

The Model of Ministry

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Preacher: Raymond Smith

[0 : 00] Take your Bibles from 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 this morning.! 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 as we continue looking through here the book of Thessalonians! And as Paul the apostle there writes to them at Thessalonica, we understand that the church at Thessalonica really brings to the forefront the change that transpires when the light of the gospel becomes effectual in the lives of an individual.

You know, because the gospel is for all but it only becomes effectual when it's applied to you by faith when you call upon the Lord recognizing Him as Savior.

And we know that that took place because when that happens there's a change that transpires in somebody's life. There's a change that happens and as we see here in the church at Thessalonica we see here that it was that they changed from serving idols to serving the Savior.

Their focus changed from that which was the present to that which is to come. Because when you get saved we have a new desire because we no longer live just with the present in mind but also in light of eternity.

And throughout this book you'll find as Paul writes to them he reminds them of that to look for the Savior. To look and understand that one day Christ is coming again.

[1 : 29] Our Savior will return and we want to be ready. And we see here that the power of the gospel stood as a testimony to everyone around them.

I mean if you remember here that this book, this letter Paul's writing back to them was only a few weeks removed. But yet so much had taken place and we see that everybody was talking about the testimony of change.

Paul said in chapter 1 here as we looked a few weeks ago that throughout Macedonia and Achaia it was known what was taking place there that something had changed in just these few short weeks. And people would begin to discuss and talk about what had taken place. But yet even with all this happening there are those who stirred up a problem of accusation against Paul and his companions.

And that was those who refused to accept the declaration of Scripture. You know, because remember Paul had reasoned with them from the Scripture as that Jesus is the Christ.

[2 : 37] In other words Jesus is the one the Old Testament spoke about. And he reasoned with them that everything from the Old Testament points to Christ. Christ is the Messiah.

Christ is the one that has come and has paid the price that was pointed to throughout the Scripture. But they accused Paul instead of bringing good news to them.

They accused Paul and his companions as we looked last week of basically having guile. you know, trying to trick them into something and basically try to make profit off it.

Was the accusations that they were doing. And it began to cause doubt towards their motive. And as Paul puts forth a rebuttal to these accusations.

With a simple encouragement he says, Guys, evaluate what we did while we were there. You know, you yourself were a witness to it. Measure up. Measure up.

[3 : 38] Does what they say or what they accuse measure up with what you saw and what you heard and how things happened? You know, that's some good advice anyways, you know.

Because people make accusations you need to measure it up. Because as a believer people are going to make accusations in your life. They're going to try to tear down. And what we're going to see here today is we're going to look at a word that Paul uses, unblameable.

It basically means that it doesn't stick. Okay. When we want to understand, Paul says that these things don't stick. And so he admonishes them to check their motive.

And he says, look at that motive in light of what we've modeled for you. You know, that model that was there because that sincerity and purity in the truth that was present, the motive and purpose did not even benefit them.

As we saw, Paul says that he didn't take anything from them. He says, matter of fact, as we're going to see today, he says, I worked night and day so you wouldn't have to put forth anything.

[4 : 46] He says, I invested for your benefit. And so this morning we're going to take a look here and see this model of ministry. Because, you know, it's a model that we need to use today also in ministry.

And the two things we're going to look at here this morning are important. So if you found 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, let's stand together for the reading of God's word. We'll pick up here in verse 7 here this morning.

And we notice this. It says, but we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherish her children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

For you remember, brethren, our labor and travail. For laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

Ye are witnesses, and God also, how wholly and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.

[5 : 52] As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Heavenly Father, as we take a few moments here this morning, as we look into your word, Lord, we pray just to have your hand upon each one today. Your spirit might stir our hearts and our minds and our very core of who we are, Lord, that you might do what you've said you're going to do, convict and convince, and to stir the hearts of individuals.

Lord, I pray just to have your hand upon each one today, Lord, even as the word is put forth, Lord, that you would be lifted up above all else, that you would be the centerpiece of what takes place here this morning.

And Lord, we just ask it all in your precious name. Amen. May be seated. You know, as we see here this morning, this model that Paul compares it to, he has two things here. One, he compares it to a mother, and he compares it to a father.

He compares it to a parental relationship that takes place as he gives a practical illustration about what happens. Because this model, you might say, is a parenting model.

[7 : 09] And it's that model of love and direction. You know, what's a parent to do? They're to love their children, but they're also there to guide and direct them. You know? Because we have a false narrative today about love.

Love, sometimes in our narrative today, says love says you let them do whatever they want to do. But love is always attached to direction and purpose and always attached to truth.

When you detach love from truth, there's a problem. And we're going to see here, Paul ties those two together. He says the model for ministry involves those two elements, love and truth, love and direction.

What direction do you need to be going? What does God have established? And as we see here, as God clearly established the order within the family, you know, we know that God established husbands and wives and children.

And this authority is not something that's to be used to lord over others, but it's a place of responsibility towards those for the ones that they are responsible for.

[8 : 13] And what Paul is saying as an apostle, as a preacher of the gospel, he says, I am responsible for not only telling you the truth and loving you, but also making sure you're going the right direction.

He says this is attached together. I can't, you can't say I just loved on you and without attaching the truth to it. And Paul reminds them that his authority is there.

He's an apostle. You know, take a look in our text here as we look up a little bit earlier in verse six here above this. Notice what it says. It says, nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as apostles of Christ.

You know, I want you to understand because Paul held the office that he held, there was certain scriptural responsibilities attached to it. And we'll look at that here in a little bit, but I want you to understand there's certain things that he could exercise his authority differently. Because you could exercise authority a couple of different ways. You can exercise it as an authoritarian where it's like, there is no option. There is no choice. This is what it is. Or you can have love attached to truth that those things were guiding, gently guiding somebody to the direction that they ought to go.

[9 : 35] That they choose to follow the truth and not just a person. You know, people can be made to do something, but it doesn't mean that they understand it or that they're doing it for the right reason.

You know, oftentimes people do something just because somebody told them, you know, the important thing is, is that we do it because God has instructed us on how we're to navigate whatever situation it is in life here.

But he reminds them as an apostle, he merited and had a righteous claim of both respect and support. But he says it was an exercise that they might benefit above all.

In other words, Paul said, just because it's merited me doesn't mean I have to use or apply that. You know, one of the things with authority, sometimes people think, well, just because I have the position, I can force others to do something.

Now, yes, you might be able to for a little while, but it doesn't affect the heart of an individual. Because Paul said, I want you to know that I'm not there just to be an authoritarian over you.

[10 : 40] He says, I want you to understand that I love you and I'm going to guide and direct you. Because there's a concern and a care and we see this desire. What was his desire?

That they might mature and grow in the Lord. You know, that ought to be our desire. When a parent's have children, your desire is to see your kids grow and mature. You want both those things, growth and maturity.

Maturity means you understand what it is to be an adult. To mature in the faith means you understand what is to be an adult Christian instead of a babe.

And a baby, we understand there are certain steps that they're going to take and they struggle with. But when you grow up, the Bible says you ought to put away childish things. That's maturity.

To mature in those things. But we see here, look at Paul's analogy here that he applies. Look at verse 7 with me in our text. Notice what it says. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.

[11 : 44] Now the picture here is a mom with a little baby nursing that child and that love and care and concern as they nourish that child.

I mean, as you see a mom that's nursing a baby, it's like a moment of just love and concern. And they're caring for that child and they're holding that child and they're making sure it gets the nourishment that it needs.

They have a sincere love for that child. There's something distinctly there. And Paul says that this gentleness, this kindness, he says you witness that kindness of a deep love towards them.

You know, because they were precious. You know, that warmth and care a mother has for a child, they willingly surrender their rights. You know, that's part of the problem that we see.

As Paul points this out, I want you to understand. Notice what he says in verse 8. Zyrus of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but our own souls, because you were dear unto us.

[12 : 54] You know, Paul's pointing to this, he says, as a mother sacrifices for her child, a mother's love for a child, a mom will go above and above, mom will get up early, stay up late, get lack of sleep because they wake up two or three times in the middle of the night.

Why? Do they not have a right to sleep and rest? Yeah, they have a right to rest and sleep. But you know what they said? That right can be put on hold for the benefit.

It's a saying, I surrender what might be rightfully mine to take. For Paul's painting, he says, I want you to understand that this ministry is similar in that it involves a personal investment of one's time, one's talent, and one's treasure to accomplish the task.

Because the important thing to understand when he says he cherishes, that's love put forth. Love is not about you, but love is about others. You know, that's a biblical reality is, is love is not about you.

Love is about others. Because love is something that you put into action for the benefit of others. Look over to 1 Corinthians chapter 13 for a moment. 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

[14:11] I want you to hear this in the context of saying, it's not about you. Because notice what Paul says here, and he's speaking here. Look at verse 1. It says, though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, have not love, I become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy and understanding all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing. And he says, though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Notice in verse 4 now, it says, charity what? Suffereth long and is kind. Suffering long is for the benefit of another. Suffering long is because that love is for the benefit of another.

