**Lesson 2**

1 Thessalonians 1:5-2:6

**Chapter One Verse 5a**

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction;

1. **a. Paul reminds them of the gospel he preached.**
   1. **“Our: gospel:** Here Paul personalizes the gospel. He means to say the gospel which he and the others with him preached.
   2. Paul communicated the gospel, not as simply information, but in all of its power, fully convinced of its veracity.

***Romans 1:16***

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the* ***power of God*** *to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

*Rather, Paul seems to be doing two things with this contrast: First, he is setting up the argument in 2:1-12, that his preaching and the Thessalonians’ response are quite unrelated to the kind of “word” one finds among the religious and philosophical charlatans. As they well know, and as he will argue in 2:1-12, his manner of life among them as proclaimer of the gospel was quite in contrast to such purveyors of empty words, who used “flattery as a mask for greed” (2:5). Paul’s “word” was accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit and carried deep conviction. Fee*

*Second, Paul wants to remind them, as he will the Corinthians in another context (1 Cor 2:1-5), that the message of the gospel is truth accompanied by experienced reality. Fee*

*Most likely, as with the former phrase, it refers in a way both to Paul’s preaching and to their response to it. His preaching was accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit so as to carry great conviction, which finally was evidenced by their conversion. Fee*

**Verse 5b**

Just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

1. **b. Paul reminds them of his character and that of those who worked with him.**

*“You know” what manner of men we were “among you for your sake.” This appeal to the Thessalonians’ recall of what they “know” is one of the notably repeated themes in these two letters, occurring no fewer than nine times. Fee*

*That is, with the return of Timothy (3:6) Paul has learned that a part of the Thessalonians’ present suffering (both past and ongoing) at the hands of their (pagan) fellow citizens had included a considerable smear campaign against Paul — as just another religious charlatan, Fee*

*The accusation apparently was threefold: (a) what Paul teaches is full of error; (b) he himself is less than honest (full of guile, flattery, impure motives); (c) the reason for which is greed. Paul then responds to these matters in reverse order: (c) in verse 8, he and his companions toiled with their own hands so as not to burden you; (b) in verses 10-11, their conduct was holy and righteous; (a) in verse 13, their gospel is the very word of God. Fee*

***Hence the emphasis throughout is simultaneously on the truthfulness of the message and the integrity of the messenger. In this case these two concerns are inextricably intertwined. Fee***

**Verse 6**

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

1. **The Thessalonians were immediately persecuted for their faith in Jesus.**
   1. They imitated Paul and the Lord.
   2. The “word” they received was the gospel.
   3. Along with the tribulation they faced they also experienced the joy of the Holy Spirit, just as Paul and Silas experienced in the Philippian jail.

*Paul has just said: “You know how we were toward you for your sakes”; now he adds: “indeed, you yourselves became imitators of us — and of the Lord.” The content of their “imitation” is then spelled out in terms of their having received the word in the midst of great affliction, but accompanied by the joy of the Holy Spirit. Fee*

*But in coming to Christ and thus receiving the Holy Spirit, they had been filled with such an unparalleled joy that even in the midst of genuine hardships related to their having become believers, this is the one characteristic of their life in the Spirit that Paul recalls for them as clear evidence of their conversion. This suggests in the strongest possible way that for Paul joy is one of the certain hallmarks of genuine spirituality. Fee*

**Verses 7-8**

So that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

1. **Just as Paul and those with him had been examples to the Thessalonians, now they themselves were an example not only in Macedonia, but in Achaia.**
2. **Again, “the word of the Lord” spoken of here is the gospel. That gospel was being proclaimed (just as with Paul), not only in word, but by the example of their faith.**

*Paul is well aware that word about the gospel and its affects in Thessalonica had spread like wildfire among the Jewish synagogues in Greece, and therefore especially among the Gentiles who attended the synagogues. And as the word spread, the Thessalonians served as a “model” of “faith in the midst of suffering” as the gospel continued west and southward. Fee*

*Even so, it was not their “conversion” itself that was to serve as a model for others, but the way they welcomed the gospel in the context of “severe suffering” that served as the model, and continues still to do so where “conversion” takes place outside of cultures deeply influenced by “Christendom.” Fee*

**Verse 9**

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

1. Word was spreading, not only about the gospel, but about the kindness and dedication of the Thessalonians. The love they showed and the act of turning to God from idols was testimony to their living faith. Formerly, they served a dead and false gods, but now they were serving the living and true God.

