

To the Saints of God at Topeka, Kansas October 29, 2017

But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.

Part 2

1 Thessalonians 2:1-20

4 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, which trieth our hearts.



Paul says that he was allowed or rather *approved of God to be put in trust with the Gospel*. God appointed Paul, and us, His fiduciaries. A “fiduciary” is a term of art in the law. This is a big deal in the law and with God. A fiduciary is a person who holds a legal or ethical relationship of trust with one or more other parties (the Triune God in this case). Typically, a fiduciary prudently takes care of money or other asset for another person. One party, for example a corporate trust company or the trust department of a bank, acts in a fiduciary capacity to their client to hold funds for safekeeping or investment. A fiduciary duty, requires the highest standard of care at either equity or law. The fiduciary is expected to ALWAYS act with extreme loyalty to whom he/she owes the duty (the principal) and ALWAYS acts in the principal’s best interest. There must be no conflict of duty or interest between fiduciary and principal, and the fiduciary must not profit from

his/her position as a fiduciary. If you are a fiduciary you act in the principal's best interest – period. If you as a fiduciary act in your own interest or are careless in your duty, the penalty is severe – because it is a special relationship of trust.

Beloved, there is no higher calling than this! It was the good will and pleasure of God, that He from all eternity trusted, chose and appointed Paul and this faithful little group to do this work. God in His own time by His grace called them to it, and by His gifts qualified them for it, who otherwise were unworthy of it, and insufficient for it.

Matthew Henry - They were stewards, put in trust with the gospel: and it is required of a steward that he be faithful. The gospel which Paul preached was not his own, but the gospel of God. Preachers must diligently make use of what is entrusted with them, so as God hath allowed and commanded, knowing they shall be called to an account, when they must be no longer stewards. Their design was to please God and not men. God is a God of truth, and requires truth in the inward parts; and, if sincerity be wanting, all that we do cannot please God. The gospel of Christ is not accommodated to the vain fancies and lusts of men, to gratify their appetites and passions; but, on the contrary, it was designed for the mortifying of their corrupt affections, and delivering them from the power of fancy, that they might be brought under the power of faith. If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ, #Ga 1:10.

Gill - We are not men pleasers - to gain favor and affection, esteem, applause, and honor from them; to escape reproach and persecution, and obtain worldly advantages by dropping, concealing, or blending of truths to make them more agreeable to the taste of natural men.

Beloved, we refuse to be counted as those that do this. The annals of history are full of men pleasers, but not the servants of the Most High God. They would rather endure great affliction unto death, than to compromise and follow the commandments of men.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness.

Elder Sam did a sermon on the flatterer. Beware of the flatterer! (January 3, 2016, I recommend you review that good work.)

Job 32:22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.

Ps 5:9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

Ps 12:2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

Ps 12:3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:

Pr 2:16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

Pr 7:21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

Beloved, we know all too well, that flattering and covetous preachers inhabit this land like locusts, that do not act as faithful fiduciaries to God. They are always sayings what they think their audience wants to hear. Their goal is to gain the esteem and good will of men for filthy lucre's sake. They pander to their audience at every turn with their pensions hanging in the balance. They violate their position as a fiduciary to God. Showing that God did not send them, but they ran anyway.

Jer 23:21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

Jer 27:15 For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.

Jer 28:15 Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie.

Jer 29:9 For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD.

Paul refused to engage in flatteries. He did not aim to gain an interest in men's affections by glorying, and fawning over them. He did not flatter men in their sins. To the contrary, he used great plainness of speech. 2Co 3:12 *Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.* That is exactly what this generation of preachers and churchgoers do – they flatter each other in their uncleanness and gross sin. He did not flatter them with fluffy vague promises or indulge them in any evil work and so daub the matters with untempered mortar (Eze. 13).

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

Paul did not seek the honor, esteem, and popular applause of man. He did not seek the love of fame. He was a faithful fiduciary! Many of the preachers of this generation fall into the trap of their own pride and greed. "It's a trap!" In fact, Paul did the opposite. He preached doctrines which were reviled by men and not agreeable to them. As Christ bid the apostles to do, he received the hatred of all men and counted his life not dear unto him. He spoke not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but spoke and did everything that rendered him mean and despicable in the eyes of men so that they looked upon him as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.

Gill - But we were gentle among you (to these new, tender, novice souls in Christ) - Meek and humble, mild and moderate; not using severity, or carrying it in a haughty imperious manner; assuming power and dominion, lording it over God's heritage, and commanding persons to do homage and honour to them, and forcing themselves upon them, and obliging them to maintain them... They were harmless and modest, and disinterested; and sought not themselves neither honour nor wealth, but the real good of others, and were kind and tender, and affectionate to them.

Barnes: Instead of using authority, they used only the most kind and gentle methods to win [them over] and to promote peace and order. The word here rendered "nurse" may mean any one who nurses a child, whether a mother or another person. It seems here to refer to a mother, #1Th 2:11; and the idea is, that the apostle felt for them the affectionate solicitude which a mother does for the child at her breast. Beloved, there is no earthly

relationship that I know of that is more tender than a mother nursing her child. That is how Paul and Silas treated these new, tender Thessalonians.

