

## The Why of the What

### 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6

Notice how much he talks about himself!

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

This COULD be summarized this way: **PAUL DESCRIBES HIS GOSPEL WORK**

#### HOW We Got The Gospel Out

- a) vs. 2 we had boldness in our God
- b) vs. 3 our appeal did not spring from error
- c) vs. 3 our appeal did not spring from impurity
- d) vs. 5 our appeal did not spring from flattery

#### WHY We Got The Gospel Out

- a) vs. 3 we did not attempt to deceive
- b) vs. 4 we did not attempt to please man
- c) vs. 4 we did attempt to please God
- d) vs. 5 our appeal did not spring from greed
- e) vs. 6 we did not seek glory from people

(Which should make us wonder if we are thinking of this in the right way!)

Sure! What...? Paul's view of his own ministry

AND SO: WHY...? The common idea: "Paul is writing to defend himself, and his colleagues

e.g. **THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE COMMENTARY III. Vindication Before The Thessalonians (2:1-3:13)**

BUT I think we should see that THAT isn't really his point at all.

AND we all know people, who talk about themselves, who star in all their own stories ...Pastors and other speakers can be like this!

Here's a better way of understanding these verses.

**SUMMARY of Chapter 1:** *The church of the Thessalonians* became **an example to all the churches** (1:7),

which they did by becoming **imitators of Paul, etc., and of the Lord** (1:6)

**specifically** in their **reception of the Word** and their **communication of it.** (1:6,8)

In other words, "**a church that works**" (A functional church) is effectively engaged in "getting the gospel out."

~~PAUL DESCRIBES HIS GOSPEL WORK~~ **PAUL DESCRIBES A FUNCTIONAL CHURCH**

**I. WHAT A CHURCH DOES:** (if it is a *church that works*)

a. It "**sounds forth**" the word of the Lord (1:8) ("*pillar and buttress of the truth*" [1

Tim.3:15] )  
b. It **lives out its "faith in God"** (1:8) ("*an example to all the believers...*" [ 1 Thes.1:7] )

AND then we get to Chapter Two: Where we see that there's more to *the work we do* than **WHAT we do.**  
→ **HOW we do it** and **WHY we do it** is also a part of our functionality!

#### II. HOW A CHURCH DOES WHAT IT DOES

- a) vs. 2 with "boldness in our God"
- b) vs. 3 without error
- c) vs. 3 without impurity
- d) vs. 5 without flattery

#### III. WHY A CHURCH DOES WHAT IT DOES

- a) vs. 3 not to deceive people
- b) vs. 4 not to please people
- c) vs. 4 to please God
- d) vs. 5 not to gain wealth (without greed)
- e) vs. 6 not seeking glory from people

**So what does this mean for WLA in 2007?**

re: "**The work we share**" → As much as **WHAT** we do matters SO does **HOW** we do it and **WHY** we do it!

**THE PLAN:** We will leave “**HOW**” until next week, because... 1) **vs. 7-12** has lots more to say about it.

2) Both **WHAT** and **HOW** are built on/driven by **WHY** ↗

### **WHY IS REALLY IMPORTANT!**

When you see that **WHAT** a man is doing is **digging a hole** ... And he says, “*Would you like to help me?*” it’s always a really good idea to find out **WHY** he is doing **WHAT** he is doing.

You know he is digging a hole, but **WHY?** **Maybe** he is putting in a swimming pool. (If you help him, he might invite you over!)

**Maybe** he plans to bury someone he has recently murdered. (An accomplice!)

**Or maybe** he just needs the exercise --- or the dirt. **WHY** is important!

You notice **HOW** he is doing it... And if he says, “*Any tips for me on how to proceed?*” -- once again you need to find out

**WHY** he is doing “**WHAT** he is doing” **HOW** he is doing it. (Rather than doing in any other way.)

You know he is digging a hole, but **WHY is he doing it THAT way?**

**Maybe** he is digging for buried treasure. **Maybe** he is looking for his long lost contact lens.

**Or maybe** he just needs the dirt.

**Motives matter.** **WHY** we do what we do determines **HOW** we do **WHAT** we do, **and** explains **WHAT** it is we are actually doing!

So today we will look at **WHY!**

**So what does this mean for WLA in 2007?** “The work we share” → **WHAT** we do matters **BUT** so does **WHY** we do it!

### **WHY A CHURCH DOES WHAT IT DOES**

The Main Thing here! ↗

- |    |       |                               |                        |
|----|-------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| a) | vs. 3 | not to deceive people         |                        |
| b) | vs. 4 | not to please people          |                        |
| c) | vs. 4 | to please God                 | c) vs. 4 to please God |
| d) | vs. 5 | not to gain wealth            |                        |
| e) | vs. 6 | not seeking glory from people |                        |

**1 Thessalonians 2:4** “...we have been approved by God to be **entrusted with the gospel**, so we speak, not to please man, but **to please God** who tests our hearts.”

**Meaning?** .... We must get this right! We must get right the **WHY** of **WHAT** we do! **To please God” must be WHY!**

We must be God-centred in all things, including this thing!

→ He must be the centre of our/your solar system!

→ Our first/highest calling!

So how do we make that true? How do we become the sort of people who live to please God rather than people?

**TWO THINGS REQUIRED:** 1) **To love God more and more** until we love him the most.

**Mark 12:30** And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

2) **To care what people think of us less and less** to be free to love God more and more.

It’s sometimes basically either/or!

**Galatians 1:10** For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 2:4** ...we have been approved by God to be **entrusted with the gospel**, so we speak, not to please man, but **to please God** who tests our hearts.”

**Proverbs 29:25** The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.

Or we will never be really bold!

**1 Thessalonians 2:2** But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had **boldness in our God** to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.

**Make your choice!**

*“Choose this day whom you will serve ... whom you will love ... whom you will please.*

**TWO THINGS TO DO:** 1) ***Make your choice!*** Whatever shame, whatever pain it involves, I will follow Christ!

**Luke 9:23** "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

***2) Submit your heart to the treatment!***

If it turns out you have a **heart condition**, would you submit to the treatment?

I suppose it depends .... Do you care about your health? Do you trust this doctor? A second opinion?

The treatment is a change of heart that the Word can accomplish.

**Hebrews 4:12-13** For the word of God is **living and active**, sharper than any two-edged sword, **piercing** to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **discerning** the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And **no** creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

**Psalms 119:11** I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

**Psalms 1:1-3** Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and **on his law he meditates day and night**. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers