



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V25 N6 February 5, 2023

## NOT HOME YET

“Ministry without Apology”

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Evangelism

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*  
**Acts 1:8**



How does the integrity of the messenger affect the reception of the message?

When it comes to evangelism—sharing the gospel of Jesus—the integrity of the messengers is linked to the integrity of the message in the minds of hearers. There were charlatans in Paul’s day; there are charlatans now. There were hypocrites then; there are hypocrites now.

Itinerant philosophers were commonplace in the first century. Like itinerant evangelists, they were ministers of their own particular philosophical gospels. Regarding their purpose, one author writes: “The philosophers’ aim was to benefit their listeners by turning them to the rational life or to convert them to philosophy (i.e. to educate them morally). Serious philosophers shared the view that human beings fall short of their potential to live rationally and thus morally, but they differed in their assessment of the gravity of the human condition . . . What philosophers shared, however, was the assumption that people were generally able to change and that the philosopher could bring about change through his speech” (Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 21). And like itinerant evangelists, they were seeking converts. The same writer explains: “Some of the terms used to describe conversion to philosophy—for example, turning, repentance, and rebirth—are also used of Christian conversion, without necessarily meaning the same thing. So, too, Christian preaching aiming at conversion addressed the sinful human condition and resulted in a confession. These similarities should not be pressed too far; they do, however, demonstrate that conversion was a well-known phenomenon and that Christians used the same language as the philosophers to speak about it” (Malherbe, 29). However, for the philosophers, conversion was the work of education; for Paul and his coworkers, it was the work of the Holy Spirit.

Some itinerant philosophers earned a bad reputation in the first century. Cynics were a good example; about them it was said, “they leave their jobs, sponge off people, contribute

nothing to society and meddle in other people’s business” (Malherbe, 100). No wonder Paul wanted to distance himself and his coworkers from such charlatans and defend himself and his coworkers against those who would put his team in the same camp. He does this in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

When it comes to evangelism, all talk and no walk makes the gospel messenger a *hypocrite*. On the other hand, all walk and no talk makes the messenger an *enigma*. Paul was neither; his life verified his gospel. He tells the Thessalonians: “For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you . . . You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness” (2:3, 5; cf. 1Co 2:1-5). But apparently, some in Paul’s day preached with mixed motives. Much later in his ministry, he writes to the Philippians from house arrest, advising them that “some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry” and others “out of selfish ambition” (1:15, 17). “But what does it matter?” he asks, and in the same breath he answers, “The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached,” which leaves him rejoicing.

It seems little has changed over the past two thousand years. Unfortunately, some who preach nowadays are *charlatans*. For them ministry is just a business like any other. They employ a business model, and consider without question that the marks of business success are also the marks of ministry success. And unfortunately, too, some who preach are *hypocrites*. For them ministry is a charade and preaching an act. They tell people that prosperity is guaranteed to sacrificial givers, while it actually only makes them prosperous. Whether charlatans or hypocrites, their lack of integrity casts a long shadow over the integrity of the gospel. The same is true to a lesser degree of those Christians who fail to either walk their talk or talk their walk.

# 1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

## Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1 You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. 2 We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. 3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. 4 On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed – God is our witness. 6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. 7 Instead, we were like young children among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8 so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. 9 Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket “not without results” in v. 1.
- Underline “treated outrageously in Philippi” in v. 2.
- Box “but” in vv. 2, 4 and “not only . . . but” in v. 8 indicating *contrast*.
- Circle “strong opposition” in v. 2.
- Circle “error,” “impure motives,” and “trick” in v. 3.
- Box “On the contrary” indicating *contrast* in v. 4.
- Box “instead” indicating *contrast* in v. 7.
- Box “like” and “Just as . . . so” indicating *comparison* in v. 7.
- Circle “young children” in v. 7.
- Bracket “of God” in v. 8.
- Circle “holy,” “righteous,” and “blameless” in v. 10.
- Box “as” indicating *comparison* in v. 11.
- Circle “encouraging, comforting and urging” in v. 12.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about \_\_\_\_\_.”



