

1 Thessalonians 2 1-6

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness, God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

Devotional

Paul's ministry among the Thessalonians was so fruitful that not only were people saved and a vibrant, reproducing church planted, but the church also grew and flourished even after Paul left. Paul and Silas had been brutalized in Philippi before coming to Thessalonica. They suffered physically when beaten and incarcerated. They were arrogantly mistreated with false accusations and illegally punished in spite of their Roman citizenship. Like their treatment in Philippi, Paul's team was falsely accused of civil treason in Thessalonica and suffered physical intimidation. Paul used three distinctly different words to affirm the truthfulness of his ministry, each expressing a contrast with what was characteristic of false teachers. He first asserted that "his message" was true and not erroneously false. His "manner of life" was pure, not sexually wicked. His "method of ministry" was authentic, not deceptive. It could be that some false teachers came into the church to discredit Paul's ministry. This would account for his emphasis in these verses on his divine appointment, approval, integrity and devotion to them. Paul used three disclaimers to affirm the purity of his motives for ministry: 1. He denied being a smooth talking preacher who tried to make favorable impressions in order to gain influence for selfish advantage. 2. He did not pretend to be poor and work night and day. 3. He did not use his honored position as an apostle to seek personal glory, only God's glory. Bible Footnotes