We see here, notice what it says. It says, suffereth long as in kind. Charity envieth not. Charity vaulteth not itself, is not puffy.

[15:15] Seeketh not her own. Is not easily provoked. Thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things.

Believeth all things. Hopeth all things. Endureth all things. I want you to see here, Paul was telling them, I want you to, he says, we did this not for our benefit, but for yours.

He said, we invested of ourselves because of the love that we have for you. It wasn't just a duty that we performed. We did it because we loved you.

There's a love factor involved. Ministry has love involved. Ministry without love is a problem. Paul says, I want you to measure things that tell you there was love involved.

Are those things present? You know, when we understand that they did not come just with the facts of the gospel, but the love that had changed their lives. I want you to understand the love that God has towards the whole world.

[16:22] Paul says that as believers, we ought to have for people also. To understand that love, you know, think about over in 1 John chapter 3. 1 John chapter 3 in his epistle, he says this, whereby perceive we, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

There ought to be a love involved as Christ loved us. Because remember that love is revealed in actions, not words or declaration.

Now, it's good to tell somebody you love them. But you know what? You can tell somebody you love them if your actions don't back it up. It becomes empty.

It's hollow. Because it definitely puts into question what's their motive. What are they desiring? What are they looking to get out of it? Because love is not about you.

It's about the other. Remember, love is that it's revealed in actions, the choices that you make. It's not just a statement that is made. Notice what he looks, look here in verse 9.

[17:28] Notice what he tells him here. He says, Now, I want you to see here, they worked night and day, not only to declare the gospel to them, but it might not cost them anything.

Now, let me tell you what's going on. Paul says, In other words, we know from Scripture, Paul was a tent maker.

He went down and was industrious for hours of the day to make a profit, to make money, to make resource that he might take care of himself along with the others.

The others worked also. I don't think this was just about Paul. I think it was all about the group. I think Silas worked. I think Timothy worked. I think the rest of them, they said, Well, let's go get a job here and accomplish this, that we might not be a burden unto them.

Why? Because of love for them. Because you know what? They were going to be accused of something. And sometimes, I want you to understand, we give up our rights for the benefits of others.

[18:46] Sometimes it's just a merit so they can't be a false accusation that sticks. Because you think today, what's the perception of religion today? Most people think religion is nothing but a way to scam people out of money.

All they want is money, money, money, money, money. And if you watch certain people, that's exactly what you would come to the conclusion. But biblically, you know what it tells you? Hey, those people are lacking what?

Love. We ought not to work the gospel or even serve the gospel without understanding that it's not about gain for ourselves.

And we see here, he was willing to work to provide for himself because it is what was needed. The right to be supported. Look over in 1 Corinthians chapter 9. The church at Corinth in chapter 9. Here in verse 13, he says, Do you not know things of the temple? And they that wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel.

[19 : 45] I want you to understand, that's a biblical principle that you ought to support it because that's what God said to do. But I want to make it clear.

The reality is, is that a preacher that is called to a place or called to serve is not doing it for the money. You know, I've told people this before. I don't preach because it's all I can do or to make a living.

I'm thankful, but that's not the measurement of service. If God's called you someplace, you ought to be willing to do what's needed. And we'll get off that one because it's going to go a lot of different directions.

So let's get back to the text. But I want you to understand, this distinguished Paul's ministry from all do this because there was many itinerant guys that went around.

What philosophers and other religions do is expect remuneration. They would expect payment for showing up. Now we all understand it costs something to live.

[20 : 48] But when that's your motivation, there's a problem. We'll understand that sin is not given right to expect this, but it ought not to be something that I force.

He says, I'm willing to put that aside on energy like a mother does. Now I want you to understand, love is not the substance of ministry, but the means by which it is to operate.

Because love is how it operates. That's the operational aspect of ministry. Paul says, I want you to see the operation involved love. Because there has to be love involved.

Love is just not coddling. Because I want you to understand, love is how the truth is to be offered.

Love does not, you know, I want you to understand, that's a misconception today. Well, God loved me, so therefore I must be, to send his son to die for your sin.

The operation which put the truth into action. It's always tied together. Because truth is what saves an individual. You don't get saved just because somebody loves you.

[21 : 55] You get saved because God loved you enough to send his only begotten son to die upon a cross for your sin and my sin. And the Bible says, because he died and rose again, that if we call upon him, recognizing him as savior, yourself as deserving of what he took for you, that he'll save you.

That you'll be rescued. You'll be find love of leading them to maturity by telling them the truth. You know, as a parent, would it be beneficial to not tell your kids the truth about life?

Is that loving to not tell them the truth? You know, I think we see that some today in culture. Parents don't prepare their kids for what's to come. Because they're not telling them the truth.

When you get out of the house, guess what? Somebody's not going to be there to coddle you all the time. And sometimes life hits them hard. Because they ought to be willing to say, I understand what it's going to take.

And notice what Paul says. Look at verse 10. As he tells them here, he says, We have a model of love, but also a model of truth.

[23 : 17] The presentation of the gospel to those at Thessalonica. You know, you think about what Paul says here. Look at verse 10 again. It says, You are what witnesses. Now, what's the term witness mean?

It means that they understood what was taking place. For God, he says, You know, part of the problem today, I think, sometimes, is we have this idea.

Say, do as I say. And I think that's a struggle we all have. But you know what? I want you to see here. Paul said, look at my life as an example. He says, look at it to see if it measures up.

He didn't say, do what I say and not what I do. Paul says, do. I'm willing to. You know, oftentimes people say, don't look at my life, but look to Jesus. Paul says, look to my life because I'm following Jesus.

He says, I want you to see. I want to be an example of that. Paul wanted people to look to Jesus, but he could also tell them to look at his life because the power of Christ was real in his life.

[24 : 28] Because we see this model has a display of truth. He says they want him to witness it. Even though it was a short time he was there, the evidence was present.

Because remember, Paul's purpose there was not to please himself or to please them or even please others. He says, my purpose there was to please God. About God.

You know, look up in verse Paul tells them. Here he says, but as we're allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak not as pleasing men, but who?

God, which trieth our hearts. He said this display of truth involves about pleasing the Lord. You know, Philippians chapter 2 in verse 15, the word of God tells us this, that God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

You know, our testimony of our walk ought to be a light to others. Now I want you to understand that means all of it are responses to people. Because notice what it says in verse 16 of Philippians chapter.

[25 : 37] It says, holding forth the work in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. He says, I want to be an example. I want to run my race of my life in a way that pleases God.

And Paul points to that. He uses some terms here. Holy, holy here. He simply lived a holy life before God. That's a life separated from the world and set apart to the Lord.

To say, God is my one I want to please and not the world. Just. You know, this is simply, he says, I was righteous. He lived a just and righteous life before a life that loved and treated people just as God said.

And just as he wanted them to be treated. In other words, things were done fairly and honestly and properly. He says, unblameable. You know, here's what we talked about a little earlier.

Paul says that he was unblameable. We have behaved ourselves among you that believe. In other words, he says, they're going to make accusations to get me. But he says, look at the witness.

[26 : 41] Look at yourself. Look at our interactions to see if it holds any merit. Is there any substance behind the accusation? Unblameable means it doesn't stick.

In other words, your life is lived in such a way when people look at it and say, that doesn't correlate. There's no stickiness there to it. Of an accusation.

You know, Paul later refers back to this. Look over to 2 Thessalonians chapter 3. 2 Thessalonians chapter 3. We see over here that Paul tells us this. For yourselves know how you ought to follow us as we behaved ourselves.

Behaved not ourselves disorderly among you. Labor and travail night and day that we might not be chargeable to any of you. You know, Paul is telling them our gospel was played out, lived out.

Because truth is not just about what's displayed though. That's another problem that sometimes we have. It's just not living a good life that's part of the testimony. You're to love people.

[27 : 45] You're to live truth. But you also need to speak truth. There has to be a declaration of that truth. Notice what Paul tells them here in the text.

He makes it very clear because now he equates it to a father. Notice in verse 11 he says, As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father, doth children.

You know, what's a father's role to direct and to guide? Paul says they didn't just live a life of example, but they declared what is right and why it's right.

And he uses this. He used the word exhorts. You know, that's not a word about territory. You know, it simplifies a lot of things.

Basically, when you exhort somebody, you direct or guide or you teach. You give them instruction. Look over to Acts chapter 20. Acts chapter 20 and verse 20.

[28 : 44] Notice what Paul says, In other words, he says, I displayed it and I taught you.

Now, that involves a lot of things. That's a lot. You know, sometimes the things that get taught make people uncomfortable. They're like, well, people can do the same thing with scripture.

They can know what God says, but they said, if I just ignore it, it'll go away. It won't bother me. But as a dad, you know what your responsibility is? Your kids don't get to put their fingers in your ear.

You have a responsibility to exhort them.

To teach them the truth, to put forth those things. But he says also comfort. You know, he comforts them. He encourages. He consoles. He supports. He sustains.

Leaving and easing of pain. You know, part of teaching has come alongside. That's amazing. We usually learn more in the difficult times than we do in the good times. Have you ever noticed that?

[29 : 47] You usually learn more when life's rough than when it's easy. And how do we learn? Because those things come alongside and give encouragement and hope that help us to grab a hold and to understand the things of God.

You know, that's the reason Paul tells them very clearly in 2 Timothy. He charges Timothy in chapter 4. He says, preach the word, be instant, in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

You know, doctrine is what the Bible teaches, but it's also important. There's a movement today to erase doctrine. Say, preacher, what do you mean? Well, we just put doctrine on the back burner. You know, that stuff separates. I want you to understand doctrine defines. Anything that's defined is separated from what else there is. It becomes distinct.

God tells us there are doctrines, there's teachings, there's things that are unmovable. But people say, well, we can adjust it a little for the sake of unity.

[30 : 55] I want you to understand God never tells us to surrender doctrine for unity. We ought to come under subjection to doctrine. You know, that's a hard thing because that means we surrender ourselves under the truth.

You know, Paul, this is exactly what Paul was talking about. He says, I surrendered my rights and my will for the benefit of others. But oftentimes we look at it differently.

We say, well, what's in it for me? What's in it for me says for the benefit of anybody but myself.

Charges. You know, notice this word charge means to protect and to warn.

You know, sometimes we need warned about some things. We live in a world thinking you have warnings all over. Warning you not to drive down this street or that street. Or it's notorious.

I mean, I think a couple of years drive down and it kept causing all sorts of problems because they'd ignore the warning that said it was closed. Warnings serve a purpose. Warnings keep us out of trouble.

[31 : 55] It says there's something dangerous here. You know, you think you go to the zoo. Do they have warning signs at the zoo? Does you not put your finger and certain sign on there for the critter inside the cage?

Who's the warning for? People outside the cage that says, hey, we're not responsible for what happens. We see here he's to charge. 2 Peter chapter 3 in verse 17 says, You know what?

We need to stick to the word of God. Because there's many false and taught things contrary to the word of God. They may sound good. They may even operate good for a little while.

But you know, pretty soon the motive shows up. It's not a pure motive because notice there ought to be a demonstration of truth. Because he says we've done these things.

We need to be a demonstration of truth that ye should be worthy. Now I want you to understand, Paul says we do these are just not about us doing our responsibility. But the objective is to lovingly that ye might walk worthy.

[33 : 10] That you would walk worthy of God. Now notice there, he says not walk worthy of Paul. He says because even though he says I've set the standard, I've set an example, I've told you the truth.

He says I'm not the measurement. He says God's the one that you ought to be worried about pleasing. Not what somebody else thinks. Not what somebody else promotes.

But what does God say? He said that we walk, ye should be worthy. The truth was to be demonstrated for them to follow. It was dead walk should follow in eternity.

Think about what the scripture tells us. Colossians chapter 2 and verse 6. It says as ye have therefore received Christ, walk ye in him. Let me put it simple for you.

If you're saved, your focus ought to be on your Savior. To what Christ would have for you. What he's laid out for you. What decision are we going to follow what God says about it or not? You know that's really often times where people get stuck.

[34 : 08] Because I find often times it's not a lack of information. It's a lack of am I going to follow what Christ said or not. People know how a Christian ought to behave. But expectation is merited.

Well if you believe the Bible, why aren't you doing this? You know why? Because it's not that you don't know, it's because you choose not to. Ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

In other words, if you say you're saved, there ought to be a difference in your life. And that difference ought to be to walk. To be encouraged to do those things. We find that Paul ties these things together.

Love and truth. Love is just the things that are done. The attitude, the spirit in which those things are done. But he says you can't do the truth. And you have to make a choice.

Am I going to follow the truth or not? You know that's the reality of children. As a parent, you can raise your kids. You can give them all the right. I think it's one of those things with Christ. He sometimes looks at us and says you have to make a choice.

[35 : 06] What are you going to follow? If you've called upon me as Savior, are you going to follow me? Are you going to follow yourself or something else? If you say that you're Christ, why don't you walk to be made?

And I want you to take a moment to consider that in your life. Where's that intersection of love and truth in your life when it comes to the truth of what God said? Are you willing to say, Lord, what you have established is greater than me?

That I ought to walk as you walked. That my life's focus ought to be upon you. Not upon myself.

That the decisions I make, the things I surrender to, surrender to the things that God would have for us.