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A1050 – December 12, 2010 – 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12
The Manner Of Paul's Ministry

Last week we studied 1 Thess 2:3-6, Paul's motive in ministry, and basically Paul is giving a defense for how he did not come. Paul had to do this because Paul had opponents and Paul's main opponent was Satan. Satan perceived Paul as a threat and I hope Satan perceives you as a threat because if he does that means you're making waves and disrupting his program. Satan does have a program and he doesn't like his program being disrupted so he'll try to make waves for you. Satan is the "god of this world," "the ruler of this age" and "the prince of the power of the air" and so he controls the world system which is anti-God and he does not like individuals that try to come into his world system and through gospel preaching and training take people out of his system and inform them of reality. So expect some waves if you're like Paul. Consider it a compliment if certain family members get upset with you this season for proclaiming the gospel. It means you're doing the right thing; you're doing what Paul was doing.

Now sometimes people will come along after you've done some ministry and there's been some fruit and they'll try to spoil things by attacking you, by challenging your motives. That was the kind of tactic Satan was using against Paul. In verse 3, certain jealous people were saying, oh, Paul, that Paul's exhortation is all demonically inspired, that's all Satanic in origin and Paul has a lot of boldness but it's all coming from a false source so don't buy it! And in verse 5, that Paul, we have a whole series of problems with him, he's just using the slick techniques of rhetoric to win you to his position, oh, and by the way, he's doing it for your money, he just wants money, that's all. And finally, in verse 6 they said, oh, Paul, he was only out for human accolade, he is a man very interested in being propped up by other men, he wants people to give him kudos and tell him he's the best and so he's catering to you, that's all. And so don't bother with it Thessalonians. And Paul

answered those charges. He said I did not do these things and if you'll just think back to how I actually was when I was there you'll see I was not that way.

Today, in vv 7-12, he's going to say, this is how I came to you, this is the manner of my coming and ministering to you and by doing so, Paul is going to teach us about serving one another in the body of Christ. Chapter 2 we characterize as Service, our second S, Service. Chapter 1 is salvation, chapter 2 is service. Today we're going to learn from two similes how to serve one another. You say, what's a simile? Those of you in modern public education may not know what a simile is because the poor English teachers have to spend all their time getting you ready for TAAS and that's not on the test. So a simile is a comparison using *like* or *as*. Those of you who went to the public school system back when they still taught English grammar are familiar with it. So for those of you who are not familiar, grammar is important and spelling is important, regardless of what people think. And you want to know what a simile is and a simile is a comparison of two things using *like* or *as*. This is the figure of speech Paul uses to convey truth in vv 7-12.

Now the comparison Paul uses involves mothers and fathers. Mothers and fathers teach us something about how to serve in the body of Christ. Why do mothers and fathers exist? Where does this category of mother and father come from? It comes only because God created man male and female. We're back to creation. All categories, whether you believe the Bible or not are established at creation. So God created male and female and God established the 3rd divine institution of family. God said, go forth and multiply. So when God created the universe He gave certain divine institutions. We might as well define a divine institution. A divine institution is "an absolute structure built into the created order, specifically for man that serves some spiritual function." And there are five divine institutions: responsible dominion, marriage and family are all instituted at Creation, then we have human government and tribal diversity instituted at the Flood.

Now these become teaching tools. These categories are not just there because. They are there to serve as teaching tools. God wants to reveal Himself to man and one of the ways God does this is through divine institutions. And the first divine institution basically says that man was created for God's glory. You say, "What does that mean?" It means that God created man to reflect His

glory. And since the first picture of God is a laborer -creating the universe - then man's first responsibility is to reflect Him by laboring, having dominion over God's creation. This is man's fundamental responsibility in this world: it's not happiness, it's not romance, it's not procreation, it's to have dominion under God's authority, to produce something that reflects in motive and outcome the glory of God. The second divine institution is marriage; the joining of one man and one woman in a contract such that the two become one flesh. One man and one woman, not one man and one man or one woman and one woman or any of the other strange arrangements men have devised out of their evil hearts. So, we have responsible dominion, responsible because it will be evaluated, and marriage, one man and one woman. The 3rd divine institution is family and family looks at the offspring of the marriage, what comes out of the marriage as far as the image of God is concerned and this gets into population growth. God is interested in procreation as a means of greater dominion. And this means children are counted a blessing of the Lord and not as Carbon footprints, and it also means that there is such a thing as mothers and fathers. Those titles exist only because of the 3rd divine institution of family. And to put that in perspective, if evolution were true those titles would not exist because physical material does not organize itself into these categories. The point of evolution is there are no absolute categories, everything blends.