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The expression “not without results” is an example of *litotes* (see note on v. 1). Interpret the meaning of this *figure of speech* used in verse 1 and explain why results matter.
  2. What made the treatment of Paul, Silas, and Timothy in Philippi (see Ac 16:16-24, 37-39) so outrageous?
  3. Verse 2 contains a *contrast* introduced by “but.” Replace “but” with another word or words indicating *contrast* that might clarify the nuance of the verse.
  4. Why would Paul feel it necessary to defend “the appeal” (v. 3) he, Silas, and Timothy made when in Thessalonica?
  5. Explain the *contrast* indicated by “On the contrary” in verse 4.
  6. The NIV reads “we were like young children” (v. 7); other translations read “we were gentle” (e.g., ESV). Explain which you think better fits the context and why (see note on v. 7).
  7. Compare and contrast the *comparisons* indicated by “Just as” in verse 7 and “as” in verse 11.
  8. In what sense did Paul, Silas, and Timothy not only share the gospel but also their own lives?
  9. God calls believers into a *glorious kingdom* (“kingdom and glory” v. 12). Is he referring to *heaven*? Explain.
  10. **Discussion:** Paul’s description of the character of the “appeal” he, Silas, and Timothy made in Thessalonica reminds us of the critical relationship of the message to the messenger. Talk about it.
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### Commentary On The Text

If Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth in the early summer of A.D. 51, then he wrote it approximately six months after he, Silas, and Timothy visited Thessalonica at the end of A.D. 50 (H. Wayne House, *Chronological and Background Charts to the New Testament*, 130). In those intervening months, the Thessalonian believers continued to redefine their relationships to unbelieving family members and the larger unbelieving community. One commentator writes: “Their conversion resulted in distress and dejection which threatened their adherence to the faith. Their feeling of isolation, heightened by opposition or suspicion from non-Christians, was exacerbated by Paul’s abrupt departure . . . The Thessalonians’ social relationships within the community, as well as between the community and the wider society, were being redefined, evidently not without stress” (Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 51). During that time, too, their pagan detractors were busy reinterpreting what had transpired in city, suggesting that some of its citizens had been duped by a band of smooth-talking itinerant philosophers who used questionable means to prey on their gullible hearers. That reinterpretation of recent history cast a shadow over the credibility of the gospel and the genuineness of the Thessalonians’ response, thereby undermining their continuing adherence to the faith. What’s more, the believers at Thessalonica had become imitators of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, but the three were no longer with them and their example had begun to fade. So perhaps Paul’s description of their ministry in Thessalonica (chap. 2) is both *apologetic*, namely, to debunk the notion that they were just another group of itinerant philosophers peddling their philosophy for personal gain, and *parenetic*, namely, to remind the Thessalonians of the kind of people of whom they had become imitators.

In 2:1-12, Paul reminds his readers how he, Silas, and Timothy behaved when they made their gospel appeal. He begins (vv. 1-2) by reminding them that as Roman citizens, he, Silas, and Timothy had been treated “outrageously” in Philippi; nevertheless, they were not deterred from preaching in Thessalonica—and that preaching yielded remarkable results, namely, the establishment of the church. “He continued preaching boldly (Gr. *parresiazomai*) even though his message was not popular and resulted in public abuse. *Parresia*, boldness, is the opposite of *kolakeia*, flattery (v. 5). Paul’s was not the reaction of a person who seeks personal recognition or money. Such a person would move on quickly to a more friendly and profitable audience” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Thessalonians,” 2023 ed., 24, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1thessalonians.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1thessalonians.pdf)).

Paul continues (vv. 3-7a) by debunking the notion that he, Silas, and Timothy were no more than itinerant philosophers and the Thessalonians’ conversion no more than a

conversion to philosophy. “On the contrary” indicates the *contrast* between them. On the one hand, the appeal of Paul, Silas, and Timothy springs from truth, pure motives, and transparency, suggesting, on the other hand, that the appeal of itinerant philosophers typically doesn’t. Furthermore, as those approved by God entrusted with the gospel, the itinerant evangelists, on the one hand, were not trying to please people, did not use flattery, did not use deception, did not seek praise from anyone, and did not wield their authority for their own benefit, suggesting, on the other hand, that the itinerant philosophers did. Instead of being harsh with the Thessalonians, the evangelists were *gentle*, in contrast to some philosophers, namely, Cynics “who could not distinguish scurrilous reproach from admonition and had recourse to the former when the latter was required” (F. F. Bruce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 45, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 32).

