

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE

Message Two

Presenting Ourselves as Patterns for Fostering the Young People and New Believers

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 1:5-8; 2:1-20; 2 Thes. 3:7, 9; 1 Pet. 5:2-4

- I. For new believers to live a holy life for the church life, there is the need of the aspect of fostering—1 Thes. 2:7-12; Eph. 5:29, footnote 1:**
- A. Paul likens the apostles both to a nursing mother and to an exhorting father; they regarded the believers as children under their fostering care; just as parents care for their children, fostering their growth, so the apostles cared for the new believers—1 Thes. 2:6b-7, 11.
 - B. First Thessalonians is a word to beginners, to new believers; those who are working with young people or with new believers can receive from this book both a direction and an outline to follow—1:3 and footnote 2.
- II. Paul fostered the young believers mainly by presenting them a pattern of life, a pattern of a proper living; this pattern was actually Paul himself—v. 5; 2:10; 2 Thes. 3:7-9:**
- 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 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—v. 4; Psa. 139:23-24.
 - 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—v. 6a:
 - a. To seek glory from men is a real temptation to every Christian worker; many have been devoured and spoiled by this matter—1 Sam. 15:12.
 - b. Lucifer became God's adversary, Satan, because of glory-seeking; anyone who seeks glory from men is a follower of Satan—Ezek. 28:13-17; Isa. 14:12-15; Matt. 4:8-10.
 - c. How much we will be used by the Lord and how long our usefulness will last depends on whether we seek glory from men—John 7:17-18; 5:39-44; 12:43; 2 Cor. 4:5.
 - 6. The apostles did not stand on their own authority or dignity as apostles of Christ—1 Thes. 2:6b.
 - 7. The apostles cherished the believers and yearned over them as a nursing mother would cherish and yearn over her own children—vv. 7-8, cf. v. 17; Gal. 4:19; Isa. 49:14-15; 66:12-13.
 - 8. The apostles not only imparted the gospel of God to the Thessalonians; they also imparted their own souls—1 Thes. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:15.

9. 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.

III. To do the work of fostering, 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—vv. 1-12; cf. 2 Cor. 1:23—2:14; 1 Cor. 9:22; Acts 20:28:

- A. Parents are patterns, models, for their children; whatever the parents are, the children will be also; imitating is related to growing; children grow by imitating their parents—2 Thes. 3:9; Heb. 13:7.
- B. To give the new believers and young ones a lot of teaching is not the proper way to take care of them; the proper way to foster them is to show them a pattern; by showing them a pattern you water them, supply them, nourish them, and cherish them—2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 8:1b; 1 Thes. 2:8.
- C. The source, the origin, of the apostles' preaching was God and not themselves; whenever we preach or teach, we must impress others with the fact that what we are saying is not the word of man, but is truly the word of God—v. 13; Heb. 4:12.
- D. The church in Thessalonica imitated the churches in Judea—1 Thes. 2:14:
 1. Reports concerning the churches in Judea reached the believers in Thessalonica; they must have heard about the churches and the saints and these reports fostered the growth of the Thessalonian believers—v. 14.
 2. Nothing can foster a church or a saint as much as a true story about other saints or churches—Acts 27:21, footnote 2; Rom. 16:4, 13.
- E. The inoculating word was also part of Paul's fostering of the saints; even inoculation is included in fostering; Paul inoculated the believers against the eventual coming of the Judaizers—1 Thes. 2:15.
- F. Paul likened their departure from them to a bereavement, a loss they suffered from being separated from them and that caused them to miss them; this word implies that the apostles considered the new converts precious and dear to them—vv. 15-17.

IV. Those who work with the Lord in fostering the believers to walk worthily of God will receive a reward; this reward will be the believers we have fostered becoming our crown, glory, and joy—1 Thes. 2:19-20; 1 Peter 5:3-4:

- A. Because the apostles rendered such a care to the new believers, the apostles will eventually receive a reward from the Lord—1 Thes. 2:19-20.
- B. First Thessalonians 2:20 indicates that since the apostles were the believers' nursing mother and exhorting father, the believers, as their children, were their glory and joy; apart from them, the apostles had no hope, glory, or crown of boasting—vv. 19-20.
- C. "When the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will also receive the unfading crown of glory"—1 Pet. 5:4; Matt. 24:45-47.