

1Thessalonians, Chapter Two, Lesson Two

BOUND IN CHRIST 1Thessalonians 2:5-8

STIMULATE

** In our study together last week, we had the privilege of watching the apostle Paul as he was "**Bold in Christ**". Near the end of that study we learned the reason for his boldness. Why are Christians bold?

They have been "**approved by God** to be entrusted with the gospel"! cf. 1Thessalonians 2:4
Paul knew he was approved by God, so he boldly "spoke" the gospel.

** How can we develop or increase our boldness? What is to be our motivation?

To please our gracious God, rather than men! (V.4)

(Another way to view this is to avoid peer pressure by following the Spirit's prompting.)

Hopefully, we have spent this past week trying to learn how to be more pleasing to our Lord and by that means, we are even more "**Bold in Christ**".

MOTIVATE

** Today, we hope to learn what our Lord expects of us as we share His gospel. Ask yourself this, "Is it enough to just share the truth about Christ with others?" "What are we to do once someone becomes saved?" For the exciting answer, please join me now in 1Thessalonians 2:5-8 where we see how Paul became "**Bound in Christ**" to the hearts of the Thessalonians.

Read Passage (V.5-8)

Opening Prayer

Bound in Christ

INVESTIGATE

V. 5 ** Picking up where we left off last week, Paul said in verse four that Christians are "approved by God" for what purpose?

As we have just seen, "to be entrusted with the gospel". This is a serious responsibility before a Holy God. Remember Matthew 10:32-33 (everyone)!

** Paul is going to delineate for us three specific ways we are not to speak forth the gospel. Here in verse five, what is the first method or style of evangelism we must avoid?

Preaching or speaking the gospel "**with flattering speech**"... This first area of avoidance for the approved saint of God, is perhaps among the most difficult.

** What does it mean to flatter someone?

Webster: "to praise excessively, especially from motives of self-interest (hypocrisy)". Webster goes on to say, "to raise hope by false representations"

The word used here by Paul for flattering speech is kolakeia and literally means, "to falsely build up or flatter".

** Why is this such a difficult thing to avoid?

We do not want to offend our family, friends, neighbors or strangers on the street, who do not know Jesus Christ. We hope to win them over with pleasantries, so they will then be open to the gospel.

** What is wrong with that approach to evangelism?

It sets aside the preeminence of God's truth, and replaces it with our fleshly efforts. Let's watch the approach Jesus used. All see - Matthew 15:1-14

** So, should we go blazing along calling sinners hypocrites and not worrying about offending them?

Absolutely not! What we need is a balance.

cf. Romans 9:33 - "a rock of offense"

2Corinthians 6:1-3 - "giving no cause for offense"

Ephesians 4:15 - "speaking the truth in love"

So we do not puff people up with compliments, hoping they will feel good about us and receive the gospel. Nor do we try to offend them, which in turn would discredit the ministry. We simply tell it like it is, based upon the authority of God's word, with an attitude of love and if they take an offense; it should only be based upon their rejection of the truth.

** What does Paul say at the beginning of this verse to indicate how important it is to not flatter someone?

He said, "...we **never** came with flattering speech"

** Still here in verse five, did the Thessalonians think they had be flattered?

No - Paul adds, "...as you know..." They had heard and believed the gospel truth about their own sin and their desperate need for a Savior.

** Paul now moves on to the second style of evangelism which must be avoided. What is it?

Preaching or witnessing "**with a pretext for greed**"

Pretext (prophasis in the Greek) literally means "to weave in front", a cloak or covering. Paul is saying that we did not come to you using evangelism as a covering for our greed.

** Do you think that ever happens?

Absolutely! All see - Acts 8:9-21 cf. Philippians 1:15-18

** Did Paul avoid this trap of using the gospel for financial gain?

Yes he did! And we can prove it Biblically. cf. 1Corinthians 9:13-18

** Paul had a pure heart behind his desire to share God's saving truth. He did not care about the things of this world. How do we know he was serious about this claim to be free from greed?

He calls God Himself as his witness!

