

Thessalonians Bible Study
Fall 2022
Lesson 2 - 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16
(week of September 18)

Verse to remember - 1 Thessalonians 2:12

“Lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.”

Gathering

Opening Prayer - We give thanks, O God of sacred stories, for the witness of holy scripture. Through it, you nurture our imaginations, touch our feelings, increase our awareness, and challenge our assumptions. Bless we pray, our hearing of your word this day. Speak to each of us; speak to all of us; and grant that by the power of your Spirit, we may be hearers and doers of your word. Amen. (From *Touch Holiness*, eds. Duck and Tirabassi.)

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16.

1. What accusations, real or imagined, is Paul defending himself against (2:3-6, 10)? How does he defend himself?

2. Think back over the Christian mentors and leaders who had (or still have) a formative impact on you. What specific things did you observe in them that built your trust and demonstrated their integrity?

3. Paul writes that he and his traveling companions had been “shamefully mistreated at Philippi” (2:2). What happened to them? See Acts 16:11-40.

4. Despite shameful mistreatment and in the face of opposition, Paul had courage to proclaim the gospel to the Thessalonians. What stops you from sharing the gospel? What gives you courage?

5. Paul said that he was “approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel” (2:4). Where did his confidence come from? See 2 Corinthians 3:4-6. What does this say about your ability to share your faith?

In 2:7, Paul writes that, “we were *gentle* [other ancient authorities read: *infants*] among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children.” The difference between “gentle” and “infants” is one letter (*epioi* and *nepioi*, respectively). Oddly, it is often the more difficult reading that is the more original one, because a scribe was more likely to change something to make more sense, not less sense!

6. Which seems like the more difficult reading to you - “we were gentle among you” or “we were infants among you?” Reflect on the impression your preferred reading gives you of Paul’s manner of leadership and evangelizing.

7. In 2:7 Paul compared himself to a mother. In 2:11 Paul compares himself to a father. What impression do these combined images give you of Paul’s style of church leadership?

8. What does it mean to you to “lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory?” (2:12) What does it mean for you this week?

9. 2:14-16 and Acts 16 show that Paul suffered his worst hurts from people close or similar to him, as did the Thessalonians. How do you see this at work today? In your own experience? (Please note - and discuss if needed - the anti-Semitic “feel” of these verses named in the sermon.)

10. Questions for personal application.
What truth does this passage teach you?

What is God saying to you in this passage?

What difference does it make in your life?

How will you respond in obedience?

Closing prayer