Gill - "the children of her own self"; her own children, and so designs a nursing mother, one whose the children are, has bore them as well as nurses them, and therefore has the most tender concern for them; she lays them in her bosom, and hugs them in her arms, and so warms and cherishes them; gives them the breast, bears with their frowardness, condescends to do the meanest things for them; and that without any self-interest, from a pure parental affection for them: and such were the apostles to these Thessalonians; they were their spiritual parents, of whom they travailed in birth, till Christ was formed in them; they used them with the greatest kindness and tenderness; they fed them with the sincere milk of the word; they bore patiently all the slighting and ill treatment they met with; and condescended to men of low estates, and did them all the good offices they could, without any selfish views or sinister ends.

A nursing child can be quite burdensome and oppressive, but we put those things aside when we deal with them as with "natural affection" and love. Beloved this is the standard for how we must view and treat new members of the churches or those that are tender in faith and need much patience and oversight and that also includes how we should treat each and every one of our beloved fellow laborers. Beloved we must be careful to not mock, lose patience with or look down upon spiritual new-born babes for their inability to eat meat, when they need milk.

8 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.

Clearly, the sense here is, that Paul was so strongly attached to the Thessalonians that he writes that he was willing to lay down his own life for them.

JFB - As a nursing mother is ready to impart not only her milk to them, but her life for them, so he not only imparted gladly the spiritual milk of the word to them, but risked his own life for their spiritual nourishment, imitating Him who laid down His life for His friends, the greatest proof of love (#Joh 15:13).

Matthew Henry - He spared no pains therein. He was willing to run hazards, and venture his soul, or life, in preaching the gospel. He was willing to spend and be spent in the service

of men's souls; and, as those who give bread to the hungry from a charitable principle are said to impart their souls in what they give (#1Th 2:8-10), so did the apostles in giving forth the bread of life; so dear were these Thessalonians in particular to this apostle, and so great was his love to them.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

Paul says that he/they labored night and day – working constantly preaching and teaching them, disputing with the Jews and all such and probably supporting himself as a tent maker at the same time. They did what their hand found to do with their might (Eccl 9:10), that they would not be chargeable unto them or responsible unto them for slacking off. They gave the Thessalonians a 100% effort. They were all in – even unto exhaustion. “Labour and travail” means unto weariness.

10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: 11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children.

Paul says that he treated the Thessalonians as well as he knew how to do – holy and justly. And, he once again goes back to using the analogy of how a parent treats and views their own child. That is the standard we are to use not just in dealing with new babes of the body of Christ, but all members, all our brethren. We are to cultivate and encourage and nurture one another. That is how Christ deals with us and that is the standard.

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Barnes: *That you would live in such a manner as would honour God, who has chosen you to be his friends. A child "walks worthy of a parent" when he lives in such way as to reflect honour on that parent for the method in which he has trained him; when he so lives as to bring no disgrace on him, so as not to pain his heart by misconduct, or so as to give no occasion to any to speak reproachfully of him.*

2 Tim 2:3-6

3 *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

4 *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

5 *And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*

6 *The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.*

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

The Thessalonians had great faith in God, even under great affliction. They received His Word, and were not offended by it. They accepted it with much assurance and certainty, as infallible truth. They were obedient to it and adhered to it without any alteration, without adding to it or taking from it. They held it like we do, with the utmost respect, the greatest esteem and with Holy reverence. They accepted that it was never to be departed from.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

It was clear to Paul from his time in Thessalonica and Macedonia and from the reports that he no doubt received, that they were a suffering church. That they suffered from their countrymen just like the churches in Judaea suffered at the hands of the Jews. And, in case there is any question in anyone's mind who killed our Lord Jesus Christ – whether it was in fact the Roman's or not - Paul answers that question and forever proclaims that the sin of killing Christ rests primarily with the Jews that manipulated the Romans to torture and murder him.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. 18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and joy.

The thought is that this was a painful bereavement. It is like a parent losing their child. Paul would have rather stayed with the Thessalonians and nurtured them and been with them, but the circumstances were that he had to flee for his life to Berea, or endanger the very people that he loved. The intention, when they moved him to Berea, was that he would be able to return to Thessalonica shortly. But, that never happened because of the circumstances on the ground. He says that for a short time they are not in his presence, but not so in his heart, because they are always in his heart. And, that he greatly desired to see and be with them and look into their faces, but Satan hindered him.

The apostle recognized the hand of Satan in frustrating his attempt to do good, and preventing the accomplishment of his strong desire to see his Christian friends. Satan does all he can to hinder the preaching of the Gospel, the hearing of the word, the profession of true religion, and the saints coming together, and having spiritual conversation with each other. We are instructed to do that, and for good cause. When we are speaking and communing with each other, we have fresh reminders of our common goal and common love of Christ and His word and His purpose and the blessing He bestowed upon us in entrusting this ministry to us. So we are reminded of that important help to keep unity of the body of Christ.

Malachi 3:16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. 17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. 18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Ps 133:1 « A Song of degrees of David. » Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Heb 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Heb 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Ro 16:16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

1Co 16:20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

2Co 13:12 Greet one another with an holy kiss.

1Th 5:26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

It is not the “kiss” that is important, it is the feeling that you have when you see each one of God’s elect – your fellow laborers - that you desire their company and are delighted to see them. It is like a person coming out of a hot, terrible desert to a beautiful oasis of palms trees and fresh, bright running water – when you see a servant of God that you love right down to your toes. This is the love that Paul describes in 1 Thes. 2.

Satan is an enemy to Christ and His interest, and to the souls of men. However, Satan can do nothing but by divine permission, nor can he hinder the will of God, and the execution of that, though he often hinders the will of man, or man from doing his will; he hindered the apostle from doing what he willed and purposed, but he did not hinder the will of God, which was that Paul should be employed in other work elsewhere.

I love you all. Amen.