If verses 3-7a describe the evangelists’ appeal to the Thessalonians, verses 7b-12 describe the *quality* and *depth* of their relationship to them. Paul’s description is built around two *comparisons*—first, to a nursing mother (v. 7b) and second, to a father (v. 11). In the first, the comparison is two-fold. A mother’s care is rooted in love for her children and involves giving her very life to them. So, too, was the evangelists’ care for the Thessalonians rooted in love and involved giving to them—not only the giving of the gospel but also the giving of their very lives. The giving of their lives is measured in terms of the “toil and hardship” they endured, working long hours—“night and day” is a *merism*, a figure of speech using contrasting extremes to express a whole—probably making tents and other leather articles, so that they would not be a burden to them. Then in a nutshell, Paul writes, “You are witnesses, and so is God of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed” (v. 10). In the second, the comparison is three-fold. A father *encourages*, *comforts* and *urges* his children in preparation for life. So, too, did the evangelists while they were with the Thessalonians. “While Paul compares himself to a nurse or mother when he speaks of cherishing his converts, he compares himself to a father when he speaks of instructing them. In 1 Cor. 4:14, 15 he claims the privilege of giving his converts fatherly admonition because it was he who ‘became their father in Christ Jesus through the gospel’” (Bruce, 36).

In this passage, Paul defends the gospel against those who would dismiss it as just another philosophy and the response of believers to it as just another example of gullible people being duped by smooth-talking philosopher evangelists. He also reminds his readers of his character and lifestyle and that of Silas and Timothy, to encourage them to continue imitating the ones who had brought them the gospel. Together what he says reminds us of the importance of the integrity and lifestyle of those who share the gospel.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 **not without results** Cf. You yourselves know, dear brothers, how worthwhile that visit was" (TLB). "Not without results" is an example *litotes*, a figure of speech that expresses an affirmative by denying its contrary, for example, "you won't be sorry," meaning "you'll be glad." Here "not without results" means "with remarkable results."

v. 2 **treated outrageously** Cf. Ac 16:19-24, 37. "We do not share the view of those who think that when Paul spoke of having been *shamefully treated* (insulted, abused), he was referring only to the fact that he and Silas, uncondemned men, *had been beaten publicly though they were Roman citizens*. That was part of the shameful treatment but not all of it: the men—Roman citizens, yes; apostles of Jesus Christ besides!—had been arrested, dragged into the market-place [*sic*] before the rulers, slandered, robbed of their clothing, thrown into prison with their feet made fast in the stocks, etc. The verb employed in the original (study its use in Acts 14:5; then Matt. 22:6 and Luke 18:32) is comprehensive enough in meaning to include *all* this insolent treatment to which the missionaries had been exposed and which had caused them much suffering" (William Hendriksen, *Exposition of 1 and II Thessalonians: Commentary on 1 Thessalonians*, NTC, 61).

v. 2 **strong opposition** The Gk. term *agōn* "The word 'conflict' ['opposition' NIV] is a vivid one. It is part of the vocabulary of athletics, where it means a contest or race. It is that from which we derive our word 'agony.' It denotes not a token opposition, a tepid struggle, but a very real battle" (Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, NICNT, 70).

v. 3 **error, impure motives, trick** "The cities of the ancient world were full of traveling philosophers and preachers, many of them fakes seeking only applause and profit. Paul's concern is to show why he and his friends are not just another group of people like these" (Paul Ellingworth and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians*, 23).