Now, the first three divine institutions of creation are fundamental to the human race and if they are not respected then social chaos will always be the result. And they are all linked. So marriage, what's that all about? Marriage is in the context of man's labor. So what's the purpose of marriage? It must be defined in terms of man's labor. It's not good for man to be alone. That is, he cannot labor responsibly independent of a woman, we say that generally. Every once in a blue moon God has a man that does not get married for a purpose that he couldn't fulfill in a fallen world with a woman, due to such factors as danger, travel, etc...But generally speaking it is not good for man to be alone, therefore marriage. And the marriage is defined in terms of labor or production for God's glory. Then we have family, and family is defined in terms of what? Marriage. The offspring come into a marriage and the marriage takes priority over the family. And if we put the family over the marriage then the marriage will fail and the family will fail. So you see they are interconnected. Now the family is the basic unit of society. The individual is not the basic unit of society. And this is why in the Bible property rights

are not held by individuals. They are held by families such that when family members die the property is still in the family and there are no inheritance taxes to pay because the property is still in the family.

So, we have family as the fundamental unit of society. Now, so far as the marriage is concerned, we have an authority structure. Parents have authority over the children. And inside the marriage the husband has authority over the wife (1 Corinthians 11:1-3). There is always authority structure and until people learn this they'll be all over the board. A person who doesn't understand authority structure can't believe the gospel because the gospel presupposes an authority structure. God is the head of Christ and Christ is the head of every man and man is the head of woman. Authority structure.

In verses 7-12 Paul is going to pick up on the individual differences in the authority structure of male and female, father and mother and how they function toward the children in order to illustrate how they served among the Thessalonians. There's a difference between father and mother and it's a difference built-in to who we are by God at creation. Our society is trying to destroy those differences; to downplay fundamental differences of father and mother. And the reason they're trying to destroy these differences is because these differences are revelatory, they contain truth. And fallen man is a sinner and he hides from the truth, he suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. But if we allow these truths to be suppressed within the church then when we try to teach the word of God, verses like 1 Thess 2:7-12 we lose the capability of teaching it because the categories are all screwed up and we don't understand the category of father and mother and their roles in the family structure.

So, verses 7, 8 and 9 Paul will draw from the uniqueness of the mother to teach us about service and in verses 10, 11 and 12 Paul will draw from the uniqueness of the father to teach us about service. Each parent has certain qualities or characteristics unique to their side of the human race. And each one accomplishes something different for the children that is necessary for proper human development. This is why both mothers and fathers are necessary for the proper rearing and development of children. Some people think oh, it's not necessary to have a mother and father; it would be just as good to have two mothers because all humans are equal in every way. But

that's not true, even anatomy and physiology 101 tells you that. Proper development requires both a mother and father because mother and father are distinct in what they contribute. Both are designed to accomplish different tasks in the rearing and development of children and these come naturally and children need to see both sides. Finally both sides complement one another in the raising of children to produce normal human development.

Notice verse 7, here's the mothering side that Paul draws from. **But**, that's a strong contrast, **But**, rather, **we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.**ⁱ **8 having so fond an affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you have become very dear to us. 9 for you recall, rather, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaim to you the gospel of God.** Now, every one of those characteristics cited in verses 7-9 is a characteristic attributed to mothers. Verse 7, the manner of a mother among her children - she's gentle, she tenderly cares for her children. Verse 8, she's affectionate, she enjoys imparting her life to the life of her children. Verse 9, she works from son up to son down, son with an -o-. It's a NT description of the OT Proverbs 31 woman applied to how Paul and Silas served among the Thessalonians.

Now the core contribution of mothers in the Scripture, from which all others flow, is she is a life-giver. Always the mother is the life-giver. What was the name Adam gave his wife after the Fall? "Eve." Her original name was not Eve, it was Ishah, "woman," but after the Fall God revealed that the woman would have a seed who would be life and so Adam said, my wife will be the mother of all living and so he named her Eve, which in the Hebrew means "life, living." The woman would be the life-giver. And we think that because of the prior context of Gen 3:15 when God said that the seed of the woman would defeat the seed of Satan that ultimately what Adam perceived was that through His wife the Messiah would come who would reverse the death penalty of sin. So he named her Eve, life. And when Eve had her first son she named him Cain because she thought he was the One. Cain means in the Hebrew, "I have gotten a man child: Yahweh." So Eve, the first life giver thought she had given birth to the God-man who would supply life for all. Of course she quickly realized Cain was not the Messiah who would bring life to all. But the point we want to make out of all this is that mothers are always

the life-givers. And so what Paul is saying is that when they were among the Thessalonians they were life-givers. Being a life-giver is an element of service because service is not looking out for self but it is giving to others as a mother gives life to her children.

Now the woman is so much a life-giver that we want to develop it. The mother being a life giver begins at conception. Even the anatomy of the woman's egg is designed for giving life. The father's sperm is designed to basically carry genetic information and deposit it in the egg. But as far as resources are considered for developing the newly conceived child, that is wholly provided by the woman's egg. She is a life-giver. Then during pregnancy the baby draws from the mother's resources so that it can develop and this puts tremendous strain on the mother's body. Again, she is a life-giver. And when the baby is born the tiny infant must depend upon the mother's breast milk for nourishment. And then, as the child grows in the home the mother, in her role as homemaker, works from son up to son down, and so again the woman is expending energy, giving life. She's a life-giver. It's always the mother giving life, giving life, giving life, pouring her life into the child's so that the child can develop normally. This is the central contribution of a mother, they give life from conception. And this is why when her children have left the home she gets empty nest syndrome. Because she has given life, given life, given life and she's given all these resources and now the children are gone and she's still looking to give more life, where do I pour my life now? And God has provided this in the role of the woman in Titus 2 for older women to pour their life where? Into younger women, so that younger women can learn to love their husbands and their children, become better life-givers. So, this becomes the outlet for mothers whose children have departed from home. She continues to give life to others in the church, but always she's a life-giver. The Bible is absolutely consistent and beautiful in these things.

Now when you read verses 7, 8 and 9 you understand what Paul is saying. Paul says we were life-givers to you, we were **gentle among you**, we **tenderly cared for** you. Verse 8,

Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. Look at all the life giving there. Notice the **affection** toward them, that's an aspect of life-giving. And they enjoyed

doing it, he says, **we were well-pleased to impart**, impartation is life-giving, you're pouring out to others. And what did they **impart? the gospel of God**. What's the gospel of God? It's the necessary content one must believe to have eternal life. So to impart the gospel is to impart that which gives eternal life. This is all life giving. Their lives among them were characterized as mothers who give life to others. **Not only** did they give the gospel of God, **but also their own lives, because you have become very dear to us**. The word **lives** is *psuchos*, which is the word for "souls" and it refers to the total person. They gave their whole selves to the Thessalonians. He says we gave and we gave and we gave of our resources to you, we poured into you as a mother pours into her growing child. And if new believers are going to grow spiritually then other believers must pour their life into theirs, they must continually teach them the word of God because the word of God is the food that is necessary to spiritual growth. You can't grow apart from the word of God. It's the word of God that is used by the Spirit of God to produce the growth. And that's why I teach the word of God to you and not my life stories. My life stories aren't food for growth, the word of God is food for growth that can be used by the Spirit of God to produce growth in you. And so week in and week out I'm pouring my life into you as Paul and Silas poured their life into the Thessalonians. Why? So you can grow spiritually. That's how much I love you and tenderly care for you. I give you the resources you need to nourish your spiritual life!

