

March 16, 2014
1 Thessalonians 2. 7-8
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About the letter that is 1 Thessalonians

- Written by Paul to a church he planted in Thessalonica, Greece.
- Read about it in Acts 17.
- He wrote the letter from another Greek city, Corinth.
- He wrote because Timothy reported they were doing well, but were struggling in a couple areas of their faith.
- Paul was encouraged by what he heard about them, but there were issues. They had some pretty big questions and concerns.
- Questions about: When Jesus would come back, what happens to Christians when they die, why are we being persecuted?
- Paul was also concerned about moral living. He sees healthy sexuality as a primary concern in the formation of the first Christian communities.

How the Gospel spreads

- One of the great things about the letter is it shows us how the Gospel spreads.
- One of the lesser themes, it's probably described best as subversive, is Paul's depiction of how he and other Christians would share Jesus.
- The letter is full of language about modeling, and embodying and the message of Jesus to people.
- Paul didn't just tell people about Jesus, he showed people Jesus.

About 1 Thessalonians 2. 7-8

- Is one of the most clear and compact examples what genuine Christian living looks like.
- It's also some of the most tender and endearing bits of writing from Paul. Paul is tough and tender.
- It informs how we think about Paul, and therefore Christian leadership, and ultimately how we think about God.

What does Paul's example to the Thessalonians tell us about Christian living and service?

1. Christians live “amongst”

- Christians are to live embedded in life with others.
- As parts of our culture become increasingly individualistic Christians who choose to live “amongst” people will have an impact.
- People are dying for connection, and to be listened to.
- When Christians choose togetherness, we rebel against the darkness that aims to drive people into isolation and despair.
- Paul went to and lived amongst the Thessalonians, because Jesus came to and lived amongst us.

2. Christians stoop and serve amongst

- The language and imagery in verse 7 is extremely affectionate.
- In the past some have translated it, we were with you *“like a nurse among her children talking in baby language.”*
- The idea is Paul and his friends served and adapted to the people they lived amongst in modesty and humility.
- They did what they had to do, and helped like they needed to help so the people could hear and see the heart of God.
- By serving people this way, they were pointing to how Jesus’ served humanity.
- If you want to know what God’s like, watch a good mom. Paul is comfortable with using this imagery. God’s attributes and character is found in both sexes.

3. Christians give it all

- Paul and his friends don’t just download the Gospel. They didn’t drop of a scroll and roll out to the next city.
- Paul says here, “we gave you everything”.
- Tim Keller once wrote, *“Jesus didn’t tithe his blood.”*

- What does he mean by that? God is a giver, and when we truly get what he gives we're desperate to give to others.
- We're not just going to share a little, we'll share everything.
- Jesus' teaches this on the Sermon on the Mount with the examples of generous living (Matthew 5).
- As Paul says here, "even our very lives". That is a beautiful thing.

Discussion Questions

- What stands out in this passage to you? What about the surrounding words from Paul?
- Describe a time you saw someone exercise generosity.
- Describe a time you were generous.
- Why is generosity scary? Should it be?
- How have you, or others you know, lived generously in ways that haven't been onerous or legalistic?