

September, 2006

# Pause Ponder Profit

---

## “Entrusted With The Gospel”

by James A. Brown

In 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, the apostle Paul deals, for the most part, with false accusations leveled against him and those preachers who had labored with him, as they preached the gospel among the Thessalonians. Evidently the one’s making these charges were trying to destroy the faith of the saints in Thessalonica by undermining their confidence in Paul and his co-workers. The context seems to indicate that the accusation was made that Paul and his fellow laborers were only interested in gaining personal honor or financial profit. Since similar charges, whether true or false, may be made against preachers today, it will be profitable for us to study what Paul had to say.

**1 Thess. 2:1** For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. The Thessalonians knew by personal experience all that Paul and his fellow workers had done among them. They had not come to Thessalonica to flatter, deceive, and take, but to give the greatest treasure available—the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their coming was not in vain, i.e., it was not that which was fruitless, without effect, or that which resulted in

nothing. No, on the contrary, their coming had produced Christians and a local congregation of God’s people (cf. 1 Thess. 1:1). The plural pronouns “we”, “our”, and “us”, throughout the passage, would include in the immediate context Paul, Silas, and Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1).

**1 Thess. 2:2** But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. “As you know”, indicates that the Thessalonians knew about the physical and mental abuse Paul and Silas had experienced before they arrived in Thessalonica. This probably refers to them being stripped, beaten, and jailed in Philippi without proper examination of the charges against them (cf. Acts 16:16-40). But this kind of ill-treatment in the past did not keep them from boldly proclaiming the gospel message even when the prospect of such cruelty was likely in the future.

**1 Thess. 2:3** For our exhortation *did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit*. “Exhortation” in this context simply refers to the message, instruction, or preaching of the gospel which the Thessalonians were urged to accept. Paul said this exhortation did not come from three insincere motives. First, this message did not come “from”, Lit., “out of” error. Error here is not merely the result of ignorance, but of evil intentions. Paul is saying that he and his co-workers knew what the truth was and had no intention of misleading those who would listen to their appeal. Second, their preaching did not come out of uncleanness or out of impure purpose. For example, their appeal did not proceed out of greed for financial profit or lust for power among the Thessalonians. Third, their



**1 Thess. 2:10** You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; Continuing to show that the work of the evangelists among the saints in Thessalonica had been sincere, Paul now refers to their manner of life. Concerning their conduct Paul says both you and God are witnesses to the truthfulness of what he here writes. The word translated "devoutly" means, "pure from evil conduct, and observant of God's will". It expresses an attitude of piety and reverence toward God which would affect one's conduct. "Justly" is used to describe how man should live before God and men. It means, uprightly, righteously, in accordance with what is right. "Blamelessly" means, "deserving no criticism, not subject to blame". The same Greek word is used in 1 Thess. 5:23, where it is translated "blameless".

**1 Thess. 2:11** as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, The phrase, "as you know" is the fifth reference in this section of text to the Thessalonians' personal knowledge of the facts about the conduct of these preachers (cf. vs. 1,2,5,9,10). These evangelist had manifested the love and concern of a father for his own children. This affection was demonstrated to each one of them in the presentation of the gospel message. "Exhorted" indicates the pleading and the admonishing which was done by these evangelist. "Comforted" or encouraged evidently refers to speaking words of consolation and encouragement to those who were experiencing difficulty in living the Christian life in the face of severe opposition (cf. 5:14). "Charged" has within it the idea of solemn declaration of serious words. In 4:6 Paul reminds them of one such instance in which this type of teaching had been done.

**1 Thess. 2:12** that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. The purpose or aim of all the

exhorting, encouraging, and charging was that the saints in Thessalonica might live a life worthy of God. This expression, "worthy of God", describes a life in which we offer to God the very best we can. The main idea seems to be that of leading a life that is in harmony with the Christian's relation to God who calls us into His everlasting kingdom and glory.

Although no one today has the gospel entrusted to them as did the inspired preachers of the first century, there is still a sense in which it is entrusted to faithful men today (2 Tim. 2:2). I pray that I conduct myself as Paul and his co-workers did as I preach the gospel among those to whom I take it. And I pray that this is the way you handle the word of God with those with whom you come in contact.

***To Our Denominational Friends We Present . . .  
Some Things You Cannot Find In The New Testament***

1. One word about any kind of denominational church.
2. When any denominational church was established.
3. Where any denominational church was established.
4. Where the Lord every added one to any denominational church.
5. How to become a member of any denominational church.
6. The words, Baptist Church, Methodist Church, Lutherans Church, Presbyterian Church, Catholic Church, Nazarene Church, Pentecostal Church, etc., etc.

## Live It Down

by Larry Ray Halfey

David sinned and was shamed. "My sin," he said, "is ever before me" (Psa. 51:3). Paul never forgot his days as a tormentor and persecutor. Because of his awful past, he thought himself unfit to be called an apostle (1 Cor. 15:9). Did Peter ever forget having cursed and sworn that he did not know Jesus? I think not.

If this is your sad plight, perhaps the following story will help you. Years ago, two brothers were caught and condemned for stealing sheep. As part of their punishment, their foreheads were branded with large capital letters, "S. S."

One of the young men could not bear the stigma. He fled from town to town, but everywhere he went, people inquired about the letters on his forehead. Haunted by his past, he lived on the run as a fugitive, trying to escape his shame and reproach. He died while still a young man, never able to escape the letters seared into his skin and scorched into his condemning conscience.

Meanwhile, his brother settled down in the same community where his crime had been committed. He worked and lived an honest, upright life. He devoted himself to helping and serving others. Many years past and people scarcely noticed the scars on his face. One day, a stranger moved into town and asked his neighbor about the letters, "S. S." on "that old man's face."

"Well, we're not for certain," his neighbor replied, "but we think it means that he's the Savior's Servant."

So, my dear fellow, suffering servant, however grievous your sins have been, if they are forgiven, you are now wearing the brand of the Savior's Servant. Hence, you may humbly forget those things which are behind and reach forth unto those things which are before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Phil. 3:13, 14).



Non-profit Org.  
U. S. Postage Paid  
Permit # 356  
Paragould, AR

Second and Walnut  
Church Of Christ  
400 N. 2nd St.  
P. O. Box 356  
Paragould, AR 72451

Pause — Ponder — Profit is a monthly publication of the Second and Walnut Church Of Christ, Paragould, Arkansas.

**Sunday**  
Radio 1490 AM . . . . . 9:00 A.M.  
Bible Study . . . . . 9:45 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 10:45 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 6:00 P.M.  
**Wednesday**  
Bible Study . . . . . 7:00 P.M.

Preacher: James A. Brown  
Phone: 870-236-3371  
[www.paragouldchurchofchrist.com](http://www.paragouldchurchofchrist.com)