Now, in verse 9 he explains how they poured their life into the Thessalonians life. It begins with an explanatory *gar*, the word **For**. **For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaim to you the gospel of God**. Notice the tremendous expenditure of energy. They were giving them their life, pouring their resources into them, not only during the day but also at night! This is another contribution of mothers. The Proverbs 31 woman begins her day early and her lamp burns deep into the night. And Paul, taking this uniqueness of mothers, applies it to their ministry among them. Mothers work hard; it's not easy to accomplish all the tasks a mother has to complete each day. And Paul says we worked hard, we labored **night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you**. Paul supported himself making tents while he was in Thessalonica. He didn't ask the Thessalonians to support his preaching of the gospel. Paul never preached the gospel for money. Why? Because he did not want to confuse the gift of salvation with

money. You cannot buy salvation. Salvation is a free gift. It was Simon the sorcerer in the Book of Acts who thought that he could buy certain gifts of God. But you can't buy a gift because the moment you put money toward it it ceases to be a gift and becomes a purchase. And Paul never preached the gospel to unbelievers in the context of a purchase. Why? Because Paul wanted believers to get firmly established in grace. And after they were firmly established in grace then Paul would receive financial support. In fact, while Paul and Silas are in Thessalonica they will receive two gifts from the believers at Philippi. But he did this only because the believers at Philippi were firmly established in grace. But from those at Thessalonica he was not a burden to any of them. He simply proclaimed to them the life-giving **gospel of God**.

Verse 10 we move to a simile that uses the other side of the 2nd and 3rd divine institutions of marriage and family: the father. The father has his own unique contribution to the family and to the raising of children. The father is not the life giver. The father is the trainer. He trains his children by the manner in which he lives his life as well as the verbal instruction. The father was, by example, to train his children how to live life for the glory of God. And the father was, by teaching, to train his children in the doctrines of Holy Scripture. Both are critical. If a father merely teaches the doctrines of Scripture, but he does not live the doctrines of Scripture then the children will see the inconsistency in their father and they'll conclude it doesn't work. The doctrines of Scripture are inadequate to produce holiness. Put another way, while they may have conceptual knowledge they won't have application knowledge. As James puts it, they may be hearers of the word but not doers. They don't put the doctrine to work because they don't think that it does work because of your sorry example. On the other side, if the father merely lives a moral life, but he does not teach them the doctrines of Scripture then the children will not think that doctrine is necessary and they will reduce Christianity to morality and fall either into legalism or licentiousness. Paul and all the authors of Scripture held that it was necessary for a father to both teach the word of God and live the word of God. And Paul and Silas did both among the Thessalonians. They did not only teach them the word of God but they also lived the word of God to show that both doctrine and application of doctrine are necessary for spiritual growth. This is the father's greatest contribution to his children.

So, let's look at verse 10: **You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; 11, just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, 12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.** Observe the three adverbs in verse 10 that describe what the Thessalonians witnessed, as far as their lives in Thessalonica. Here's how they lived as examples before the Thessalonians, here's how they served them, they demonstrated what the Christian life looks like, what Christian doctrine looks like when it's put to the streets. First, the word **devoutly**, is the word for "holy" or "pious" and in this context it means set apart. They live their lives set apart from the surrounding culture. Their lives were different. And every father must live his life differently from the surrounding culture or his children will see no difference between the world system and Christianity. Second adverb, they behaved **uprightly**. The word **uprightly** means "righteously." They lived according to the standards of Scripture. Righteousness always refers to a standard or rule by which one lives. And the standard by which they lived their lives was the standard of God's character revealed in the Scriptures. This is what set them apart from the world system. There really was a difference. And the third adverb, **blamelessly**, means you couldn't find anything against them. They were conscious of the way they lived their life in open civic society. So these three participles describe how they **behaved toward** the believers at Thessalonica and it gave them an example to follow. That's one side; you have to live as an example.

Verse 11 is the other side, **just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children.** Here's the father's teaching. It's not enough just to live as an example, you also have to have teaching. So verse 10 is the father's contribution by way of living, a living example before his children. Now verse 11, the father's contribution by way of teaching. The father has to talk to his children. He can't just expect the children to know what's on his mind. He can't just expect the children to learn from the schoolteacher what the proper way of thinking and living is. It is not the schoolteacher's responsibility, ultimately, to train a child how to think and live. It is the father's responsibility to train a child how to think and live. And God will hold the father responsible for this task. A father will be judged for this.

And the teaching is described by three participles; the first one **exhorting**, they exhorted them continually, present tense. Meaning basically, they hounded them and hounded them, not in the negative sense, but in a positive sense. They appealed to them strongly. Verse 12 tells us to what end, namely that they would **walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls them into his own kingdom and glory**. So all of these participles relate to the goal of verse 12. First, they appealed to them strongly to walk in a manner worthy of God. That is to walk the Christian walk, for their experience to conform to their position, not be Christian in name only, but Christian in name and in reputation. Second, the participle, **encouraging**, and that sounds a lot like exhorting but really it is encouraging someone who may be discouraged. Children get discouraged and they need to be encouraged. They need to know that though they fail they're growing, they're advancing. And the Thessalonians needed **encouraging**. Now we can only guess what might have been discouraging them, but probably the opposition from verse 2 was a threatening opposition, or maybe because they had responded positively to the gospel, now they were being ostracized by their families. We don't know why they became discouraged while Paul and Silas were with them but apparently they were discouraged and so Paul and Silas, like good fathers, came alongside their spiritual children and encouraged them to keep walking worthily of the God who calls us out of the world system and into his own kingdom. And finally, **imploring each one of them**. And by this he means affirming to each one of them that the gospel of God is truth no matter what other people may think of them. This is an affirmation and this is what a father would give his children in the midst of opposition. Children can begin to easily doubt their position when they see that so many are against the Christian position and so they need reinforcement so that they will hold fast to the truth and learn how not to compromise in the midst of opposition, but rather to continue in firmness of the truth of the gospel of God and its sufficiency for all of life.

If they would follow Paul and Silas as an example of living before them, described in verse 10, as a set apart walk, a righteous life, that could not in any way be found in error, and if they would follow Paul and Silas's teaching of verse 11, their strong appeal, they're encouraging words in the face of discouragement, and their affirmation and reinforcement of the truth of the word of God then they would **walk in a manner worthy of the God who**

calls them into his own kingdom and glory. At the moment God calls us through the gospel and we believe, at that point our citizenship is transferred from the world system and to **his kingdom and glory.** The reference to the kingdom is to the Messianic Kingdom spoken by all the OT prophets and rejected by nation Israel so that national Israel has been put aside temporarily in order that God call out a people for Himself that is neither Jew nor Gentile, that is, the body of Christ, the Church. And finally both Israel and the Church will enter into the **kingdom and glory.** This is not heaven but the millennial kingdom. We call it millennial because it will last 1,000 years. And while believers are not yet in that kingdom experientially, we do have citizenship in that kingdom. Our citizenship was transferred at the moment of faith alone in Christ alone from the kingdom of this world to the kingdom of God. And Jesus Christ will reign in that kingdom over the entire earth. And so Paul is saying we ought to walk in a manner matching our kingdom citizenship. If we really are citizens of God's kingdom then we ought to act like it.

So we have the two similes that Paul picks up as teaching devices for how we ought to serve one another. On one side, we ought to be like mothers who are life-givers. From beginning to end mothers give life and we ought to give life to others through the preaching of the gospel and through giving of ourselves night and day so as not to be a burden on anyone. And on the other side, we ought to be like fathers who are trainers. From beginning to end fathers train by way of example, how they behave among others, and what they teach, the content of their doctrine and their constant exhortation, encouragement and affirmation of their children in the truth. This will result in the normal development of a Christian, if we as believers serve in these ways, for one another.

ⁱ There is a textual issue here. Three of the earliest manuscripts read differently. It has to do with the word in verse seven translated **gentle**. The word for gentle is *epios* in the word for babes is *nepios*. So is the original *epios* or is the original *nepios*. You can see how a scribe could make a mistake here in transcribing. Especially because the prior word ends in a -n, so you can easily attach it to the next word if it was *epios* and that would make it *nepios* (dittography). Or *nepios* is original and it should read "babes" rather than **gentle**. There are only three manuscripts that support the reading "babes" but they are all very early manuscripts. However, not all early manuscripts read



babes, others read **gentle**. There are good commentators on both sides. It seems easier to me to simply leave it as **gentle, we proved gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her children**. But if you have the NET Bible it reads "we became little children among you. Like a nursing mother caring for her own children," so they structure the sentences differently syntactically. Overall it's a difficult question and it's not involving any kind of doctrinal dispute. Either way it simply points out how Paul and Silas lived among them.

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