***Acts 20:17-21***

*From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.****18****And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you,****19****serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;****20****how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,****21****testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks****, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ****.*

*Indeed, when Paul himself explains what he means, he notes that “your faith in God has become known everywhere, so that we do not need to say anything about it.” Thus “the word about the Lord” that has “rung out” from them is the fast-spreading report about “their faith, a faith which is (directed) toward God,” which is further explained in verse 10 as their “turning to the living God from idols.” Fee*

**Verse 10**

And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

1. We don’t just serve the living and true God. We wait for Jesus’ return. We will be rescued from the wrath to come.

[***Romans 5:9***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5:9&version=NKJV)

*Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*

*This remarkable way of identifying the God of Israel occurs just often enough in Paul for Hans Küng to remark that “‘he who raised Jesus from the dead’ becomes practically the designation of the Christian God.” Fee*

*That is, the “living and true God” has a Son, who is currently “in heaven” by virtue of the Father’s having raised him from the dead; and this Son is none other than the earthly Jesus, the one who also rescues us from the wrath of God that will be poured out on all who do not obey him (cf. 2 Thess 1:6-10). It should be noted that this is the earliest known reference in Christian literature to the resurrection of Christ, the single most crucial event in early — and all — Christian faith. Fee*

*It is of interest that the word “wrath” is used exclusively in the New Testament to refer to God’s final judgment on the wicked, and thus is never used regarding believers, whose present lot is “tribulation/suffering.” Thus the focus here is not on the Thessalonian believers’ final glory, but on their opponents’ final destruction, an emphasis which fits altogether the overall perspective of the present narrative.*

*The “wrath to come” that the believer has been delivered from is the wrath or judgment that people will face because of their sins. God determined that the just punishment for sin would be eternal separation from Him. This separation is also referred to as “death” (*[*Romans 6:23*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ro+6%3A23)*). God devised a plan to place the death penalty for sin upon His Son (Jesus Christ) when He suffered and died upon the cross. Because of that death, God offers the forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who will repent and believe upon Christ (*[*Acts 16:31*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A31) *and* [*20:21*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+20%3A21)*). Fee*

*For those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, there will be a day of wrath and vengeance (*[*2 Thessalonians 1:8*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Th+1%3A8) *and* [*1 Peter 4:17*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Pe+4%3A17)*). Those who receive forgiveness through faith in what Jesus has already suffered will not come into judgment again. Their judgment has been placed on Jesus. AWMI*

*Paul introduced here the theme of Christ’s return that he discussed later in detail in 2 Thessalonians. In this letter, he referred at least five times to the return of Jesus Christ, once in each chapter (*[*1 Thessalonians 1:10*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Th+1%3A10)*,* [*2:19*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Th+2%3A19)*,* [*3:13*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Th+3%3A13)*,* [*4:16*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Th+4%3A16)*, and* [*5:23*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Th+5%3A23)*). His return will reveal two things: (1) It will be the “blessed hope” and the final manifestation of the salvation of the believer (*[*Titus 2:13*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Tit+2%3A13) *and* [*Hebrews 9:28*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+9%3A28)*); and (2) it will reveal the final manifestation of God’s personal opposition to evil, resulting in judgment for the unbeliever (*[*2 Thessalonians 1:7-10*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Th+1%3A7-10)*). AWMI*

**Chapter 2 Verses 1-2**

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.

1. There journey was not in vain because the Thessalonians had received the word (the gospel).
2. Paul and Silas were beaten and jailed in Philippi before coming to Thessalonica (Acts 16-17), and they continued to receive intense opposition in Thessalonica. Even so, they had boldness in God to preach the word (the gospel) to them.

**Verse 3**

For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit;

1. Paul defends the motivations for his teaching.
   1. **Error**, Gr Planay objectively *fraudulence*; subjectively a *straying* from orthodoxy or piety: - deceit, to deceive, delusion, error.
   2. **Impurity**, Gr. Akatharsia, *impurity* (the quality), physically or morally: - uncleanness.
   3. **Deceit** Gr. Dolos, probably meaning to *decoy*; compare G1185); a *trick* (*bait*), that is, (figuratively) *wile:* - craft, deceit, guile, subtilty.
   4. **So Paul’s ministry to them was the true pure gospel without error, presented by Paul and his associates form a pure morally upright lifestyle, without trickery or manipulation.**

**Verse 4**

But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.