v. 7 **like young children** Cf. "Some manuscripts *were gentle*" (NIV margin), that is, some manuscripts have *nēpioi*, "little children" (cf. NIV, NET, NLT), some have *ēpioi*, "gentle" (cf. ESV, HCSB, NJKV). "The variant [*nēpioi*], 'infants,' is well attested (see notes above) but is due probably to dittography of the final letter of [*egenēthemen*]. It is inappropriate in the immediate context, where the writers go on to compare themselves not to infants but to a nurse or parent caring for her children. 'Being gentle' also provides a fitting contrast to 'being burdensome' ['asserted our authority' NIV] in the preceding clause" (F. F. Bruce, *Word Biblical*

*Commentary*, vol. 45, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 31). Unlike some Cynics who believed "the majority of people were so diseased in soul and morally corrupt that *the only hope of cure lay in the severest treatment*, with no concession made to the individual's circumstances" (Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 21, italics added; see also Bruce, 32).

v. 8 **of God** Cf. "his gospel" (v. 2). "It originates in God, and it tells about God, and it invites men to take God's way of salvation. Accordingly, when Paul speaks of 'the gospel of God' he turns men's thoughts away from anything of human contrivance to God's perfect way . . . he uses the phrase 'the gospel of God' again and again (vv. 8 f., and cf. v. 13)" (Morris, 70).

v. 10 **holy . . .** "With reference to God's objective standard their behavior was **righteous**, measuring up to what God expects and requires. Their conduct was unrepachable (**blameless**, *amemptōs*; cf. 5:23), able to stand their critics' scrutiny because it was right. Both they and **God** were **witnesses** (cf. 2:5) of the truthfulness of Paul's claims" (Thomas L. Constable, "1 Thessalonians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 695).

v. 12 **encouraging . . .** "The training provided included strong positive appeals (**encouraging**, *parakalountes*), soothing encouragement (**comforting**, *paramythoumenoi*), designed to cheer up and to inspire correct behavior, and solemn, earnest entreaty (**urging**, *martyromenoi*). Such a combination of appeals proved effective in moving the Thessalonians to action by the Holy Spirit's convicting power" (Constable, 695).

v. 12 **kingdom and glory** "The words kingdom and glory, joined as they are by and, probably indicates a hendiadys. This is a figure of speech that can be translated 'glorious kingdom'" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 1 Thessalonians," 2023 ed., 27, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1thessalonians.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1thessalonians.pdf)). That kingdom is the present form of the kingdom of God that believers enter when they believe; it takes its future form when Christ returns to rule on earth for a thousand years (Rev 20:1-6).



## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

As stewards of the gospel, share it accurately with pure motives lest you undermine the integrity of the good news and people's response to it.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



## 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

When my daughter was five years old, she was taking a bath and pretending to baptize her toys. We seized the opportunity to talk to her about believer's baptism, which led to explaining what a believer is, which led to the gospel, which led to her trusting Christ. What an absolute privilege! I had never been involved in another person's moment of trusting faith, and always dreamed of being used by God in this way. The fact that it was my own child had me in a puddle of grateful and overwhelmed tears. As followers of Christ, we have the privilege and responsibility to share the gospel with others, and there's no better audience than the kids under our roof. Often, parents don't feel qualified to share the gospel with their kids and would rather send them to church and let the professionals handle it. Friends, you are qualified! God picked you to be your child's parent. He will give you every tool and every word you might possibly need to teach your kids about His mercy and grace. He will daily provide rich opportunities to speak His name and model godly character that honors Him. He will give you struggles that help you point to Him as you patiently endure. When you ask God for help, He will give you wisdom to lead you kids (James 1:5). Our job is simple obedience. We don't need a degree or fancy words or a title. We need only to take the step, say the word, or model the behavior. This week, we're praying you seize every opportunity to share the gospel with your kids.

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1. Who approved Paul to speak and what did he share?
2. Describe Paul's character as he was among the Thessalonians.
3. How did Paul act like a mother and a father with the Thessalonians?

### What Do You Think?

What was Paul's main goal while he was in Thessalonica?

### What Do You Do?

Paul boldly shared the gospel with others. Follow his example and share the gospel with someone this week using words as well as actions.

## CORE COMPETENCY: Evangelism

I share Jesus with others with my words and actions.

## MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 5:16

*"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week's verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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