

1Thessalonians, Chapter Two, Lesson Three

BURDENED IN CHRIST 1Thessalonians 2:9-12

STIMULATE

** In our study last week, Paul showed us three methods or styles of evangelism which are to be avoided at all costs. Do you recall what they were?

- 1) **flattering speech**
- 2) **using evangelism as a covering for greed**
- 3) **seeking praise and glory from men** (Remember, you just might get it)

** 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.

Have you been more aware of the bond you have with other believers? Are you more willing to reach out to the lost, even if it means giving them your life as well?

MOTIVATE

** There is a logical progression in the chapter we are currently studying together. If we are "**Bold in Christ**", we will find ourselves becoming "**Bound in Christ**" to those who hear and respond to our boldness. The next step of our journey is for us to become "**Burdened in Christ**" for those He saves. Today Paul will manifest his own heartfelt burden for the Thessalonians, and by example give us the pattern we should form in our own lives. Let's read our passage together.

Read passage (V.9-12)

Opening Prayer

Burdened in Christ

INVESTIGATE

V. 9 ** Once again, who does Paul call upon to verify his ministry among the Thessalonians?

"For you recall, brethren..."

The Thessalonians themselves were fully aware of Paul's life and ministry in their midst. This is one of five times he would ask them to be a witness to the validity of his ministry.

1Thessalonians 1:5 - "just as you know"
2Thessalonians 2:1 - "For you yourselves know"
2Thessalonians 2:2 - "as you know"
2Thessalonians 2:5 - "as you know"
But it was a two way street, Paul knew of their faithfulness too!
cf. 1Thessalonians 1:3

** Here in verse nine, what is it specifically that they "knew" about Paul's life and ministry?

They knew about Paul's "labor and hardship" on their behalf.

** To what is that referring?

Paul paid his own way! cf. 2Thessalonians 3:7-9

** Why did he do that?

"...in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example".
cf. 2Thessalonians 3:9

** Do you suppose Paul had some part-time job to help float the cost of the ministry?

No - He labored, "working night and day"! Paul was a cutter of skins, or tent maker.
cf. Acts 18:1-3 and 2Corinthians 11:27

** This amazing work ethic introduces us to Paul's first burden which he had for the Thessalonians. Why would he be so committed to hard work? It doesn't seem very spiritual, why not just go about praying for people and then let those same people feed him in return?

His burden was - he did not want to be a burden to them! "...so as not to be a burden to any of you". Remember, he wanted to be an example that they would be able to follow.

** What drove Paul to this burden? What was at stake, if he were to develop a poor reputation?

"...we proclaimed to you the gospel of God". Paul knew that if his life was not exemplary, the message of the gospel could be damaged.

** Did that mean Paul would never accept assistance from another Christian?

Absolutely not! He often was dependent upon others and openly expressed his appreciation.
cf. Philippians 4:16-17

** So what is the difference? Why did he not want to be a financial burden to the Thessalonians, and at the same time he was accepting a gift from the Philippians while living there in Thessalonica?

Paul had established the church in Philippi and knew the love and sacrifice behind their gift. While he was in Thessalonica he was still preaching the gospel and starting this young church and he did not want the message to be lost behind a pretense of greed. cf. 1Corinthians 6:12

V.10 ** As we move into this next verse, who does Paul again add to the witness list?

"You are witnesses, and so is God...!"

** Why is Paul so persistent in calling on God to verify his life and ministry?

Because God is the One who knows the heart!
(Remember 1Samuel 16:7 - man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart)

** Paul now gives us three adverbs to describe his behavior or character, which was made manifest in his life and ministry. What are they?

devoutly - in holy fashion, true piety out of a reverence for God.

uprightly - righteously, justly (observable by men) as we ought. cf. 1Corinthians 15:34

blamelessly - without blame, unable to find a flaw.

** These three adverbs describe Paul's behavior toward whom?

"...toward you believers..." the Thessalonians.

** Does that mean that Paul was less devout, upright or blameless toward unbelievers?

No - He was an example to all who knew him, but the unsaved could not be called as a witness to the godly character of the man, that job had to be done by the Thessalonians and God!
cf. 2Corinthians 1:12

V.11 ** While verse ten described Paul's behavior or character, verse eleven now describes his activity, and this time too he uses three distinct terms. Let's look at them together.

exhorting - "Paul and his friends had directed the converts into suitable lines of conduct."
Leon Morris cf. V.3

encouraging - To comfort the fainthearted. cf. 1Thessalonians 5:14, John 11:19, 31

imploring - Lit. "testifying", to bring forward a witness, to solemnly testify.
cf. Acts 20:26, Galatians 5:3

** Was Paul vaguely applying these three activities to the congregation as a whole?

No - this is how he ministered to "each one".

** So, was it cold and mechanical? How did Paul relate to those with whom he shared God's truth?

As a father would his own children! Paul was truly "**Bound in Christ**" to these saints.

V.12 ** That brings us to Paul's second area of burden for these Thessalonians. To see what it is here in verse twelve, let's first do a quick review of what we have seen today.

Paul and company, while staying in Thessalonica, labored with hardship both day and night so they could present the gospel without financial burden and behaved in an exemplary fashion, directing, comforting and testifying about God to each one of the Thessalonian believers as if they were their own children! Wow, that is really a lot! Why did they do all of that? What was Paul's burden for the life of the Thessalonians?

"...so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you..." cf. 3John 1:4

** Our labor for the Lord is to always produce this type of fruit, in ourselves first and then in the lives of those to whom we minister. Are you so "**Burdened in Christ**" for the walk of other Christians, that it effects the way you live your own life?

Hopefully, we are able to learn this pattern from Paul and develop a passion for this type of life and ministry. cf. Ephesians 4:1, Philippians 1:27, Colossians 1:10, Romans 12:1-2 and John 4:20-24

** To where does Paul say that God has called us?

"...into His own kingdom and glory"!

** If we can grasp the significance of that statement, what incentive does it provide for us to have a life and ministry similar to Paul's?

As we focus on God's glory and the advancement of His kingdom, instead of the pull of this world we live in, we can be available to be "**Burdened in Christ**" for the godly walk of other Christians. With such a burden, we ourselves will walk worthy of our glorious Lord.

EXTRICATE

** What is to be the Christian's view of hard work? What is our work ethic?

We should willingly pursue it, to be an example for others and to use our godly work ethic as a platform for proclaiming God's saving truth. cf. Colossians 1:28-29

DELINEATE

** What kind of behavior or character should be driving our life and ministry according to verse ten?

We should live devoutly, uprightly and blamelessly toward the lost world around us (to convict them of the truth we proclaim) and around other Christians (to encourage them to do the same).

** Which three activities should naturally flow from that kind of lifestyle?

Exhorting, encouraging and imploring our brothers and sisters in the Lord unto godliness.

EVALUATE

** As you look at verse twelve from today's study you might think that I am going to ask you if you are walking worthy (and of course we should be).

But - to better fit the context of our study, let me ask if you are "**Burdened in Christ**" for the walk of your fellow Christian.

Are you exhorting, encouraging and imploring them, so that they might walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls them?

That should be the norm for the child of God! cf. Deuteronomy 6:5-7

ACTIVATE

** Would you ask the Lord right now to make you more sensitive to this area of ministry and responsibility which we all share as children of the King. Ask Him to make you "**Burdened in Christ**" for those around you to the glory of God!

Closing prayer