

Jason Holt Preaching

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. I'd like to invite you this evening to open the Word of God to the book of 1 Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians chapter number 2. And my commitment to sequential expository preaching. I'm going to pick up where we left off in September. In 2011 we saw the first five verses of chapter 1.

And then back in September we finished up chapter number 1. And here we're going to jump in chapter number 2 tonight. Praise the Lord for it. I don't know.

You know a lot of times people say kind things about the ministry in Chile. And I try to follow the example that we find in the Word of God. Where you just find a good man of God that can train you and just do everything he says to do.

As long as it goes along with the Bible. And so Pastor Gardner has written about it expensively lately. And I think it's a good thing to follow. Amen? Amen. I was encouraged to see how Eric got kicked out of the singing group tonight.

[1 : 04] Right at the last minute of the song. I want to use him though in the message. Because I don't want him to feel left out. So we'll have him in a minute. It was interesting to know how a tribe in Africa has written a proverb about Robert.

No? Wasn't that? I was thinking about the village and the elephant or something like that. I don't know. Alright. 1 Thessalonians chapter number... In chapter number 1, to bring you back up to speed because it's been a while.

In verse number 7, it says, Look what it says in verse number 9.

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you and how we turned or how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

So here we find a group of people that were idol worshipers. And in a short period of time, these pagans turned into preachers. And it says that the word of God sounded out from them and their church was an exemplary church.

[2 : 20] In verse number 7, they were in samples or examples to all that believed in this larger area. And it's so interesting for me as a church planter on the field to know how can we take people from being pagans to being preachers.

How can we have a church planted with first generation Christians principally and help them to grow to be an exemplary church that's making an impact on their community, on their region, and even around the world.

That's what missions is all about. That's what the goer-sender coalition is all about. Going to other parts of the world and starting churches like this church that can continue to reach their neighborhood and other parts of the community.

Well, in chapter number 2, we find here Paul's heart expressed to these people about what he feels and what is going on inside of him.

And not just Paul, but if we go back to the beginning of this book, it's actually Paul, Silas, and Timothy that are writing this letter. And so let's just for a little while tonight take a moment to look inside of Paul's heart.

[3 : 28] If we can hook up a scanner and try to get inside of Paul's heart. Eric, he can represent Paul tonight. Come on up. They said in the Bible that Paul was not the most attractive fellow.

And so we know that Eric, you know, he looks kind of like Mark Coffey. So before it's over, I'm going to try to get everybody. So great. I love you, brother. And so here we have Paul. Paul is a great man to God.

It's what matters what's on the inside, not the outside, because the message is about Paul's heart, right? So just imagine tonight that we were able, if you were to lay down right here, that'd be fantastic.

I'm not sure whose Bible that says Trent. I guess he doesn't use it. All right. Great. All right. If we could just get maybe the sword off the back wall, not literally, but we're going to open up his heart tonight.

And we're going to take a look on the inside to see what's going on in Paul's heart. What's going on in Paul's heart. All right. So he's going to be comfortable. Have a seat there, brother.

[4 : 24] We're about to open you up. You can't be sitting up while we're trying to cut you open. Verse number one of chapter number two. For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you that it was not in vain.

But even after that, we had suffered before and were shamefully entreated. As you know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

Notice the word there, the gospel of God. You'll notice gospel repeated here several times. Verse number three. For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak. Not as pleasing men, but God would trieth our hearts.

For neither at any time use we flattering words, as you know, nor cloak of covetousness. God is witness. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ.

[5 : 28] But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth 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.

Let's pray. Father, we love you and thank you for the opportunity to be here tonight. I pray that you would speak to our hearts through your word. May your Holy Spirit change us and challenge us to obey you and follow the example that we find here of Paul and his love toward these people and his commitment toward them.

And no doubt through his dedication and your work through him, this group of pagan people grew in the faith and became a church that was strong, that exemplified all the things that we need in a local church.

And I pray that we can learn from it. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, the first thing we see here, if we go over to Paul, and man, what are you doing? I give him one simple instruction.

Lay there. And I've had to repeat it three times. All right. So let's just imagine we have a sword tonight or a knife tonight. We were able to go in there and open up the way they did in the old days and crank the ribs open.

[6 : 43] And, you know, check out the heart of Paul. Here's Paul. He's laying here before us. And we're going to see what makes Paul tick. What is inside of his heart?

What is going on inside of him as he's out preaching the gospel, going through suffering and trial and complications after complication. But he's doing such a great job for the Lord.

And as goers and senders, wouldn't it be awesome to understand what's going on inside Paul's heart? To grow in that way and pray in that way and strive to have that same heart toward God and toward his word and toward his work.

Wouldn't that be a great thing for us? And we see here in Paul as he's expressing these things in chapter 1, verse number 5, the Bible says, For our gospel, there again it's repeated, For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance, as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

You know how we were when we were with you. In chapter 2, verse 1, he says again that they know how he was when he entered into them and the message of the gospel that was preached.

[7 : 57] The first thing that we find, if we were able to go into Paul's heart as he expresses that here in this passage, is there's a confidence in the word of God.

There's a confidence in the word of God. And that is so important. Sometimes we might think, well, that's a given. That's obvious. But you know, if we have a true confidence in God's word, then it will express itself in everything that we do.

We will be Bible-led and Bible-driven and everything will be about the Bible, because the Bible, teaching the Bible, preaching the Bible with kids, with teenagers, with adults, no matter where it is or how it is, preaching the gospel and preaching the word of God.

Look what the Bible says in verse 1. For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance into you that it was not in vain. It was not empty. It was not useless.

There was something important that happened because we went in unto you. Look in verse 2. But even after that, we had suffered before and were shamefully entreated or shamefully treated, as you know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak what?

[9 : 10] To speak unto you. Help me out. The gospel of who? Of God. So, there's confidence in God's word. If you go down to the side here in his heart, there's confidence in the word of God.

And he spoke boldly, not because he had a bold personality or not because he just liked to kind of go in like a bull in a, or maybe an elephant in an Indian village or a bull in a china shop or whatever metaphor you want to use.

No, the Bible says here that he was bold in who? Check it out now. Bold in our God. I might be pointing at the Bible. Everyone's looking over my head. Then I remember it's on the screen behind me, right?

All right, good. It says there that he was, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God. You know, if you go inside Paul's heart, you're going to find someone that was bold for God and bold in God.

And he spoke the message of the gospel with boldness. That was something we find in Paul's heart. And it was because of the confidence he had in God's word.

[10 : 15] He knew that the Bible, that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Let's continue looking here in this passage to see if that's really what it's talking about. Verse number three. For our exhortation or our preaching was not of deceit nor of uncleanness nor in guile.

We didn't teach you things that weren't in the word of God or things that were untrue. Verse number four. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, so even or even so we speak.

Not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. Hey, there's confidence in God's word. There's confidence that God's word should be spoken boldly. There's confidence that we're not trying to please men or speak about things that are popular, but we're just trying to say what God says and preach the word of God.

You know, as goers and senders, we need to be ever more growing in our commitment to the word of God. Let's put it in practical terms. If we had the opportunity to sit down with someone and discuss with someone a problem that they're going through or a difficulty they're going through, or maybe as a goer or a sender that's hitting reply to an email and we want to say something encouraging, wouldn't it be great if we're over coffee or wouldn't it be great even over email that we could encourage each other in the Lord through the word of God, through principles from the Bible?

We need to be rooted and grounded in the word of God. Amen? Amen. And our kids' ministries and teen ministries and activities with young couples and adults and whoever it might be, all should be centered around God's word and the teaching and preaching of God's word.

[11 : 59] So here we find Paul that is expressing time after time what his ministry was like as he went there to these people, what was in his heart. Look what the Bible says in verse number five.

For neither at any time used we flattering words. We weren't trying to butter you up, as you know, nor cloak of covetousness. We weren't trying to get in your wallet. God is our witness. He knows we weren't trying to get on your good side or get your money.

That wasn't what our desire was that was being there with you. Look in verse six. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ.

But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children. So here Paul says, when we preach the message unto you, we preach with boldness. In my heart, if you could see, there's a desire to preach the word with boldness in God.

There's a desire not to just make friends or not just to please you, but there's a desire to preach the word of God and preach it correctly and clearly.

[13 : 03] And here we find Paul talking about this. Now, remember, this group of pagans turned into be preachers. And sometimes we have the desire to see those kinds of things happen in our church or to see those kinds of things happen in Chile.

And sometimes we might sit around and think, all right, how many ideas can we come up with? And let's be creative and let's think outside of the box. But we don't need to think necessarily out of the box. We need to just think in the book.

Amen. And be biblical in our ministry and in the things that we do and have a confidence in God's word. Look what the Bible says here in verse number eight in the passage.

It says, 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 ye 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.

[14 : 05] Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holy and justly and unblamely we behave ourselves among you that believe. Look in verse number 11. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his child.

Verse number 12. That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. Verse number 13. For this cause also think we, God, without ceasing, because when ye receive the word of God.

Now what was preached over and over and over? The gospel of God, the word of God. And thankfully, you received it. Look what the Bible says. Which ye heard of us, you received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which, help me out now, what's it say there?

Which effectually worketh also in you that believe. Paul had a confidence in God's word. This message that we're preaching, if we could go in and just kind of dive in, there's not a whole lot to dive in, but if we could dive in here and see what's going on inside the heart here of our brother, we would find that he trusted that what could change that pagan heart was not his ability, was not his talent, was not his words, was not his culture, was not his experience, was not anything else but the word of God.

