

Message Four

The Pattern of the Apostle Paul in His Person and Living and in Cherishing the Believers and Fostering Their Growth

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 2:1-12

- I. Paul was a pattern to the believers of living and ministering Christ as the Spirit in his spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12; Rom. 8:16:**
- A. Paul took Christ as everything—as his living, pattern, goal, and secret—Phil. 1:19-21a; 2:5-16; 3:7-14; 4:11-13.
 - B. Paul lived by the Spirit, walked by the Spirit, sowed unto the Spirit, and ministered the Spirit as a spiritual man who lived and served in his spirit—Gal. 5:16, 25; 6:8; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 2:15; 2 Cor. 2:13; Rom. 1:9; 8:16.
 - C. Paul lived and did everything in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:1-6, 15-16; Col. 2:19.
- II. The best way to shepherd people, to cherish and nourish them, is to give them a proper pattern; Paul fed his spiritual children with his own living of Christ—1 Thes. 2:1-12; 2 Cor. 1:23—2:14; 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22; Acts 20:28:**
- A. The apostles not only preached the gospel but also lived it; their ministering of the gospel was not only by word but also by a life that displayed the power of God, a life in the Holy Spirit and in the assurance of faith—1 Thes. 1:5.
 - B. The saints in Thessalonica became imitators of the apostles; this led them to follow the Lord, to take Him as their pattern, thus making them a pattern to all other believers—vv. 6-7.
 - C. The apostle Paul stressed repeatedly the apostles' entrance toward the believers; this shows that their manner of life played a great role in infusing the gospel into the new converts—vv. 5, 9; 2:1:
 - 1. The apostles were struggling and speaking the gospel to the Thessalonians in the boldness of God—v. 2.
 - 2. The apostles were free from deception, uncleanness, and guile—v. 3.
 - 3. The apostles were first tested and approved by God and then were entrusted by Him with the gospel; hence, their speaking, the preaching of the gospel, was not of themselves to please men but of God to please Him; God proved, examined, and tested their hearts continually—v. 4; Psa. 26:2; 139:23-24; 2 Cor. 1:12; 6:6; 7:3.
 - 4. The apostles were never found with flattering speech nor with a pretext for covetousness—1 Thes. 2:5.
 - 5. The apostles did not seek glory from men and did not stand on their own authority or dignity as apostles of Christ—1 Thes. 2:6b.
 - 6. The apostles cherished the believers and yearned over them as a nursing mother would cherish and yearn over her own children—1 Thes. 2:7-8; cf. Gal. 4:19; Isa. 49:14-15; 66:12-13:
 - a. To cherish people is to make them happy, to comfort them, to make them feel that you are pleasant to them, easy to be contacted in everything and in every way.

- b. Cherishing includes nourishing; to nourish people is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ in His full ministry of three stages—Eph. 5:29.
- 7. The apostles not only imparted the gospel of God to the Thessalonians; they also imparted their own souls—1 Thes. 2:8.
- 8. The apostles considered themselves as fathers in exhorting the believers to walk in a manner worthy of God, to have a walk that will enable them to enter into the kingdom of God and usher them into the glory of God—1 Thes. 2:11-12.
- D. We need to follow the pattern of the apostles to pay more attention to life than to work—John 12:24; 2 Cor. 4:12.
- E. Paul fostered the development of the believers' faith, love, and hope—1 Thes. 1:3, 5, 8; 3:2, 5-7; 4:9; 5:8:
 - 1. To foster is to bring up, to nurture, to nourish and cherish, to cultivate, to promote growth and development—2:7-8, 11.
 - 2. Paul fostered the believers mainly by presenting to them a pattern of life, a pattern of a proper living; this pattern was actually Paul himself—1:5; 2:10; 2 Thes. 3:9.