

Friday 10th July 2020

On the contrary, we speak as men of God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tested our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed - God is our witness. We are not looking for praise from men, nor from anyone else.

As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved so much we were delighted with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. 1 Thessalonians 2:4-9

Paul's ministry to the believers in Thessalonika is personal and intimate; he doesn't stand apart from them aloof and superior but shared in the everyday life of the community. In verse 7 Paul speaks of his ministry to them in the most intimate way using the image of a mother tenderly caring for her little children by providing basic food (milk) that assures life. Paul is reminding Thessalonian Christians that they also have received nourishment, the life-giving nourishment of the word of God is being poured into their lives and they are growing in their faith.

Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians is not only showing the tenderness and gentleness of a mother but also the encouragement and comfort of a father.

For you know we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom of glory. 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

Paul is emphasizing to the Thessalonians that he is encouraging them to grow and mature. He is committed to encourage them to press on until they become all that God has planned for them to be.

What a beautiful picture and balance we see in Paul's ministry. On the one hand the gentleness and nurturing provision of a mother and the encouragement, challenge and discipline of a father. By his care and concern Paul brings a healthy and whole ministry to these believers who long to live lives worthy of God who calls them into his kingdom and glory. As God's people we too are called. We can experience this closeness that can mark the relationships within the church today, as we grow closer to each other, as the family of God.

Heavenly Father we praise and give thanks for all who preach and teach the gospel message in all its fullness. We pray that although we all have different views on many things, that we learn to be tolerant and more understanding of others point of view. Lord we ask that through your Holy Spirit you enable us to grow closer to each other as the family of God and remember that we are part of the one body through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.