

1 Thessalonians 2:6-10

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Sunday Morning
March 22, 2009

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The Heartbeat of the Minister – Part 1

REVIEW

LAST WEEK we covered the first four verses of Chapter 2. We began our study by noting that Paul looked at this gathering of men and women with the deep understanding that they are blood-bought and from that understanding he pours out his heart in Chapter 2 in regards to

ministry. As he wrote to them, he made clear the inseparable and crucial connection between the integrity of the minister and the integrity of ministry that had so powerfully touched their lives.

Jim Elliot, the missionary martyr wrote in his journal, “In spiritual work, if nowhere else, the character of the worker decides the quality of his work. Shelley and Byron may be moral free-lancers and still write good poetry. Wagner may be lecherous and still produce fine music, but it cannot be so in any work for God. Paul could refer to his own character and manner of living for proof of what he was saying to the Thessalonians.”

In those first five verses of 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 2, we looked at the INTEGRITY of the MAN and the INTEGRITY of the MESSAGE.

I. INTEGRITY OF THE MAN

Paul began the explanation and defense of his own character and ministry with, “For you yourselves know...” ¹ *Thes 2:1*

In this explanation and defense of his own ministry we found invaluable instruction concerning the character of the man or woman in ministry.

II. INTEGRITY OF HIS MESSAGE

1 Thes 2:3 For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive,...

1.) There was the INTEGRITY of the message.

By virtue of its origins, the appeal - the message, proclaimed by the countless religious systems and philosophies of the day, had their origins in the wandering and wayward speculations and opinions of man’s wisdom, and even demonic deception.

We spent considerable time walking through Scripture after Scripture that declared unequivocally that the Gospel message springs from God. There are a lot of sincere people who are sincerely wrong. They aren’t saying what they say to you as a cloak for covetousness, but sadly, their just sincerely wrong. You see, the Christian has confidence in the message because it springs from God.



2.) There was the INTEGRITY of the message by virtue of the ones proclaiming it. The message was not defiled by the spiritual and moral character of Paul. Paul tells them that the message they heard was pure and that it came from a pure hearts.

3.) There was the INTEGRITY of the message by virtue of the WAY Paul delivered it.

1 Thes 2:3 For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive,...

The Greek word for “deceive” means to put bait on a hook or in a trap. Paul’s saying, “We didn’t come BAITING you.”

4.) There was the INTEGRITY of the message by virtue of their MOTIVES in preaching the message. Paul was motivated to preserve his personal INTEGRITY and the INTEGRITY of the message because he recognized his commission from God - he said we’ve been approved by God.

Paul was motivated to preserve his personal INTEGRITY and the INTEGRITY of the message because he recognized the tremendous TRUST that God had given to him - to be entrusted with the gospel.

Paul knew that the message he proclaimed did not ORIGINATE with him. It was God’s message and God had ENTRUSTED him to handle it as such.

WE CLOSED in verse 4 saying we speak not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. Paul was motivated to maintain the INTEGRITY of the message because he understood that he was speaking to please God, not man.

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There is a phrase in verse 4 that links us to the core of this morning’s study

1 Thessalonians 2:4to please God who tests our hearts

HEARTS - Throughout the Bible this term is used to refer to:

- The seat and center of human life.
- The very depths of inner life.
- The center of the personality.
- The place within man that controls the intellect, emotions, and will.

Proverbs 4:23 (KJV) Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Paul makes it clear that God EXAMINES – SEARCHES and TRIES the very core of who we are.

Jeremiah 11:20 But, O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously, who tests (same word as used in 1 Thes 2:4) the heart and the mind

Jeremiah 12:3 But you, O Lord, know me; you see me, and test (same word as used in 1 Thes 2:4) my heart toward you.

Paul makes it clear that God searches and tries the very core of who we are. Paul does not merely leave this as a truth or a doctrine to which we should ascribe, he makes it clear that he spoke and he served as a man conscious of the fact that - God examines the heart — the very origins of WHY we speak and serve and HOW we speak and serve.

Here in 1 Thessalonians 2:4 we find that Paul is very much like David in the Old Testament who was called

“the man after God’s own heart.”

We can look at David and say, “Lord I want to be so much like this man in all that you set forth in the best of men, and Lord that his life would also serve as a warning to me in those parts where he didn’t please God, but one thing above all God said about David was that he was a man after God’s own heart. We can paraphrase and say that the heart of David was moved by the things that move the heart of God and the heart of David longed for the things God’s heart longs for. And we see Paul and David much the same way. David said in Psalm 139:

Psalm 139:1 O Lord, you have searched (same word as used in 1 Thes 2:4) me and known me...

Psalm 139:23 Search (same word as 1 Thes 2:4) me, O God, and know my heart;

Paul said the same thing when he said I’m going to speak and serve as if you God are searching my heart.

The Bible teaches that there is coming a day that every believer must face. A day in which God’s examination of our hearts will be disclosed.

1 Cor. 4:5 So don’t make judgments about anyone ahead of time — before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.

God knows our motives. What an awesome and very practical truth. God examines every man’s heart.

Here is the bridge to our next section!

Paul has already set forth the integrity of the message he proclaimed to them. It springs from the One, True and Living God —Then he declares that the One True and Living God examines and knows the hearts of men and women.

In this next section in verse 5 we actually see God the Holy Spirit — who examines and knows the heart of men, and in particular the heart of Paul, — inspire Paul to write to the Thessalonians about what was secret within his heart about motives. God, who knows his heart, inspires Paul to show his heart.

We will see that within the heart of Paul was a zeal for the Glory of God and the very love of God for man.

First, Paul is going to show what is NOT in his heart.

1 Thessalonians 2:5 For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness.

This is a very emphatic and absolute statement! The word NEVER literally means *never at some time*.

Never comes from the Greek word, Outepote and breaks down to “never (oute) at some time (pote)”.

You can take all three weeks of Paul’s time in Thessalonica and he’s saying, “At no time did we come with words of flattery.” What does flattery have to do with Paul’s motive?

Flattery (Kolakeia) means *to persuade by use of insincere speech or exaggerated praise*. This was a well-known secular Greek term for a much despised practice that was common in ancient times. A few ancient figures that spoke of this are:

- Plato (350 years Before Christ - considered to be father of western philosophy)
- Plutarch (Roman historian 46-120 AD)
- Dio Chrysostom - A Greek orator, writer, philosopher and historian of the Roman Empire in the first century.

The Pillar New testament Commentary states that:

- Plato advised that one should shun any kind of flatterer,
- Plutarch stated that a flatterer corrupts the morals of the young and only pretends to be a friend. Plutarch was so concerned about flatterers that he wrote a whole treatise about how to distinguish between them and true friends.
- Dio Chrysostom warned that flattery was a characteristic of charlatans and sophists (people peddling their trades).

Paul says at no time did we come to you with words neither of flattery NOR with a *pretext* for greed – God is witness.

The word *Pretext* comes from the Greek word *Prophasis*. In the NT it is used only in a bad sense and with the idea of an ulterior motive.

Our English word *Pretext* comes from the Latin word- *Prætextum* -- Prae, meaning *before* and texere meaning, *weave*. It was used to describe *something woven in front of something, in order to conceal, deceive or to screen*. Our English word is used in relationship to an ALLEGED purpose or motive -- or CREATING AN APPEARANCE in order to cloak the real intentions.

As the Holy Spirit unveils the heart of Paul we see what was ABSENT from his heart. Paul is telling them what was NOT in his heart!

He is stating that which DID NOT move them – In this we see what we should never want to find in our hearts or in this ministry.

SADLY these are the very things that are:

- The heartbeat of so many church-goers today.
- At the ROOT of so many of the problems and heartaches within the Church (the body of Christ around the world) and the church (the local church organization).

People use ministry of all sorts as a pretext to:

- Promote themselves.
- Meet their own needs and wants whether financial or emotional.

Many men, women, and ministries have the problem of hidden agendas in their heart.

Adam Clarke, an old commentator who is now with the Lord said this, “Hear this, ye that preach the Gospel! Can ye call God to witness that in preaching it ye have no end in view by your ministry but his glory in the salvation of souls? Or do ye enter into the priesthood for a morsel of bread, or for what is ominously and impiously called a living, a benefice? Is God witness that, in all these things, ye have no cloak of covetousness? . . . But woe to that man who enters into the labour for the sake of the hire! He knows not Christ; and how can he preach him?”

We are going to see that Paul, Silas and Timothy had something else that moved them from the core of their being!

1 Thessalonians 2:6 Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others,

Seek from the Greek word, zeteo means, *a desire to have or a desire to experience something; man's effort to obtain something.*

Glory from the Greek word, doxa means *the condition of being bright or shining.*

In this context it can refer to a desire to be seen – in the opinion of man -- as shining or great like Star status.

In John 5:44, Jesus explains why the Jewish people of his day refused to accept Him:

John 5:44 How can you believe, when you receive glory (doxa) from one another and do not seek (zeteo) the glory (doxa) that comes from the only God?

They were more interested in gaining the approval of men than God's approval. There is a glory that believers can and should rightly seek. It is NOT a glory that originates with the favorable opinion of a man – which is fleeting and changing.

A desire for the favorable opinion of man did not beat in the heart of Paul. In fact, at the end of this chapter Paul tells us the one thing would be his glory:

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20For you are our glory and joy.

THAT was the very heartbeat of Paul and his labors! Paul's glory was to see His great God and Savior glorified in the saving of souls! THAT was the very heartbeat of God the Son as well.

Luke 5:24-25 24...I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home." 25And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. 26And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."

Matt. 15:30-31 30And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, 31so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

Luke 7:14-16 (From the funeral for the only son of a widow of Nain) 14Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man I say to you, arise." 15And the dead man sat up and began to speak and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!"

Luke 13:11-13

11And there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. 12When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability." 13And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.

John 13:31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

John 14:13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son

John 15:8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

John 17:4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

In closing - GOD, who EXAMINES and KNOWS the hearts of men and women has graciously given to us a peek into the heart of Paul. We have seen that for which his heart did NOT beat. We have seen that at the very core of Paul there was ONE overriding desire, ONE thing for which his heartbeat:

The GLORY of God!

WHERE does this come from?

It does not spring from a mere acknowledgement of or agreement with Biblical truth - though it must always -- and will always be in agreement with the Scriptures. It can ONLY come from a life *transformed* by the indwelling of life and power of Jesus.

Glorifying God is not what most Christians view as the main point of their lives. If you think of ministries as a whole...what's at the core of the ministry or the heartbeat of the Christian, most of the time it's not going to be to see that God the Father is glorified. The only way this can even begin to be in our hearts is by having the very life of Jesus within us.

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Notice the inextricable relationship between what Paul lived for and what his heart beat for and the reality of Christ living in him. He said I can't live this life to the glory of God. Paul says that "I know that in my flesh there's no good thing that dwells in me" so how do we find Paul's heart beating for and longing for God to be glorified in and through his life? He says because "it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

THIS is what separates Christianity from false religion! It is the very life of Christ in us. It is the very heart of Jesus beginning to beat in us! It is the life of a forgiven sinner lived in vital union with Jesus who IS our life!

Now as we look at our life and call ourselves Christians we have to ask ourselves, "Is this me?"

John 15:5 - I am the vine and you are the branches...apart from Me you can do nothing!

Col 3:4 - When Christ who IS your life appears...

Is Jesus your life? That's Christianity.

When you are born again you became a participant in the life of Christ! "Born again" is not cliché. It is reality. Its being born a second time through faith in Jesus; it's having your sins forgiven and being made a new creature. Old things pass away and all things are made new.

In Philippians Paul refers to it as, "a work that is begun." God is at work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. From the point of conversion forward, we are daily being conformed to the image of Jesus who LIVED for the glory of God the father.

The degree to which we yield our hearts and lives to Jesus - the degree to which we abide in Him - is the degree to which we find our hearts beating for the Glory of God!

WHAT is it that your heart beats for? Is it beating for the glory of man?

WHAT is that Metro's heart collectively beats for? The answer is found in your agenda and ours!

What is YOUR agenda? For some people church is a pretext for business connections, to have emotional needs met, or find a mate.

What is OUR agenda? Metro's agenda should be: The Glory of God.

Why do we want to see people saved? Surely we want to see people saved from Hell and into a living, abundant relationship with Jesus, but more than that we should desire to see people saved to glorify God the Father who sent his Son to save us.

There was only ONE agenda for Jesus: "Father I have glorified you in everything I've done." There was ONE agenda for Paul. There is only ONE agenda for the Church!

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

May God help us to search our hearts. May He be probing us, testing our hearts so we can know, “Is my agenda, His agenda? Does my heart look like the heart of Jesus? Is the heart of Jesus beating in my life? And to the degree that it is, praise the Lord!

None of us should leave condemned this morning. We should just leave challenged knowing that God so cares for us that he says, “Let me just search things out.”

