:2b

“we were ﻿﻿bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.”

When the Jews began to make trouble, Paul did not back down because of their conflict.

II. The Paul’s Demeanor – 2:3-12

A. Paul’s Assertions – 2:3-4

1. His Integrity was Undisputed – 2:3-4b

1. The truth shown – 2:3

“For our exhortation”

1. Free from anything doubtful – 2:3a

“did not come from error”

These early converts were either Jewish or Gentile converts (proselytes) to Judaism. At least some of them checked the Scriptures.

1. Free from anything defiling – 2:3b

“or (*did* not *come* from) uncleanness,”

Pagan religions and philosophers were noted for their sex (temple prostitutes) and hallucinating drugs

1. Free from anything deceitful – 2:3c

“nor *was it* in deceit.”

Paul’s *method* was not to trick, mislead, or deceive them, but was straightforward -- unlike,

* You will be more prosperous.
* You will be happier.
* You will get a promotion.
* Your marriage will be better.

NO!

* You will have eternal life.
* Your sins will be forgiven.
* You will have a relationship with the God of the universe.
* You will have a hoe in heaven.

b. The truth spoken – 2:4 a-b

1. A sacred responsibility – 2:4a

“But as ﻿﻿we have been approved by God ﻿﻿to be entrusted with the gospel,”

God had trusted Paul with the Gospel just as Paul had trusted God for his salvation. (Same word)

1. A simple response – 2:4b

“even so we speak,”

On the basis of God’s Word, we speak the Gospel. Now then, we are ﻿﻿ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. (II Cor 5:20)

2. His Integrity is Undisturbed – 2:4c

﻿﻿“not as pleasing men, but God ﻿﻿who tests our hearts.”

Because we have been instructed by God, we don’t seek to please men, but God. We don’t pattern our church work, our personal lives, our business practices to please men. We are not filling up our halls with saints who have been wowed by the blast of our language. We are filling up heaven with sinners, who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

The gospel is not given in shades of gray; it is black and white. People are either saved or lost/ they are going to heaven or hell. Something is either true or false/ right or wrong/ of the flesh or the Spirit/ good or bad. Jesus is the way not a way.

B. Paul’s Actions – 2:5-9

1. What he Refused – 2:5-6

1. He refused all guile – 2:5a

“For ﻿﻿neither at any time did we use flattering words”

There is nothing wrong with sincere praise, but using flattery to beguile is an insult to the gospel.

When a person senses that he is being beguiled, he is pushed away from not pulled toward the Gospel.

b. He refused all gain – 2:5b

“as you know, nor a ﻿﻿cloak for covetousness— ﻿﻿God *is* witness.”

Paul did not get rich from preaching the gospel. In Rom. 7 Paul tells that, as he went through the 10 commandments in his introspective moments, he did fine through the first 9. But # 10 tripped him up. “Thou shalt not covet”

“For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ﻿﻿*“You shall not covet.”* ﻿But ﻿﻿sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire.”

So, it was not only possible for Paul to covet, he admitted that it had been a problem. But not now! – (as we will see.)

c. He refused all glory – 2:6 ﻿

“Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when ﻿we might have ﻿﻿made demands ﻿﻿as apostles of Christ.”

Paul had as much right as any of the apostles of the Lord, though he had not been one of the 12. Some people, esp. the Corinthians had a problem with that. It was important to Paul that he defend his rights, but he reserved the right not to exercise them; lest it become an impediment to the gospel. (See II Cor. Chapters 10-13)

Paul’s life verse might well have been:

Galatians 6:14

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the ﻿﻿cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by ﻿﻿whom the world has been crucified to me, and ﻿﻿I to the world.”

2. What he Revealed – 2:7-8

1. His love – 2:7-8a

“But ﻿﻿we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. ﻿So, affectionately longing for you,”

Paul went farther than “salvation” with them. See 8b “not only the gospel” Little baby Christians need to be feed, loved and nurtured. There is no better example of that than, a nursing mother. Paul was that spiritually to them.

b. His life – 2:8b

“we were well pleased ﻿﻿to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also ﻿﻿our own lives, because you had become dear to us.”

Evangelism is not only a “hands on” but also an “arms around” ministry. We have not only to be there with the Gospel, but to be there for them.

1. What he Reserved – 2:9

“For you remember, brethren, our ﻿﻿labor and toil; for laboring night and day, ﻿﻿that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.”

He reserved the right to minister to them without charge. He, Titus and Timothy worked, perhaps as tent makers, (Acts 18) So that their ministry might not be maligned.

C. Paul’s Attitude – 2:10

1. Paul Calls his Witnesses – 2:10a ﻿

“You are witnesses, and God also”

He reminds them of the difference between him and the other itinerant who had come through their city. He is saying, “In case you hadn’t noticed, we didn’t take any money from you. Paul did not take money from the people he was working with.

His next witness is God. How do you swear in God?

1. Paul Culls his Works – 2:10b ﻿﻿

“how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;”

* Devotedly -ὁσίως - in a holy manner
* Justly – δικαίως – in a righteous manner
* Blamelessly – in a blameless manner

D. Paul’s Apprehensions – 2:11-12

1. It was Fatherly Concern – 2:11 ﻿

“as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and ﻿﻿charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children,”

“as you know” fourth time (1:5; 2:2; 2:5)

* Exhorted - παρακαλοῦντες - called alongside. Not in your face to confront, but alongside to console.
* Comforted – παραμυθούμενοι – with an arm around his shoulder
* Charged – μαρτυρόμενοι - testify, bear witness; Encourage with your experience.

1. It was Fundamental Concern – 2:12

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“that you would walk worthy of God ﻿﻿who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

Paul’s main concern is for the to walk worthy of their calling. They are called to enter and be partakers in His kingdom and called to glorify and share in God’s glory.

Conclusion: