

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 67 – 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2:12

Day 331: Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

In our introduction to Paul's letter to the Galatians we left Paul and Silas at the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey, having revisited the churches of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. Paul conveyed to these churches the decisions of the Council at Jerusalem which resulted in much rejoicing and seems to have contributed to the growth of the churches (Acts 16:5). At Lystra, Timothy joined Paul and Barnabas.

Paul seems to have wished to travel on from Pisidian Antioch into the neighbouring region of Asia, perhaps intending to travel to Laodicea (and Colossae?) and on to Ephesus, but he was kept from doing so by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6). Having travelled northwards 'throughout Phrygia and Galatia' the missionaries sought to enter Bithynia but were again prevented from doing so (Acts 16:7). The nature of these hindrances is unclear but Bruce suggests that it was probably the result of a prophetic utterance from one of the party (note that Silas is referred to as a prophet in Acts 15:32). As a result the travellers turned west and went to the sea port of Troas (ancient Troy). It is in Troas that Luke (the author of Acts) seems first to have joined Paul's party for the first 'we' section of Acts begins in (Acts 16:10).

Paul may have hoped from Troas to head for Ephesus by sea. However, during the night Paul had a dream or vision in which he saw a man from Macedonia pleading with him to 'Come over to Macedonia and help us' (Acts 16:9). He concluded that God was leading them to preach the Gospel in Macedonia. These incidents mark a key turning point both in the ministry of Paul and in the history of the spread of Christianity: Paul is driven by God to take the Gospel into Europe¹.

Macedonia and Achaia

From Troas Paul's party sailed to Neapolis and then the short distance inland to Philippi.

Philippi

On the Sabbath, after several days at Philippi, Paul and his companions found a Jewish place of prayer situated outside of the city, beside the river². It seems to have been attended mainly, if not solely, by women and it may have been for this reason that it lacked the status of a synagogue. One of the women to whom Paul spoke was a businesswoman from Thyatira called Lydia. She 'opened her heart' to the message concerning Christ with the result that all in her household were baptised. Lydia then invited Paul and his companions to stay at her house and it was probably here that the church at Philippi was formed (cf. Acts 16:40). Lydia may well have been the source of the support which Paul was later to receive from the church at Philippi and may also have been instrumental in taking the Christian message back to her hometown in Asia Minor where there was later a large Christian church (Rev 2:18-29).

During the following days, while Paul and his companions travelled to the place of prayer they were pestered by a slave-girl who was possessed by a spirit by which she could tell the future. By this means she earned a great deal of money for her owners. The girl followed Paul shouting out "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." Eventually, Paul became so troubled by the actions of this girl that he cast the spirit out of her in the name of Jesus. The slavegirl's owners, angered by their loss of income, dragged Paul and Silas before the city magistrates,

¹ Morris writes, "In response to the vision of the man from Macedonia Paul turned his back on Asia Minor and became the first known Christian missionary to preach in Europe. It is probable that this step did not seem so momentous to him as it does to us, for he simply passed from one province of the Roman Empire to another. But it set the course of Christianity westward. In time Europe would become Christian."

² Morris suggests that it was probably an open-air place of meeting.

accusing them of creating a public disturbance by recommending customs unlawful for Roman citizens. As a result they were both cruelly flogged and were then thrown into prison.

Locked in the central dungeon of the Prison, Paul and Silas fell to prayer and to singing hymns of praise to God. At midnight an earthquake broke open the doors of the prison and freed Paul and Silas from their chains. They, along with the other prisoners, could have escaped from the prison but, probably due to the influence of Paul and Silas, all remained where they were. The conduct of these two preachers proved a powerful witness to the jailer who led them out of the prison and begged them to tell him the way of salvation. As with Lydia before him, so now with the jailer, he and all his family became believers and were baptised.

The following day, the magistrates sent word that Paul and Silas should be released. But Paul asserted his rights as a Roman citizen, claiming that their beating without trial was contrary to Roman law. The magistrates, he said, must come to the prison and must personally escort them out. This the magistrates did – though they added the request that Paul and Silas leave the city.

So it was that after only a few weeks, Paul and Silas left Philippi. Luke was left behind to look after the infant church at Philippi while Paul and Silas travelled on to Thessalonica. Though they passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia there is no record of them preaching in either city. Paul seems to have been concerned to press on to Thessalonica.

Thessalonica

Thessalonica was the largest and the most important city of Macedonia and was also the capital of the province. Unlike Philippi, Thessalonica had a strong Jewish community and its own synagogue. For three weeks Paul went to the synagogue and reasoned from the Scriptures that "the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead" (Acts 17:3), declaring that Jesus is the Christ. Paul's ministry in Thessalonica may have continued some weeks longer than may be initially apparent from the narrative in Acts³.

The success of Paul's ministry, particularly in attracting God-fearers away from the synagogue, angered the Jews who stirred up a riot outside the home of Jason, a man with whom Paul and his companions had been staying. Not finding the missionaries, they dragged Jason and a number of other Christians before the city officials saying, "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus" (Acts 17:6,7). Two things are evident from this accusation:

- i) Paul's preaching had at its heart the affirmation that Jesus, the Messiah, God's promised King, had come and that his reign had commenced. From the content of the letter to the Thessalonians it is evident also that he also declared that Christ was to return and would then establish his kingdom in all its glory.
- ii) Paul's preaching was having no small effect upon the Jewish communities of the Diaspora. They viewed his ministry as a threat to their very existence, so much so that they were even prepared to use their own hope of the Messiah as an accusation against Paul before the Roman officials – as has the Jewish leaders at the time of Jesus' trial.

Faced with this opposition, Paul and Silas were persuaded to leave Thessalonica for Berea⁴. Timothy left with them, or followed shortly afterwards.

Berea

The team ministered at Berea for some time. Here, many of the Jews along with Gentile God-fearers became Christians. After a while Jews from Thessalonica, hearing of Paul's ministry in Berea arrived

³ Ramsay suggested that it may have been as long as 6 months. Polhill, in his commentary on Acts writes, "It was long enough for a church to be established and leadership appointed (1 Thess 5:12). It was of sufficient duration that Paul received financial support from Philippi "time and again" while in Thessalonica (Phil 4:16). Evidently he took up his trade and supported himself as well during this period (1 Thess 2:9). Most of Paul's converts in Thessalonica seem to have come out of paganism, judging from 1 Thess 1:9, which would indicate a more extensive Gentile witness than one might gather from Luke's highly compressed account."

⁴ It may be that when Jason and his friends were 'bound over', this included the condition that they should no longer shelter Paul and maybe that they should see to it that he left the city.

and stirred up the crowds against the apostle's ministry. The Christians at Berea sought to defuse the situation and also to save Paul by escorting him from the city to Athens. Silas and Timothy remained to minister at Berea.

Athens

On arriving at Athens, Paul sent word for Silas and Timothy to come and join him. While he waited for them he began to minister at Athens – a ministry which was pursued in two very different contexts.

As was his custom, Paul took advantage of the synagogue to reason with Jews and God-fearing Greeks concerning Jesus (Acts 17:17). But in Athens Paul seems to have been particularly distressed by the idolatry and superstition of this, the intellectual centre of the Greek world. In Athens, Paul therefore took the message to the marketplace and reasoned there with philosophers and with all who would listen to him. The Athenians loved a good debate and so took Paul to the Areopagus, the ruling council of the city. There Paul addressed the assembly, telling them of the Living God, a God unknown to them yet the one who had created all things and who now gave them breath. He backed up his arguments with quotations from the Greek poets. Paul called upon them to turn from their ignorance and idolatry and to seek this God.

Thus far, Paul may well have received a sympathetic hearing, but he then went on to speak of the day when God would judge the world through Jesus whom he had raised from the dead. This Jewish doctrine of the resurrection of the body appeared absurd and abhorrent to the Greek intellect. Most mocked Paul, though some asked to hear him again and a few, including Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, became believers.

At some point during Paul's brief stay at Athens, Silas and Timothy rejoined him. Paul's main concern at this time seems to have been for the infant churches of Macedonia, churches with whom he had been able to spend such a short time. Paul therefore sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to find out how they were getting on in the faith and to minister to them (1 Thess 3:1-2). Silas he sent off elsewhere in Macedonia, perhaps to Philippi (Acts 18:1,3).

Corinth

From Athens, Paul went on to Corinth where he met a Jewish couple, Aquilla and Priscilla, who, like Paul, were tentmakers. It seems probable that they were Christians. Paul stayed with them, working with them, and on every Sabbath reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue.

Of Paul's state of mind when he arrived at Corinth Morris writes, "We have every reason for thinking that Paul was a discouraged man when he came to Corinth... Fanatical opponents had brought about his forcible ejection from three successive preaching places, in each case just when it seemed that his work would be crowned with success. After that he had gone to Athens, the cultural centre of Greece, and had been met by mockery. In later days he recalled that he had arrived at Corinth, 'in weakness and fear, and with much trembling' (1 Cor 2:3)."

Shortly after Paul's arrival at Corinth, Timothy and Silas came to him from Macedonia (Acts 18:3). Timothy brought news of the church at Thessalonica saying that despite all the difficulties the new believers were standing firm (1 Thess 3:6-9). The letter he wrote to them in response to this news reflects this mood of relief and exultation.

1 Thessalonians

The Christians at Thessalonica were facing opposition, probably chiefly from the Jews. One element of this campaign of opposition seems to have consisted in a personal attack upon Paul. His opponents suggested that he was just another fly-by-night wandering preacher who had no real concern for the Thessalonians – after all, had he not abandoned them when the going got tough? In writing to them Paul therefore emphasises the purity of his motives and his deep affection for them.

Apart from the external trials the church was troubled by erroneous views concerning the second advent. Imagining that the Parousia was imminent:

- i) Some were troubled concerning Christians who had died, fearing that they would miss out on the coming kingdom;

- ii) Some had abandoned their daily work on the supposition that further attachment to this present world is pointless.

In seeking to deal with these problems, the leaders in the church, lacking maturity, seemed to have caused further problems.

Paul addresses all of these issues in his letter, as well as encouraging the Thessalonians to keep away from the immoral behaviour so common in the Greek world, behaviour which may have formed part of their former lifestyle.

1 Thessalonians was probably written in the early part of AD 50.

Referenced Works

John Drane	<i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976
John Eadie	<i>A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians</i> , MacMillan, London, 1877
Leon Morris	<i>The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians</i> , The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1991

Day 332: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Verse 1

Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη.

Silvanus is the Silas of Acts. Bruce suggests that the mention of Silas and Timothy is more than a courtesy and that they may have actively participated in the composition of the letter.

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

"This wording directs attention to the group of believers comprising the local church, whereas such a salutation as 'to the church of God in Corinth' (1 Cor 1:2) brings to our minds rather the great universal church as it is manifested in a particular place." Morris

πατήρ, πατρός m father

ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ is an unusual expression. "It is Paul's usual habit to speak about being 'in Christ,' though 'in God' does occur (Col 3:3; cf. Eph 3:9). But throughout these two epistles he constantly associates the Father and the Son in the closest of fashions (cf. v3; 3:11-13; 5:18; 2 Thess 1:1,2,8,12; 2:16-17; 3:5...). No higher view can possibly be taken of the Person of Christ. God is occasionally called 'Father' in the Old Testament, but Jesus taught his followers to see God as Father and it is a characteristic designation among the Christians." Morris

"The whole name ... *Lord Jesus Christ*, and the significance of each of its component parts and all of them in conjunction, was essentially pre-Pauline, the faith of the church from the beginning." Neill. Each element needs therefore to be understood firstly against its Jewish background.

χάρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour
εἰρήνη, ης f peace

Reflects the Hebrew greeting *shalom*.

Many MSS add expressions such as the TR's ἀπο θεου πατρος ἡμων και κυριου Ἰησου Χριστου. Metzger, in his *Textual Commentary* on the UBS text writes, "Representatives of the Alexandrian and the Western types of text unite in supporting the shorter reading. Other witnesses expand the salutation by adding phrases familiar from the salutations in other Pauline letters. If any of these expansions had been original, there is no reason why it would have been deleted."

Verse 2

Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν, μνησάντες ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν, ἀδιαλείπτως

Paul usually begins his letters with thanksgiving. Galatians is a "conspicuous exception." Morris

εὐχαριστεῖω thank, give thanks

The plural implying Paul, Silas and Timothy.

παντοτε always

μνησάντες ας f remembrance, mention

ἀδιαλείπτως ceaselessly, without ceasing

Several commentators (such as Eadie and Hendriksen) argue that ἀδιαλείπτως belongs with what follows – so NIV. Morris thinks that it belongs with 'mentioning' rather than the 'remembering' of the following verse.

Verse 3

μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν,

μνημονεὺω remember, keep in mind

'work produced by faith, labour produced by love, patience produced by hope' Paul speaks of aspects of their character and conduct which have their origin and dynamic in these fundamental graces.

For a similar conjunction of ἔργου, κόπος and ὑπομονή cf. Rev 2:2.

For the conjunction of faith, hope and love, cf. 5:8; Rom 5:1-5; 1 Cor 13:13; Gal 5:5-6; Col 1:4-5; Heb 6:10-12; 10:22-24; 1 Pet 1:21-22.

κόπος, ου m work, labour trouble

ἀγάπη is the distinctive love that God has manifested towards us in Christ; love to the unworthy, love that acts at cost, love seen supremely in the cross.

ὑπομονή, ης f patience, endurance
ἐλπίς, ἰδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

ἔμπροσθεν prep with gen before, in front of

ἔμπροσθεν... Eadie argues that this phrase belongs with the opening participle μνημονεὺοντες. Morris thinks this unlikely and suggests that it either belongs with the whole of ἔργου ... Χριστοῦ or perhaps simply with the last phrase concerning hope.

Verse 4

εἰδότες, ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ [τοῦ] θεοῦ, τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν,

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

ἀδελφοὶ – fellow members of God's family.

ἠγαπημένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl ἀγαπαω

Their love is a reflection of the fact that they are loved.

ἐκλογή, ης f election, choosing, what is chosen

"Election protects us from thinking of salvation as dependent on human whims, and roots it squarely in the will of God... Nothing gives security to salvation like the concept of election." Morris

Paul is confident of their election because of the evidence of God's grace at work in them, as he indicates in the following verses.

Verse 5

ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ, καθὼς οἴδατε οἷοι ἐγενήθημεν [ἐν] ὑμῖν δι• ὑμᾶς.

εὐαγγέλιον, ου n good news, gospel
ἐγενήθη Verb, aor indic, 3 s γινομαι
μονος, η, ου i) adj only, alone; ii) adv
μόνον only, alone

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

ἅγιος, α, ου holy, consecrated, set apart to/by God

πληροφορία, ας f full assurance, conviction

πληροφορία πολλῇ – 'with deep conviction'

πολὺς, πολλή, πολὺ gen πολλοῦ, ης, ου
much, many

Some (e.g. Eadie and Morris) understand Paul to be speaking here of his subjective sense of the Spirit at work – he felt that the Spirit was at work through him as he preached. It is better to understand what he says in an objective sense – he was confident that the Spirit was at work because of the effect he observed in his hearers.

οἷος, α, ου relative pronoun such as, of what kind

οἷοι ἐγενήθημεν (ἐν) ὑμῖν δι• ὑμᾶς. 'You know how we were among you for your sake' Eadie argues that this refers to the manner of their preaching and not to their self-support which is dealt with in 2:7-9. However, it is probably best to see it as a reference to the missionaries' general conduct, particularly conduct in the face of opposition, of which the Thessalonians then became imitators (v.6).

Day 333: 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10

Verse 6

καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου, δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου,

μιμητης, ου m imitator

See 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17

δεξάμενοι Verb, aor midd (dep) ptc, m nom
pl δεχομαι receive, accept, welcome

"The word ... is that used for the reception of a guest (as in Luke 10:8, 10; Heb 11:31), and it includes the thought of a warm welcome." Morris

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

Cf. 3:3,7; 2 Thess 1:4,6 and the cognate verb in 3:4; 2 Thess 1:6,7.

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου
much, many ii)πολλα many things

There had been opposition in Thessalonica from the beginning (Acts 17:5-9) and there was now persecution from local pagans (1 Thess 2:14).

χαρα, ας joy

Joy in suffering had been the hallmark of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:25).

Verse 7

ὥστε γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς τύπον πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
τυπος, ου m pattern, example, type

"In the present passage the word is used in the singular. Paul is speaking of the church as a pattern community rather than of the individuals comprising it as so many individual patterns." Morris

πας, πασα, παν gen παντος, πασης,
παντος without the article each, every
(pl = all); every kind of

"First they followed their preachers as a living pattern or example, μιμηται, and then they in turn became an example, τυπος, a pattern for the imitation of other churches." Eadie

Verse 8

ἀφ' ὑμῶν γὰρ ἐξηγήται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ [ἐν τῇ] Ἀχαΐᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν, ὥστε μὴ χρεῖαν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς λαλεῖν τι·

ἐξηγήται Verb, imperf pass indic, 3 s
ἐξηχεω sound out

"The verb ἐξηγήται is found only here in the New Testament. It is a vivid word, and expositors from Chrysostom on have often thought the imagery to have been derived from the sounding out of a trumpet, though some prefer to think of the rolling of thunder. Either way there is nothing apologetic about it! The perfect denotes the continuing activity, as does the use of ἐν rather than εἰς (though this cannot be pressed). The word is pictured as still sounding forth." Morris

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv
μονον only, alone

τοπος, ου m place

προς τον θεον rather than the more usual εἰς τον θεον to imply how they had turned to God from idols, cf. the following verse.

ἐξελέλυθεν Verb, perf indic ἐξερχομαι go out

Reflecting the strategic position of Thessalonica on the Via Egnatia and with a harbour.

ὥστε so that, with the result that

χρεια, ας f need, want

λαλεω speak, talk

Verse 9

αὐτοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὁποῖαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδωλῶν δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ,

ἀπαγγέλλω announce, proclaim

Continuous present, 'kept talking'.

ὁποιος, α, ον correlative pronoun of what sort, such as

εἴσοδος, ου f visit, reception, entrance

ἔσχομεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl ἔχω

πως how, in what way

ἐπιστρεφω turn back, return, turn round, turn

εἰδωλον, ου n idol

Most Thessalonian believers were Gentiles. "Becoming a Christian involves a very definite break with non-Christian habits. Whatever the believers' previous background, there must always be a turning from idols of some sort. The act of conversion involves a change of direction of the will. This is a decisive happening, a reorientation of the whole of life. This is so in every age, but especially was it true of Christians in the Greek world of the first century A.D." Morris

ζωω live, be alive

ἀληθινος, α, ον real, genuine, true

"The word Paul uses conveys the idea of 'genuine, real' (BAGD). Its opposite is not so much 'false' as 'unreal.' Moffatt says that it is 'real as opposed to false in the sense of counterfeit.'" Morris

Verse 10

καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ [τῶν] νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν ῥυόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης.

ἀναμενω wait expectantly

Here alone in the NT.

ἐγείρω raise

νεκρός, α, ον dead

The mention of Jesus' resurrection from the dead is preceded and followed by eschatological references. This event is central to NT eschatology – Christ has been raised as the firstfruits of the new creation.

ῥυομαι save, rescue

Note the present participle ῥυόμενον 'Jesus who is delivering us...' expresses the full force of the present. Christ's saving or delivering work is ongoing and will be completed only when we are safe with him in glory.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

"God's wrath lacks the imperfections that are bound up with the purest of human righteous indignation. But it gives strong expression to the active opposition of a holy God to all that is evil. We cannot do without this concept." Morris.

The present participle ἐρχομένης stresses that God's wrath is coming even now – it is on its way.

These truths must have occupied a prominent place in the preaching of Paul and his companions at Thessalonica.

Day 334: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6

Verses 1-6

Paul seems to have been accused by some of insincerity – preaching to profit from his converts. Hence his defence in these verses.

Verse 1

Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν,

οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

εἴσοδος, ου f see 1:9

By repeating the term εἴσοδος the thoughts here are linked back with 1:9. "'You' here corresponds to 'they themselves' in 1:9. There Paul cited outsiders as witnesses; here he says that the Thessalonians needed no one else to bear witness, for they themselves knew what had happened." Morris

κενος, η, ον empty, to no purpose, senseless

Morris suggests that the meaning is 'hollow, empty, wanting in purpose and earnestness.' "Paul is affirming as a well-known fact the purposeful manner of his visit."

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

Verse 2

ἀλλὰ προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες καθὼς οἴδατε ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλήσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἀγῶνι.

προπαθόντες Aor act ptc, m nom pl

προπασχω suffer previously

ὑβρισθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl

ὑβρίζω treat shamefully, insult,

mistreat

"On that occasion, when it had been suggested that the jailor should simply free Paul and Silas, the great apostle had refused to leave until the praetors themselves had come to make amends for their treatment of Roman citizens. In his insistence on upholding the dignity of Roman citizenship we see something of the deep hurt Paul had experienced in the indignities heaped on him. So now, as he recalls those days, he uses a word that evokes memories of the insolence of those who had ill-treated him." Morris

Φιλιπποι, ων Philippi, Proper name, plural in form

παρρησιαζομαι speak boldly, speak freely, have courage

"It denotes a state of mind when the words flow freely, the attitude of feeling quite at home with no sense of stress or strain, an attitude that includes both boldness and confidence (in fact the corresponding noun is sometimes translated 'boldness,' sometimes 'confidence'). When it is used in the New Testament the verb always has to do with the proclamation of the gospel." Morris

ἀγων, ωνος m struggle, fight, opposition

"The use of [this] ... word here reminds the Thessalonians that the opposition that Paul had met had been intense, and his preaching had not been easy. How, in the face of this, could it be urged that he preached only for what he could get out of it." Morris

Verse 3

ἡ γὰρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης
οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλω,

Paul is being accused of being just another peddler of religion. "There had probably never been such a variety of religious cults and philosophic systems as in Paul's day. East and West had united and intermingled to produce an amalgam of real piety, high moral principles, crude superstition and gross license. Oriental mysteries, Greek philosophy, and local godlings competed for favour under the tolerant aegis of Roman indifference. 'Holy Men' of all creeds and countries, popular philosophers, magicians, astrologers, crack-pots, and cranks; the sincere and the spurious, the righteous and the rogue, swindlers and saints, jostled and clamoured for the attention of the credulous and the sceptical." Neil

παράκλησις, εως f encouragement,
comfort, appeal

'The appeal we make does not spring from ...'
NIV. The reference here is to the preaching
undertaken at Thessalonica.

πλάνη, ης f error, deceit, deception
οὐδὲ neither, nor
ἀκαθαρσία, ας f impurity, immorality,
uncleanness

Sexual impurity was a regular feature of many
of the cults of antiquity.

δόλος, ου m deceit, treachery

Noting the change in the preposition from ἐκ
to ἐν Morris comments, "The Greek ἐκ
denotes origin; but ἐν rather signifies
atmosphere, so that Paul is saying that his
preaching did not spring from delusion or
impurity, nor was it conducted in an
atmosphere of craft [i.e. trickery]."

Verse 4

ἀλλὰ καθως δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ
πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον οὕτως
λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωποις ἀρέσκοντες
ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας
ἡμῶν.

Not the strong adversative, ἀλλά, 'on the
contrary.'

δεδοκιμάσαμεθα verb, perf pass indic, 1 pl
δοκιμάζω test, examine, approve,
prove, discern

The perfect here not only past approval but
one that continues into the present, 'we stand
approved.'

πιστευθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin πιστεῦω
believe; pass be entrusted with

ἀρέσκοντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom pl
ἀρεσκῶ please, seek to please, serve

Though Paul's ministry was a service to men,
he is first and always a servant of God and of
the Lord Jesus Christ.

τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν "Here the meaning is that
God searches out the whole of our inner life.
Nothing is hidden from him. In passing we
might note that the plural, 'our hearts,' is
unlikely to be an editorial plural. It associates
Silas and Timothy closely with Paul in this
great affirmation." Morris

Verse 5

οὔτε γὰρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας
ἐγενήθημεν, καθως οἴδατε, οὔτε ἐν
προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς,
οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ...
nor)
ποτε enclitic particle once, formerly, at one
time

οὔτε ποτε 'at no time,' 'never'

κολακεία, ας f flattery

"We can use this English term of remarks that,
although insincere, are directed to the pleasure
of the person being flattered. The Greek term
has rather the idea of using fair words as a
means of gaining one's own ends. It is a
matter of using insincerity as an instrument of
policy, as a means of persuading another to do
one's will." Morris

προφασίς, εως f false motive, pretence
πλεονεξία, ας f greed, covetousness

πλεονεξία refers not just greed for money but
also for influence, power etc. – seeking
something for oneself, 'self-seeking'.

Verse 6

οὔτε ζητοῦντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν, οὔτε
ἀπ• ὑμῶν οὔτε ἀπ• ἄλλων,

ζητεῶ seek, look for

δοξα, ας f glory

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

The meaning may be of other Christians or
other people more generally.

Day 335: 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12**Verse 7**

δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι, ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν νήπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν. ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα,

There is disagreement over whether the first clause belongs with v6 or v7.

βάρει Noun, dat s βαρος
εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

ἐν βαρει εἶναι 'make demands upon', i.e. look for financial support. "Paul insists that those who preach the gospel have the right to be maintained by the church as they preach (1 Cor 9:14). But he was sensitive to the accusation that he made money out of his converts, so he did not insist on his own rights (1 Cor 9:15-18)." Morris

νηπιος, α, ον baby, infant, child

There is a textual variant here between νηπιος babes, and ἡπιος gentle. It is difficult to determine which of the two is the original reading. The UBS text favours νηπιος but Metzger and Wikgren dissent, arguing that ἡπιος alone suits the context. Having discussed the various argument, Morris concludes, "When the arguments are so nicely balanced it is not possible to be absolutely sure of the original text. In general the balance of probabilities seems to favour 'babies.' If we accept this reading, the meaning is that when they preached in Thessalonica the apostles spoke as simply as possible, as simply as babies. It is a strong expression for the extreme lengths to which they went to meet the needs of their hearers."

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ., εἰς μ. in the middle, among

Morris writes, "ὡς ἐὰν with the subjunctive is a fairly rare construction. It seems to be a case of the late use of ἐὰν for ἄν and to be distinguished from the ordinary use of the indicative as denoting contingency. Findlay speaks of it here as implying "a standing contingency – 'as it may be (may be seen) at any time.'" Milligan cites examples of the construction from the papyri."

τροφος, ου f nurse, nursing mother
θαλπω cherish, take care of
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun,
himself, herself, itself
τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

Verse 8

οὕτως ὁμειρόμενοι ὑμῶν εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε.

ὁμειρομαι yearn for, long for (with affection)

Here alone in NT. An unusual word of uncertain derivation but expressing deep affection.

εὐδοκεω be pleased, take delight/pleasure in

The imperfect expressing "no passing whim of the apostles but their habitual style." Morris

μεταδοῦναι Verb, aor act infin μεταδιδωμι
share, give, impart

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv
μονον only, alone

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun,
himself, herself, itself

ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life, 'soul',
living being

'Themselves' – their whole being was given to the care of the Thessalonians (cf. 1 Cor 12:15; Phil 2:17).

διοτι because, for, therefore

Equivalent to δια τουτο οτι 'on this account', in NT always means 'because.'

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

"... brings before us the specifically Christian quality of love; its use brings to mind that that love is essentially self-giving. It is not a desire to possess the beloved, but a desire to give, a desire inspired by the nature of the God whom Christians worship. Paul had come to see the Thessalonians as the objects of God's love, and therefore as the objects of the love of God's servants too." Morris

Paul presents us with a fine but demanding model of Christian ministry.

Verse 9

μνημονεύετε γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τινὰ ὑμῶν ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

μνημονευω remember, keep in mind
κοπος, ου m work, labour trouble
μοχθος, ου m labour, hardship

These words are also found together in 2 Cor 11:27; 2 Thess 3:8. "The combination stresses that the work that the preachers had done had not been token work, something in the nature of a public show meant only to demonstrate their willingness. It had been laborious toil. They had had to work hard." Morris

νυξ, νυκτος f night
 ἐπιβαρῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ἐπιβαρεω
 be a financial burden
 κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

Paul had received some help from friends at Philippi while he was at Thessalonica (Phil 4:16) but took nothing from those to whom he preached.

Verse 10

ὕμεις μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός, ὡς ὀσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγενήθημεν,

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος m witness
 ὀσίως adv in a manner pleasing to God
 δικαίως adv (from δικαίως) righteously, justly
 ἀμέμπτως Adv (from ἀμέμπτως) blamelessly

The adverbs are rare, though their cognate adjectives are common in the NT.

Verse 11

καθάπερ οἴδατε ὡς ἕνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν ὡς πατήρ τέκνα ἑαυτοῦ

The construction of the verse is difficult, lacking a main verb. The NIV supplies 'dealt with' which Morris thinks "as good as any."

καθαπερ as, just as
 οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand
 ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every; ἕνα ἕκαστον each and every one

Paul's ministry among them was not marked by favoritism or partiality but by a fatherly care for each and every one of them.

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants
 ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun, himself, herself, itself

Verse 12

παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθούμενοι καὶ μαρτυρόμενοι εἰς τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge
 παραμυθεομαι comfort, console
 μαρτυρομαι testify, urge

"If Paul could be tender and considerate, he yet never lost sight of the high demands Christ makes on his followers." Morris

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live
 ἀξίως adv (from ἀξίως) worthily

καλοῦντος the present participle is preferable to the variant reading καλεσαντος (aor). Morris notes, "On occasion Paul can use the aorist reminding us of the once-for-all nature of the call (e.g. Gal 1:6,15); and again he may even make use of the perfect to draw attention to the fact that those called remain in the position of called ones (e.g. 1 Cor 7:15,17). But here we see that God's call is always coming to us, and it calls us to nothing less than being worthy of Him."

δοξα, ας f glory

The lack of a separate definite article for δοξαν binds it closely with βασιλειαν as a single item. "Paul holds out this glorious future as an incentive for the Thessalonians to live worthily here and now. They have been saved by a wonderful God. They have been brought into his kingdom. They face a glorious future. Let them so live here and now as to be worthy of such a God!" Morris