

The Counter-Cultural Model of Christian Leadership

I Thessalonians 2:1-16 / October 22, 2022

Background to I Thessalonians 2

1. Jews Attempt to Attack Paul and Silas after numerous people turn from idols to serve Jesus

But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. (Acts 17:4-5, ESV)

2. Jews Attack Jason; Demand Security to Silence Paul and Silas

And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. (Acts 17:6-9, ESV)

3. Paul and Silas are forced to flee by night to Berea

The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. (Acts 17: 10, ESV)

4. Jews again attempt to attack Paul and Silas in Berea

But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. (Acts 17:13, ESV)

5. Paul Flees to Athens alone; Silas and Timothy remain in Thessalonica

Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. 15 Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed. (Acts 17:14-15, ESV)

6. Paul provoked by the idol worship in Athens

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. (Acts 17:16, ESV)

7. Paul leaves Athens after only a few conversions in Athens and arrives in Corinth

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. (Acts 18:1, ESV)

8. Paul Is protected from attacks by God in Corinth

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people." (Acts 18:9-10, ESV)

9. Paul remains in Corinth for 18 months; he writes the two letters to Thessalonica

And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. (Acts 18:11, ESV)

10. Paul and Silas leave for Ephesus, avoiding Thessalonica

After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. (Acts 18:18-19, ESV)

Theme: *Paul's time in Thessalonica was not without purpose because he boldly preached Jesus in the midst of suffering as a Manager, a Mother, a Father, and a Prophet.*

Paul's time in Thessalonica was not without purpose

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not** in vain.

Because Paul boldly presented Jesus in spite of suffering as a

But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.

Faithful Manager, (2:3-4)

For our appeal

1. does not spring from **error** or
2. **impurity** or
3. any attempt to **deceive**,
4. but just as we have been approved by God
5. to be entrusted with the **gospel**,
6. so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

Gentle Mother, (2:5-8)

1. For we never came with words of **flattery**, as you know,
2. nor with a pretext for **greed**—God is witness.
3. Nor did we **seek glory** from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.
4. But we were **gentle** among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.
5. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

Encouraging Father, (2:9-12)

1. For you remember, brothers, our **labor and toil**: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.
2. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our **conduct** toward you believers.
3. For you know how, like a father with his children, we **exhorted** each one of you and
4. **encouraged** you and
5. **charged** you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Suffering Prophet. (2:13-16)

1. And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you **received** the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.
2. For you, brothers, became **imitators** of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea.
3. For you **suffered** the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and **oppose** all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But **wrath** has come upon them at last.

Successful Ministry: Ordination Message

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. (2:1)

Challenge 1: Compromise the gospel to avoid opposition and suffering.

But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, (2:2-3)

A purposeful ministry will reflect boldness in talking about Jesus regardless of the personal cost.

Challenge 2: Please others and yourself.

but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. (2:4-6)

A purposeful ministry will seek to please God only, not your supporters, your family, or even yourself.

Challenge 3: Demand respect and submission from the people because you are the “leader”.

But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. 8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (2:7-8)

A purposeful ministry will affectionately display the gentleness of a nursing mother towards her newborn.

Challenge 4: Live a life of ease and laziness since you feel entitled as a leader.

For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. (2:9-10)

A purposeful ministry will demonstrate a hard work ethic, not an expectation of entitlement.

Challenge 5: Fear confronting people’s sins and their need for Jesus.

For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (2:11-12)

A purposeful ministry will lovingly confront people as a father disciplines his children, not as an enabling dysfunctional parent.

Challenge 6: Publicly criticize and degrade the people and their culture.

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last! (2:13-16)

A purposeful ministry gives thanks to the people for their works of faith, not your works as a skilled “leader”.

Challenge 7: Measure your success by the standard of programming and activities.

But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy. (2:17-20)

A purposeful ministry measures the size of the joy of the people, not the size of the programs, the financial support, or the facilities.