And that same message works for our family, it works for our friends, works on the job, works at school, works in the neighborhood, it'll work in Alfreda, it works in Santiago, Chile, it works in China, it works anywhere around the world.

[15 : 43] We preach and teach God's word. And as goers and senders, we must be reminded of that and remember that and put those things into practice. The second thing we see, alright, first thing we find inside of his heart, there's a confidence in God's word.

The second thing we see is an abundance of love. An abundance of love. Now when you think of Paul preaching, I don't know, maybe just because I grew up the way I grew up, but when I think of like Paul preaching or somebody like that, I think of someone that has like a two by four in his hand and he's like, you know, you do what's right or I'm going to knock your teeth out, you know?

Does any of you have those kinds of thoughts when you think about Paul? Alright, there's five or ten people are shaking their head, yes, no one raises their hand. I've got to learn American culture here. It's like, alright, move your head.

Mark Coffey's back there telling me no, but he's been doing this the whole time I'm preaching. I don't know what his problem is. Okay, alright, back here in the passage, look what the Bible says. Verse number seven.

But we were gentle among you. They went from pagans to preachers. Paul's attitude toward them was to preach the Bible. But we were gentle among you.

[16 : 50] Even as a nurse cherisheth her children. Someone that is nursing. A nursing mother that loves their baby and cherishes her baby.

Paul says, if you want to see what's inside of my heart, I'm like a mama that has a baby that's feeding that baby and close to that baby and is loving that baby and protecting that baby.

When I think of you, I think of you like that baby that's just so precious and so important and I love so much and I couldn't imagine how he loved the second child as much as that first one and the second one comes and we're just like, wow, that my love capacity has doubled and we would give our life in a heartbeat for that child.

Paul says, when I think of you, pagan, that now is a Christian, you turn from your idols, you're following the Lord, I'm preaching the word to you, but I love you, I love you. And as goers and senders, we can't just be all about the book and be studious and forget the relational side of the gospel ministry.

It's the relationship of love one to another. Look what the Bible says in verse number 8. If we skip down there. 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.

[18 : 16] Look at the last two verses of this chapter. For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ that is coming? For ye are our glory and joy.

All right, so Paul's here. Why don't you hop up here, Paul. All right, he's a good looking guy. I appreciate his help. He's already got his chest healed up there. He's almost a doctor, so he knows all about this kind of stuff. Good. So Paul's, as he's writing these people, he says, I love you like a mother loves her baby.

A little further down, it talks about like a father that loves, a father that counsels his children. He has a mother's love, a father's love. He has this desire to see them, and he says, you all are my joy.

You're my glory. When I remember what God's done in your life through his word, and I was just the mouthpiece that was placed there by him to do that, you guys fill me with joy, just like our kids do, those that have children or grandchildren.

Children, that's the way we should love those new believers and those Christians that are following the Lord, just like we do our kids. Thank you, buddy.

[19 : 28] You have a seat. All right, here's some conclusions, some things we can put into practice. We need to love people. Amen? There's a mindset. Maybe it's everywhere, but there's a mindset, especially in our American culture, that our family, we love, and we protect, and we even keep a distance from others because the way I treat my family is unique, and no one can ever be treated like family because family is special, and others, we keep a bit of a distance.

But the Bible, Paul wasn't that way. These sons in the faith were sons. You all, we all need to love people. Go out and adopt five or ten and love them with all your heart like they were your kids.

Amen? You might say, well, I don't know who to love. The person sitting in the pew beside you, the person that's sitting behind you, the person that's coming on Sundays, but they're not real strong yet, the people that are overseas that have gone out, we can adopt them and be family members and love them and help them.

Amen? And we can have hope that God can use some of the ones that are young people and not so young people running around the church that we think, wow, they're either still pagans or they're not very far from being pagans, and they're not really, you know, I'm not sure how interested they are.

They could be the future ones that are up here giving video updates about how God's changed their lives and is using them now to change others. So what we have in Chile, all the pastors that are there were all pagans not too long ago, but you know the truth is all the missionaries that have been up here tonight, we were all pagans that were saved by God's grace, and he's doing the same thing here, doing the same thing there.

[21 : 05] So let's be committed to the Word, and let's have an abundance of love, that extreme radical love that biblically speaking really shouldn't be that radical or extreme, it should be normal.

Amen? Love others. Adopt others. Have a bunch of people that we love like our kids, like a mama, like a daddy. That's the way we need to love each other. Let's pray together as the pastor comes forward to close.

Father, I thank you for the opportunity to be here and to look into Paul's heart as he expresses his commitment to the Gospel, commitment to the Word, confidence in the Word that will change lives, and the love that he has towards others.

And no doubt many of us tonight are committed to the Word, and it's so easy to relax a bit on that commitment toward others and love toward others. Encourage us through your Word to live that way, day in and day out, even when it's difficult.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.