

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Second Coming Letters of Paul – Part 5

First Thessalonians

I. Exposition of Chapter Two (Continued).

A. Verse 9 – “For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.”

1. “...our labor and toil, for laboring night and day...” – The word “labor” means; “intense labour united with trouble and toil.”¹ The word “toil” here means; “hard work, implying unusual exertion of energy and effort”² The Nelson Study Bible asserts:

“Paul’s affection for the Thessalonians was demonstrated by his labor. As in 1:3, this word indicates strenuous work that produces weariness and fatigue. Paul made tents to provide for his financial needs, working early and late, in order that he might not be a burden to his converts. Paul’s actions showed that his ministry was motivated by an unselfish desire to promote the well-being of others rather than to advance his own needs.”³

2. From other writings of Paul we know that he thought it was legitimate for ministers of the Gospel to be recompensed for their ministry but Paul, in at least some instances, chose not to be. (cf. I Corinthians 9:3–14; II Corinthians 11:7–11.) This seems to be Paul’s way of refuting any of his opponents who might say that he was only trying to get money out of the Thessalonians.

B. Verses 10-12 – “You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

1. Verse 10 – “You are witnesses, and God also...” – Paul spoke confidently that, not only they, but God also was a witness of their motives. Paul goes on and states three characteristics of their behavior among the Thessalonians – “...how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved...”
 - a. “devoutly” – “pertaining to being holy in the sense of superior moral qualities.”⁴
 - b. “justly” – “upright”; “proper.”⁵
 - c. “blamelessly” – “without fault or blame”⁶

“The first term, *holy*, points to the character involved in being set apart for God, and the second, *righteous*, to conformity to a norm; for biblical writers that norm is the law of God. The third, *blameless*, means without cause for reproach. The combination makes an impressive witness to Paul’s certainty that no accusation could fairly be levelled at the conduct of the little band of evangelists. And the fact that he so confidently appeals to the Thessalonians as witnesses shows that he was right.”⁷

2. Verse 11 – “as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,” – Paul now mentions three things they did which were given as “...a father does his own children.” – This again, shows Paul’s deep love for these believers. It’s worth noting that in verse 7, he uses the metaphor of “...a nursing mother” who cherishes her children and here, he uses the metaphor of a father. The comparison seems to be that the “motherly” side is tender and caring and the “fatherly” side is training and advice.

“Having likened the conduct of the missionaries to the loving, unselfish care of a nursing mother (v. 7), Paul also compared their behavior to that of a father. Here the implication is that they trained and instructed the Thessalonians as a responsible father disciplines his children. The word *tekna*, translated children, emphasizes the believers’ immaturity as well as the apostles’ affection.”⁸

¹Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House., 1977)

²Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 514.

³*Nelson Study Bible*, Earl D. Radmacher, Gen.ed. (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1997), 1896.

⁴Louw and Nida, 744.

⁵Thayer.

⁶Louw and Nida, 776.

⁷Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Volume 13: 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984.)

⁸Thomas L. Constable, “1 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 695.

a. The Content of their Instruction:

- 1) **“exhorted” – “to cause someone to be encouraged”⁹**
- 2) **“comforted” – In the New Testament, this exact word is used especially for comforting those in bereavement (John 11:19) and those who were “faint-hearted” (I Thessalonians 5:14).**
- 3) **“charged” - “to be emphatic in stating an opinion or desire—‘to insist’¹⁰ Other sources include the idea of “urging” and “challenging.”**

“And you know how affectionately we treated each one of you, like a loving father cares for his own children. We comforted and encouraged you and challenged you to adopt a lifestyle worthy of God, who invites you into his kingdom and glory.” – I Thessalonians 2:11-12 – The Passion Translation

3. Verse 12 – “that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

a. So, they encouraged, comforted and challenged the believers to **“...walk worthy of God...”**. The word **“walk”** means; **“to regulate one’s life”; “to conduct one’s self.”¹¹** So Paul is telling them to regulate or conduct their lives in a way that is worthy of God, or in a way that God would have them behave. Dr. Bob Utley writes:

“This metaphor refers to our continuing lifestyle, which must reflect our Master’s (cf. Eph. 4:1, 17; 5:2, 15). Notice at the end of v. 12 believers are called to share and thereby reflect God’s glory.”¹²

b. **“...who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” – The word “calls” means; “to call into one’s presence, send for a person; to summon.”¹³ We’ve been called:**

- 1) **“...according to His purpose...” - Romans 8:28**
- 2) **“...to be saints” - I Corinthians 1:2**
- 3) **“called...to holiness.” – I Thessalonians 4:7**
- 4) **“...out of darkness into His marvelous light” I Peter 2:9**
- 5) This passage: **“...into His own kingdom and glory.”**

c. What does the word **“kingdom”** mean?

- 1) **“an area or district ruled by a king”¹⁴**
- 2) It is made of two words **“king”** and **“domain”**, thus it is the **“king’s domain.”**
- 3) **“Sovereignty, royal power, dominion. The Kingdom of God is the sphere of God’s rule.”¹⁵**

“The New Testament teaches that the kingdom of God has both present (Matthew 13:38; Mark 1:15; 9:1) and future (James 2:5; Revelation 11:15) aspects.”¹⁶

d. **The Church and The Kingdom of God.**

- 1) The way into the Kingdom of God is to be born again. **John 3:1-5. See also Luke 17:21.**
- 2) Not every person will inherit the Kingdom of God. **Galatians 5:19-21; I Corinthians 6:9-11.**
- 3) When you enter the Kingdom of God, you are delivered from the powers of darkness. **Colossians 1:13.**
- 4) Jesus said He would build His church and give it the keys of the Kingdom. **Matthew 16:18-19.**
- 5) We are commanded seek first the Kingdom of God – **Matthew 6:33.**

**“Set your heart first on His kingdom and His goodness and all these things will come to you as a matter of course.”
Matthew 6:33 – J.B. Philips Translation.**

⁹Louw and Nida, 305.

¹⁰Ibid., 424.

¹¹Thayer.

¹²Robert James Utley, *Paul’s First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*, vol. Volume 11, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 1997), 90.

¹³*Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary*, William D. Mounce and Rick D. Bennett, Jr. (e-sword version 1993).

¹⁴Louw and Nida, 15.

¹⁵W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing) 624.

¹⁶*The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.) 843.