** If there were any greed in the heart of Paul, would we necessarily know it?

No - he could hide it from us, but not from the God that he calls to be his witness.
cf. 1Samuel 16:7

Like the apostle Paul, we should invite the Lord to examine our hearts and remove any hurtful way that He might find there, including greedy motives. cf. Psalm 139:23-24

V. 6 ** As we move into verse six, what is the third style of evangelism which must be avoided?

Seeking glory from men!

** Who can you think of that was constantly driven by that sinful motive?

The Pharisees - Matthew 6:

V. 2 - "...that they may be honored by men"

V. 5 - "...in order to be seen by men"

V.16 - "...to be seen fasting by men"

** According to this verse, is Paul at all concerned about the glory men would bestow upon him?

Not at all! He eliminates all possible human source for praise or attention. He did not seek glory from men, "either from you or from others". cf. 1Corinthians 4:3-4

** What is it about the last half of this verse that makes Paul's humility even more amazing?

He was an "apostolos" or sent one, by Jesus Christ Himself! He did miracles, spoke the word of God, raised people from the dead and truly represented Christ to the world. And yet, he was humble beyond our understanding!

V. 7 ** Instead of coming to the Thessalonians with these three erroneous methods or styles of evangelism, instead of lording his authority over them, how did Paul and company treat the Thessalonians?

"...we proved to be gentle among you..."

** How gentle were they in their methods of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with those who lived in there Thessalonica?

They were as gentle as "a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children".

** Which three words used by Paul here in verse seven shows you that he had become "**Bound in Christ**" to the Thessalonians?

1) nursing - trophos "to nourish or feed"

2) tenderly - to warm or cherish

3) own - personal possessive, the were bound!

V. 8 ** By using such strong emotional terminology in verse seven to describe his relationship to the saints in Thessalonica, Paul sets us up for how he feels regarding these dear believers. Does he have any special feelings regarding them?

Yes - he has "a fond affection" for all of them!

** The hyperbole used by Paul to describe his love for those who had received the gospel of Christ is not meant to flatter them - it is simply the truth! To prove it, Paul goes on to make a commitment way beyond simply sharing the gospel with someone. What is he willing to give to them?

"...but also our own lives..." cf. Philippians 2:17

** Was this a forced sacrifice Paul was making against his will?

Absolutely not! He said, "we were **well pleased** to impart to you" the gospel and our lives.

** Why was Paul willing to make so great a sacrifice for their spiritual growth and well being?

"...because you had become very dear to us".

** At this point, we could probably answer our question from the beginning of our study. "Is it enough to just share the truth about Christ with others?" "What are we to do once someone becomes saved?"

We are to give our lives to their nurturing and building up in the Word of God! The cost becomes all that we are, as we serve the living and true God.

** How can we know if we have this kind of love for the lost, as they become our brothers and sisters in Christ?

Scripture provides two opposing standards - all see:

James 2:14-16 "be warmed and be filled"

John 15:13 "greater love has no one"

** Do you find yourself being superficial with caring about new Christians (or older ones for that matter)?

We must display the genuine love of God which He has poured into our hearts.
cf. Romans 5:5

** How do we develop this process of allowing others to "become very dear" to our hearts?

We start by being committed to the truth of God's word and then by loving those who respond to it! cf. Philippians 1:8, 1John 2:9-10, 3:10-16, 4:7-8 & 19-21

EXTRICATE

** What were the three methods or styles of evangelism which are to be avoided at all costs?

1) flattering speech

2) using evangelism as a covering for greed

3) seeking praise and glory from men (Remember, you just might get it)

DELINEATE

** What is the cost behind sharing the gospel? How will our relationship with the lost change, if they receive it into their hearts so as to be saved?

We will become "**Bound in Christ**", and need to give our lives to their nurturing and building up in the Word of God.

EVALUATE

** How does my love for the lost and my love for my brothers and sisters in Christ show itself? Is it even observable? Am I willing to use my life for the benefit of others, with eternity in the balance?

ACTIVATE

** Would you commit to the Lord your willingness to be so "**Bound in Christ**" to other believers, that you will spend yourself for their benefit? cf. Philippians 2:3-4

Closing prayer