1. a. What gets tested or approved is our “faith”, what we believe.

*Approved, Gr. Dokimadzo, to test (literally or figuratively); by implication to approve: - allow, discern, examine, like, (ap-) prove, try. Strongs*

1. This same word is used in the Septuagint (to which Paul is probably referring), in Zechariah 13:9.

*“And I will bring the third part through the fire,  
Refine them as silver is refined,  
And test them as gold is tested.  
They will call on My name,  
And I will answer them;  
I will say, ‘They are My people,’  
And they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”*

*Perfect passive indicative of dokimazō, old verb to put to the test, but here the tense for completed state means tested and proved and so approved by God.-Robertson’s Word Pictures*

*1 Peter 1:6-8 6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof (dokimadzo) of your faith, being more precious than gold which  praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

*Verse 4: As we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.*

*Entrusted, pisteuo, to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), that is, credit; by implication to entrust.-Strongs*

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| Trial  dokimazo (dok-im-ad’-zo):  To test (lit. or fig.) by implication—to approve; allow, discern, examine, prove, try. Other forms of the same word: trustiness—experience, proof, trial; testing—by implication; trustworthiness, trial—trying.  **This same Greek word is also commonly translated: TO PROVE**  Trials have to do with proving, improving, and approving.  **WARNING: In a few instances, the word translated try is really originally tempt.**  Trials and proving are meant to **prove us (make us stronger), *improve***  us and/or to show that we are ***approved***. |
| Test, tests, tested, testing  I discovered why there is some confusion about temptations, trials, and testing. The words “test, tests, tested, testing” DO NOT APPEAR **AT ALL** IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE KJV. WHAT A SHOCK! In the newer versions, the word **test is** used for both tempt and try/prove so you do not know which word it is  **unless you look it up.** |
| Important Conclusion: If we are uncertain about what word is being used (tempt or try/prove), it is worth our time to LOOK IT UP. Here is one example how words can be confusing.  ⬥**1 Pet. 4:12** Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;. . .   * The first word “trial” does not appear in the original text AT ALL…only “fire”. Yes, what is about to happen will not be pleasant, but it does not say here that it will be a “trial” (dokimazo). It just says “fire”. * The word translated “try” here is actually the word for TEMPT (peirazo).   🡺So, a better translation is: Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fire which is to tempt you,. . . 🡸  🗦 **AS WE OFTEN SAY, CONSIDER THE SOURCE.** 🗧  Some events in our lives are sent by The Tempter.   * The goal of temptation is to destroy us by enticing us to do wrong or to fall or to get us to deny Jesus.   Some events are meant for our good to either to prove us, improve us, or approve us.   * Some of these events will make us strong/capable. * Some of these events will prove that we are strong/capable; making us approved |

1. Therefore, because Paul was approved/refined to teach the pure gospel, God said “I believe” in you, Paul, to minister this gospel.

When Paul spoke the pure gospel, it pleased God.

When Paul says “but God who examines our hearts.” The word examine is “dokimadzo” again. What is God looking for in ministers’ hearts?

***Galatians 1:1, 10***

*Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), 2 and all the brethren who are with me…10 For do I now persuade men, or God?* ***Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ****.*

1. 1. Seeking to be pleasing to people, 2. Using the gospel for greed, 3. Seeking glory from man. These are discussed in verses 5 and 6.

**Verses 5-6**

For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness— 6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.

1. Paul is saying that even though he may be accused by others to have impure motives, God had tested his heart, and now God was witnessing to the fact of Paul’s truthfulness.

*The accusation apparently was threefold: (a) what Paul teaches is full of error; (b) he himself is less than honest (full of guile, flattery, impure motives); (c) the reason for which is greed. Paul then responds to these matters in reverse order: (c) in verse 8, he and his companions toiled with their own hands so as not to burden you; (b) in verses 10-11, their conduct was holy and righteous; (a) in verse 13, their gospel is the very word of God. Fee*

*Hence the emphasis throughout is simultaneously on the truthfulness of the message and the integrity of the messenger. In this case these two concerns are inextricably intertwined. Fee*

1. Could it be possible that “ministers of the gospel” would use flattering speech in order to gain financially? Does anyone seek glory from men? Do “ministers” assert their authority? Are there men-pleasers among those who preach? Sadly, yes. Is it true of all who preach? No. The important thing to consider is that just because someone is a “minister” does not automatically mean that this person preaches a pure message with pure motives.