A SIX-WEEK GROUP BIBLE STUDY

Entrusted with the Gospel of God

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Pastor Jason K. Boothe

Redeemer Church of Piketon, Ohio

Bold in witness. Faithful in truth. Gentle in love.

Full KJV Scripture readings • 60 discussion questions

How to Use This Study

God saves sinners by His sovereign grace through Jesus Christ, and He entrusts His church with proclaiming that Gospel boldly, faithfully, and lovingly. This study follows that central truth through Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8.

The chapters develop the preaching and written sermon material of Pastor Jason K. Boothe for group study. Read slowly, keep your Bible open, and let the passage govern your conclusions. The exposition and additional applications are arranged for study rather than presented as a verbatim transcript.

A weekly rhythm

Before the meeting, read the main passage, the chapter, and its full-text cross references. Mark one truth that comforts you, one question that needs attention, and one implication for your life.

Allow 60-75 minutes together: 5 minutes for prayer, 10 minutes to read the focus passage, 15 minutes to review the exposition and cross references, 25-35 minutes for discussion, and 5-10 minutes for application and prayer. All ten questions are provided for each chapter; leaders may carry unfinished questions into personal reflection or extend a meeting.

Ask participants to explain their answers from Scripture. Give quieter members room to speak. Do not pressure anyone to disclose private experiences. Keep personal prayer requests confidential. Where disagreement arises, return patiently to the text and seek understanding.

Scripture and study notes

All biblical quotations in this booklet are from the King James Version. Each selected cross-reference passage is printed in full. Short phrases within the exposition point back to those readings. The Gospel’s first claim upon us is personal: look to Christ, receive His Word, and seek His grace.

Scripture quotations: The Holy Bible, King James Version. The KJV text is in the public domain in the United States.

Six Weeks in the Gospel

Week 1 • The Gospel God Entrusts to His Church

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 | Pages 5-8

Recognize the Gospel as God’s message and the church as its entrusted servant.

Week 2 • Bold in Our God

1 Thessalonians 2:1-2 | Pages 9-12

Connect courage in witness with God’s sovereign grace and the Spirit’s power.

Week 3 • The Gospel of Accomplished Redemption

1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 | Pages 13-16

Explain why forgiveness and acceptance rest upon Christ’s sufficient saving work.

Week 4 • Grace That Gives Life and Receives Sinners

1 Thessalonians 2:4-6 | Pages 17-20

Understand sovereign grace as the source of faith, humility, and assurance in Christ.

Week 5 • Integrity Before the God Who Knows

1 Thessalonians 2:3-6 | Pages 21-24

Examine motives, methods, and accountability in the service of the Gospel.

Week 6 • The Gospel Shared with Our Own Souls

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 | Pages 25-28

Practice the gentle, self-giving love that accords with the Gospel of grace.

Main Scripture reading • page 4

About the Author • page 29
Learn More About the Gospel • page 30

Bring a Bible, this booklet, and a pen. Each chapter ends with ten questions and room to record prayer and application notes. The Scripture study page explains how each cross reference illuminates the chapter.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

King James Version

1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

Read the passage as a whole each week. Notice the movement from courage, to faithfulness and accountability, to gentleness and affection. The message belongs to God, and His servants are answerable to Him.

The Gospel God Entrusts to His Church

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 | Recognize the Gospel as God’s message and the church as its entrusted servant.

The deepest need of the soul

A person may come among God’s people carrying grief, financial trouble, family conflict, or fear. Those burdens deserve our patient attention. The sermon begins by taking them seriously while asking us to look beneath them. Every sinner needs reconciliation with God. A comfortable life cannot remove guilt, provide righteousness, or overcome death. The church serves people faithfully when its practical compassion accompanies a clear proclamation of Jesus Christ.

This priority gives shape to everything else. We can feed a hungry neighbor and listen to a grieving friend because we love them. Yet our love must also speak of the Savior. We should never make receiving help conditional upon a religious response. Neither should we become embarrassed by the very message God has entrusted to us. The person before us has both present burdens and an eternal destiny.

Read the whole passage before concentrating on any single verse. Paul joins the message to the manner of its delivery. Courage, honesty, accountability, gentleness, and affection belong together. The truth of the Gospel comes from God; the servant’s conduct ought to commend that truth. A ministry may speak forcefully and still fail to love. It may seem caring while withholding the message that sinners most need.

Whose Gospel is it?

The exact expression “the gospel of God” appears in verses 2 and 8. Verse 4 describes the Gospel as a sacred trust. These statements direct our attention to its Owner. God determines what the message is, sends His servants to proclaim it, and supplies the power that brings sinners to faith. We receive this message under His authority.

That means the church cannot reshape the Gospel to suit changing tastes. We may explain unfamiliar words and choose language our neighbors understand. We may answer different questions in different settings. But the content remains Christ and His saving work. Our usefulness depends upon faithfulness to what God has revealed.

Considering the Gospel

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

The sermon emphasizes that salvation is the work of the triune God. The Father purposes salvation in sovereign love. The Son accomplishes redemption through His obedience, death, and resurrection. The Holy Spirit gives life and brings sinners to faith in Christ. These are the works of the one God, eternally Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We must not speak as though one divine person were gracious while another had to be persuaded to love.

This truth provides both assurance and humility. Salvation rests upon God’s purpose and provision. The church does not create spiritual life by arranging the right atmosphere. A preacher’s skill cannot supply the Spirit’s power. We should prepare carefully, explain clearly, and pray earnestly, while remembering that the saving work belongs to God. Dependence upon the Spirit should make us diligent and prayerful.

The Gospel also has definite historical content. Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. He is no distant idea about kindness or spirituality. He is the living Lord who accomplished redemption. Our confidence rests upon Him, and our message must make Him known.

Stewards in an ordinary congregation

A steward cares for what belongs to another. That picture frees a congregation from the pressure to invent a new message. It also removes the excuse for neglecting the old one. God has placed opportunities before us: children at home, friends at work, neighbors in difficulty, visitors who are unsure what they believe. We can speak honestly about our own need and point them to Christ.

Consider a church planning its next year. Attendance, finances, and activities all require attention. Yet the central question is whether people are hearing the Gospel and receiving loving care. A crowded calendar can conceal a neglected calling. A modest gathering can faithfully proclaim the Savior.

This week, listen to the way you describe Christianity. Does your explanation reach Christ’s person and finished work? Ask God to make your words clear, your concern sincere, and your confidence steady. The Gospel has been entrusted to us for the good of people whom we are called to love.

Read Scripture Together

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (KJV)

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; **4** And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

The Gospel announces what Christ accomplished in history, according to Scripture.

Ephesians 1:3-7 (KJV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: **4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: **5** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, **6** To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. **7** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

The Father’s gracious purpose and redemption in the Son belong to one saving work.

John 15:26 (KJV)

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

The Spirit bears witness to Christ. Gospel ministry depends upon His testimony.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 (KJV)

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. **21** For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Reconciliation centers on Christ’s saving work and gives urgency to the church’s appeal.

Discuss and Respond

1. What does Paul ask the Thessalonians to remember about his ministry among them?

2. Where does the passage identify the Gospel as belonging to God, and what follows from that ownership?

3. How does the word “trust” in verse 4 shape your understanding of the church’s responsibility?

4. Why can meeting physical or emotional needs never exhaust the church’s calling?

5. How can a congregation preserve Gospel priority while caring seriously for present suffering?

6. What does 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 require us to include when we explain the Gospel?

7. How do the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work in the salvation described in this week’s readings?

8. What dangers arise when a church treats its message as something it may redesign?

9. How would you respond to a neighbor who thinks Christianity means becoming respectable?

10. What one change would help our group join clearer Gospel speech with more attentive love?

Practice this week

Write a four-sentence explanation of the Gospel. Include our sin, Christ’s saving work, the call to trust Him, and the grace of God. Bring it to the next meeting.

Prayer and application notes

Bold in Our God

1 Thessalonians 2:1-2 | Connect courage in witness with God’s sovereign grace and the Spirit’s power.

Courage after suffering

Paul does not describe an easy beginning. He and his companions had been shamefully treated at Philippi, and they faced conflict as they proclaimed Christ in Thessalonica. The memory of suffering traveled with them. Nevertheless, they spoke again. Their courage was found “in our God.”

This phrase deserves slow consideration. Paul does not present courage as a personality type. Some believers speak readily; others feel their weakness every time a conversation turns toward Christ. Both need the same God. Christian boldness grows from confidence in His authority, His presence, and His power. A trembling voice may speak with real faithfulness.

The account in Acts explains the message Paul carried into Thessalonica. He opened the Scriptures and reasoned that the Christ must suffer and rise from the dead. His boldness had content. He sought to make Jesus known through the Word. Courage without a clear message can become little more than noise. Faithful witness gives people something true to understand and believe.

Notice also that opposition did not prove the ministry useless. Verse 1 looks back upon an entrance that was not in vain. God had worked among the Thessalonians. Yet that fruit appeared in a setting of resistance. We should be slow to judge the worth of faithful ministry by how comfortable it feels or how warmly everyone receives it.

God appoints the message and the means

In the preceding chapter, Paul connects the believers’ election with the Gospel coming in the power of the Holy Ghost. God’s purpose and Gospel proclamation belong together. His sovereignty gives us a reason to speak with hope. He uses the message He commands His church to proclaim.

We do not know God’s secret purposes concerning the person before us. We do know our calling. We should speak widely, pray sincerely, and leave the saving result with Him. No heart is beyond His power to change.

Considering the Gospel

Expectancy without manipulation

The sermon repeatedly warns against trying to manufacture a spiritual response. A person may be moved by music, pressure, fear of embarrassment, or affection for a speaker without understanding the Gospel. We cannot inspect another person’s heart, but we can examine our methods. Are we explaining Christ clearly, or trying to secure a visible result that makes us feel successful?

Earnest appeal remains appropriate. We may plead, reason, answer questions, and urge people to trust Christ. Paul’s dependence upon God never made him indifferent. The difference concerns the ground of our confidence and the honesty of our approach. We appeal to the conscience through truth and trust the Spirit to give life. We refuse to substitute coercion for faith.

God’s sovereignty also steadies a small congregation. The sermon recalls how recorded preaching can continue to serve listeners long after the preacher has died. We cannot measure every consequence of a faithful word. A conversation may be remembered years later. A child may recall a passage learned at home. The Lord is free to use ordinary means beyond anything we can foresee.

Boldness that remains gentle

Read verse 2 beside verse 7. The same servants who spoke boldly were gentle among the people. Boldness cannot excuse contempt. A harsh tone may reveal wounded pride rather than courage. Our aim is that people understand the Savior, even when they disagree with us.

Suppose a coworker mocks your faith. You need not win the exchange before the whole room. You can answer truthfully, decline an angry quarrel, and remain willing to speak later. Ask a sincere question. Explain why your hope rests in Christ. Pray for the person after the conversation rather than rehearsing the insult.

For this week’s practice, identify one opportunity you have avoided. Ask the Lord for wisdom about the right time and words. Courage may begin with a simple invitation, a thoughtful question, or a brief explanation of your hope. Faithfulness is possible even when you cannot control the response.

Read Scripture Together

Acts 17:1-4 (KJV)

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: **2** And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, **3** Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. **4** And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

Paul reasoned from Scripture and proclaimed the suffering and risen Christ in Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 (KJV)

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. **5** For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Election and the Spirit’s powerful use of Gospel preaching appear together.

Romans 10:14-15 (KJV)

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? **15** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

God’s saving purpose includes the sending of messengers and the hearing of His Word.

Acts 4:31 (KJV)

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Prayerful dependence upon the Spirit produces bold speech.

Discuss and Respond

1. What circumstances made Paul’s renewed preaching costly?

2. What is the difference between being bold in ourselves and being bold in our God?

3. How does Acts 17 identify the substance of Paul’s preaching?

4. What does “not in vain” teach us about evaluating ministry amid opposition?

5. How do 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 and Romans 10:14-15 hold election and evangelism together?

6. Why does ignorance of God’s secret decree never excuse withholding the Gospel from someone?

7. How can an earnest appeal differ from an attempt to manipulate a response?

8. What would courage joined to gentleness look like in a hostile conversation?

9. How does God’s ability to use a message beyond our lifetime encourage ordinary faithfulness?

10. Where do you need courage this week, and how can the group pray and support you?

Practice this week

Pray by name for someone you hope to speak with. Prepare one clear Gospel truth and one sincere question. Seek an appropriate opportunity without pressuring the person.

Prayer and application notes

The Gospel of Accomplished Redemption

1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 | Explain why forgiveness and acceptance rest upon Christ’s sufficient saving work.

A message received under authority

Paul describes an exhortation free from deceit, uncleanness, and guile. The message was true, the purpose was sincere, and the method was honest. God had entrusted the Gospel to him. That trust required him to deliver what he had received rather than offer whatever might attract an audience.

Verses 3-4 do not summarize every doctrine of redemption. They establish the responsibility of the messenger. To explain the Gospel entrusted to Paul, this chapter follows the sermon’s use of other apostolic passages. Romans speaks of justification and propitiation; Corinthians announces Christ’s death and resurrection. Reading these texts together helps us understand the treasure that the servant must faithfully guard.

We begin where the sermon begins: every person is guilty before a holy God. Respectability cannot erase sin. Religious experience cannot change the past. Comparison with a worse offender cannot establish righteousness. God’s judgment concerns what we are and what we have done before Him, including the motives others cannot see.

Why promises cannot atone

The sermon uses a courtroom illustration. A guilty person may promise never to repeat an offense, but that promise does not answer for the offense already committed. We understand this in ordinary justice. We should understand it when considering our guilt before God.

Repentance is necessary, yet sorrow has no power to pay sin’s debt. Improved behavior cannot purchase pardon. We need the redemption that God provides in Christ. This humbles us, but it also directs us away from an impossible task. The troubled conscience is invited to look beyond itself to the Savior.

Romans 3 joins our universal need to God’s gracious provision. Justification is free to the sinner because redemption has been accomplished by Christ. Grace never means that God ignores evil. He saves righteously, through the blood of His Son.

Considering the Gospel

The obedience of the Redeemer

The eternal Son took our humanity and lived without sin. His saving obedience reaches its appointed culmination in the death of the cross. The sermon emphasizes the unity of this work. We should not divide His obedient life from His sacrificial death as though either could be detached from the Savior’s completed mission. He gave Himself fully to accomplish His Father’s will.

Propitiation means that Christ’s sacrifice satisfies God’s righteous wrath against sin. God remains just as He justifies the believer. The ground of forgiveness is found in the Substitute who bore judgment for His people. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. His death has saving purpose and saving efficacy.

Christ also rose bodily from the dead. We proclaim a living Savior whose finished sacrifice retains its power. His present intercession does not suggest that the cross needs to be repeated. The One who offered Himself lives forever to preserve His people. Their hope rests upon His sufficiency.

Accepted in Christ

To be justified is to be declared righteous before God. In the Gospel, our acceptance rests upon Christ. He knew no sin, yet stood in the place of sinners; those who believe are made the righteousness of God in Him. This exchange must never be explained as though Jesus became morally sinful. He remained the holy Savior while bearing His people’s guilt.

Faith receives Christ and rests upon Him. Its value lies in its object. A believer’s fluctuating emotions cannot improve or diminish the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. When your conscience accuses you, confess your sin honestly and return to the promise of the Gospel. Do not try to supplement the Savior with your tears, intensity, or achievements.

This assurance produces gratitude and obedience. It does not make sin harmless. The price of redemption teaches us how serious sin is, while the sufficiency of redemption teaches us where to seek peace. The church has been entrusted with this good news. We can speak of an accomplished salvation because we proclaim an all-sufficient Redeemer.

Read Scripture Together

Romans 3:23-26 (KJV)

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: **25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; **26** To declare, I say , at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

God justifies freely through redemption while remaining perfectly just.

Philippians 2:8 (KJV)

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Christ’s obedience culminates in His willing death on the cross.

John 10:11 (KJV)

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

The Shepherd gives His life for His sheep.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (KJV)

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Our acceptance rests upon the sinless Christ who stood in our place.

Hebrews 7:25 (KJV)

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The risen Savior’s continuing intercession assures His people of His saving sufficiency.

Discuss and Respond

1. What do deceit, uncleanness, and guile reveal about ways a ministry can become unfaithful?

2. Why does being entrusted with the Gospel require care about its doctrinal content?

3. How does Romans 3:23 remove our confidence in comparisons with other people?

4. Why can a promise to improve never atone for sins already committed?

5. What does propitiation teach about God’s justice and Christ’s sacrifice?

6. How does the sermon’s emphasis on Christ’s united obedience help us understand His saving mission?

7. What assurance does the Good Shepherd’s purposeful sacrifice give His sheep?

8. How would you explain justification and 2 Corinthians 5:21 without suggesting that Christ became personally sinful?

9. How does Christ’s continuing intercession strengthen a believer whose feelings fluctuate?

10. How can confidence in finished redemption encourage both honest confession and grateful obedience?

Practice this week

Write a response to this concern: “I have failed again, so I must do something to make God accept me.” Use the chapter’s Scripture readings to point the person to Christ.

Prayer and application notes

Grace That Gives Life and Receives Sinners

1 Thessalonians 2:4-6 | Understand sovereign grace as the source of faith, humility, and assurance in Christ.

The truth that humbles the messenger

Paul speaks before the God who tries the heart. He rejects flattery, covetousness, and human glory. The sermon connects this integrity with a deeper truth: salvation is wholly of grace. A messenger who understands his own helplessness has little reason to flatter human pride or congratulate himself on spiritual superiority.

Ephesians describes sinners as dead in trespasses and sins. This spiritual death does not remove human responsibility or suggest that people cannot reason, work, or care for their families. It describes their fallen relation to God. Apart from His grace, they do not possess the spiritual life by which they willingly embrace Christ. Our need reaches deeper than information or encouragement.

The words “But God” announce mercy entering our helpless condition. He gives life to the dead. The sermon calls this resurrection power. The saving response is real: a person hears, repents, and believes. Yet the glory belongs to the God whose mercy brought that person to Christ. Grace changes the heart so that the sinner comes willingly.

Faith receives what grace supplies

Faith is no independent contribution that earns God’s favor. We trust the Savior because mercy has reached us. Ephesians excludes boasting and then speaks of good works as the purpose and fruit of God’s workmanship. The order matters. Our works cannot become the foundation of our acceptance.

The sermon places special emphasis on the believer’s complete standing in Christ. We do not gradually construct a righteousness sufficient for God’s presence. Christ Himself is our righteousness and sanctification. At the same time, the sermon urges humility, brotherly love, correction, and daily dependence. These exhortations concern the thankful life of people already received in the Savior. They never add merit to His finished work.

Considering the Gospel

May I come to Christ?

A troubled person may hear teaching about election and wonder whether the door is open. The sermon answers with the Lord’s own promise. All whom the Father gives to the Son shall come, and the Son will cast out none who come. God’s sovereign purpose and Christ’s gracious welcome stand together in the same verse.

You are not instructed to discover the secret decree before trusting the revealed Savior. Look to the One who promises to receive the coming sinner. Bring your guilt honestly. Abandon every claim that your goodness obligates God to save you. Trust Christ, whose righteousness and blood are sufficient. His promise gives you no reason to stay away.

We must also distinguish God’s eternal purpose from its realization in a sinner’s life. The sermon acknowledges both that God decreed His saving purpose before time and that we were once children of wrath who needed to hear the Gospel. The certainty of His purpose does not make unbelief a safe condition. The Gospel summons us to repentance and faith now.

No room for superiority

The sermon pictures people who have moved forward in a long line and then look back proudly at those still waiting. That tendency can creep into Christian speech. We begin acting as though our position proves our wisdom or worth. Grace asks a searching question: what do we have that we did not receive?

Remembering mercy changes the way we speak to unbelievers and struggling believers. We can be clear about error without enjoying someone’s embarrassment. We can encourage obedience without implying that we have outgrown the need for grace. We can pray for people whose resistance has disappointed us.

This week, examine a relationship in which you have become superior, impatient, or dismissive. Confess that attitude to the Lord. Ask Him to make your speech reflect the mercy you have received. The doctrine of sovereign grace should be heard in our confession and seen in our gentleness. A grateful sinner has reason to speak hopefully about the Savior to other sinners.

Read Scripture Together

Ephesians 2:1-5 (KJV)

1 And you hath he quickened , who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: **3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. **4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, **5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

God’s mercy brings spiritual life to those who were dead in sins.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (KJV)

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **9** Not of works, lest any man should boast. **10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Grace excludes boasting and produces a life of good works.

John 6:37 (KJV)

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

The certainty of the Father’s gift accompanies the Son’s welcome to everyone who comes.

John 6:44 (KJV)

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The Father draws sinners, and Christ promises their resurrection.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 (KJV)

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: **31** That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Christ is the believer’s righteousness and sanctification; all boasting belongs in the Lord.

Discuss and Respond

1. How does grace challenge the pride behind flattery and the pursuit of glory?

2. What does spiritual death mean, and what does it not mean?

3. Who acts decisively in Ephesians 2:4-5, and what does He do?

4. How does renewed willingness differ from outward compliance produced by pressure?

5. What is the relationship among grace, faith, and good works in Ephesians 2:8-10?

6. Why must our complete standing in Christ remain distinct from our daily acts of obedience?

7. How do the two promises in John 6:37 answer the anxious question, “May I come?”

8. Why does God’s eternal saving purpose never make present unbelief safe?

9. Where can spiritual superiority appear in our conversations or treatment of others?

10. How would you encourage someone to trust Christ without asking them first to prove their election?

Practice this week

Name one area where you have treated a spiritual gift as a personal achievement. Give thanks for God’s mercy and plan one concrete act of patience toward someone else.

Prayer and application notes

Integrity Before the God Who Knows

1 Thessalonians 2:3-6 | Examine motives, methods, and accountability in the service of the Gospel.

The heart under examination

Paul calls the Thessalonians to remember what they witnessed and appeals to God as witness of what only God could fully know. Public conduct matters, and so do hidden motives. A ministry can appear impressive while concealing greed or hunger for praise. The God who entrusted the message also examines the messenger.

In verse 4, “allowed of God” carries the sense of being approved or entrusted by Him. Paul is conscious of divine responsibility. His calling gives him no exemption from examination. If anything, stewardship makes accountability more serious. The messenger handles something precious that belongs to God.

This principle reaches beyond a pulpit. Parents, group leaders, teachers, and ordinary believers all face the desire to appear successful. We may exaggerate results, avoid difficult truths, or resent people who receive more recognition. Before discussing someone else’s ministry, we should ask what we ourselves are seeking.

Flattery, covetousness, and glory

Flattery uses pleasing words to gain influence. It differs from truthful encouragement. We should gladly acknowledge God’s gifts in others, but we must never tell people that their standing before God is secure because they are impressive, generous, agreeable, or useful to us. Love tells the truth about sin and grace.

The “cloke of covetousness” is a religious covering for a desire to gain. The sermon speaks sharply against promises that a gift of money will compel God to provide financial multiplication. Such promises turn vulnerable people into opportunities for profit. They distort both giving and grace.

The pursuit of glory places the messenger at the center. Praise then becomes a necessity, criticism a threat, and other believers competitors. The Gospel humbles this desire. We carry a message about the Savior who rescued us. Any genuine fruit gives us reason to thank Him.

Considering the Gospel

Support without exploitation

Paul says that he could have been burdensome as an apostle of Christ. His refusal to press every right in Thessalonica displays his concern for the people. We should read this alongside his teaching that those who preach the Gospel may receive support. Honest support for ministry and exploitation are different matters.

A congregation can give responsibly, provide for its teachers, and care for the poor while rejecting greed. Clear financial reporting, shared oversight, honest appeals, and freedom from pressure help protect people. We should not infer a hidden motive from wealth or poverty alone. We examine what is taught, how people are treated, and whether conduct is open to responsible scrutiny.

God’s judgment of the heart also warns us against pretending that we know every motive. Paul’s own appeal is grounded in observable conduct and accountability before God. A faithful church must address actual deception and harm without cultivating a culture of rumor.

Pleasing God in ordinary decisions

A desire to please God does not license rudeness. Paul cared deeply for the Thessalonians. The issue is whose approval governs the message and the method. We can listen patiently, explain thoughtfully, and receive correction while remaining faithful to Scripture.

Imagine a teacher who knows a difficult passage may reduce attendance. Integrity requires explaining it carefully rather than concealing it. Imagine a leader who has misstated a fact. Integrity requires a correction rather than protecting an image. Imagine a member who serves only when noticed. Grace calls that person to the quiet joy of loving others before God.

Such honesty grows where assurance rests in Christ. We do not need to build a flawless public image to secure His righteousness. We are free to confess failure and make amends. This week, ask where your words or choices have been shaped by approval, money, or reputation. Bring the answer before the Lord and, where necessary, before those affected. The Gospel we proclaim deserves servants who are willing to walk in the light.

Read Scripture Together

Galatians 1:10 (KJV)

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

The servant of Christ must not make human approval the governing aim.

2 Corinthians 4:2 (KJV)

2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

Truthful proclamation rejects dishonesty and deceitful handling of God’s Word.

1 Corinthians 9:14 (KJV)

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Legitimate support for Gospel workers must be distinguished from exploitation.

1 Peter 5:2-3 (KJV)

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof , not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **3** Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Shepherds are called to willing service, readiness, and example rather than greed or domination.

Psalm 139:23-24 (KJV)

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: **24** And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Prayer for God’s searching work begins with our own hearts.

Discuss and Respond

1. Why does Paul appeal both to the Thessalonians' knowledge and to God as witness?

2. How does being entrusted with the Gospel increase a messenger's accountability?

3. What distinguishes truthful encouragement from flattery?

4. How can religious language become a covering for covetousness?

5. Why are promises of guaranteed financial return for religious gifts inconsistent with grace?

6. What forms can the pursuit of human glory take in a small church or study group?

7. How do 1 Corinthians 9:14 and 1 Peter 5:2-3 help distinguish support from exploitation?

8. What practical arrangements can help a congregation handle money and authority honestly?

9. How can we address observable wrongdoing without pretending to know every hidden motive?

10. Where might pleasing God require you to tell the truth, receive correction, or serve without recognition?

Practice this week

Review one area of service: what you say, what you seek, and how you handle correction. Choose a specific act of honesty or accountability to practice this week.

Prayer and application notes

The Gospel Shared with Our Own Souls

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 | Practice the gentle, self-giving love that accords with the Gospel of grace.

The strength of tenderness

Paul turns from rejected motives to the positive character of his ministry. He was gentle among the Thessalonians, like a nurse cherishing her own children. The picture is intimate and patient. He is describing people held dear, nourished, and cared for at personal cost.

This tenderness belongs beside his boldness. Truth and gentleness are not competing ambitions. A parent who cherishes a child will address danger and wrongdoing, but will do so for the child’s good. In the same way, Christian love speaks honestly while seeking restoration rather than humiliation.

The sermon presses this point upon people who confess sovereign grace. Our theological vocabulary may be accurate while our conduct is impatient or cruel. The remedy begins with remembering mercy. God has dealt graciously with us. We are fellow sinners who have been rescued, and we should speak to others with the humility of people who know that fact.

Giving the message and giving ourselves

Verse 8 describes a willingness to impart the Gospel and their own souls. Paul shared his life with the people. They were dear to him, and his ministry involved presence, attention, and sacrifice. The verse challenges a detached approach in which we deliver information but refuse to know the listener.

Our self-giving never becomes part of another person’s atonement. Christ alone redeems. We cannot assume responsibility for saving someone or control the choices they make. Yet we can listen, teach patiently, pray, provide practical help, and remain faithful through difficulty. The love of Christ shapes the way we carry His message.

Consider the visitor who asks a basic question. A brief answer may be enough, but sometimes the question reveals years of confusion or hurt. Make room for the person. Take care with unfamiliar language. Invite further conversation. A church’s welcome becomes credible through the patient attention of its people.

Considering the Gospel

Gentleness when correction is needed

Love does not abandon a person to destructive sin. Scripture directs believers to restore the overtaken person in a spirit of meekness, remembering their own vulnerability. This guards us from the pleasure of exposing another person. Our aim is their good before God.

The sermon applies the same concern to online speech. A sharp reply can earn approval while hardening our own hearts. Before posting, ask whether the words are true, necessary, and directed toward the hearer’s good. Winning a theological exchange is a poor substitute for loving the person involved. There are times to answer and times to stop a fruitless quarrel.

Gentleness also requires wisdom. Sharing our lives does not mean making promises we cannot keep, neglecting our families, or accepting abusive conduct. Care can be shared across a congregation. Clear boundaries may protect everyone involved and help love remain steady. Paul’s willingness teaches generosity of heart, not a claim that any one Christian can meet every need.

A congregation shaped by received grace

As this study concludes, return to its central claim. God saves sinners by His sovereign grace through Jesus Christ, and He entrusts His church with proclaiming that Gospel boldly, faithfully, and lovingly. These qualities belong together. Courage serves the message. Integrity protects the trust. Tenderness honors the people to whom the message comes.

The urgent personal question remains: where are you resting? Familiarity with doctrine cannot replace faith in Christ. Bring your guilt to Him. His finished work is sufficient, and His promise to receive the coming sinner is sure. For the believer, that same grace supplies comfort and calls forth gratitude.

Let the group’s final response be practical. Choose a way to welcome someone, strengthen a struggling believer, or continue a Gospel conversation. Pray for wisdom and arrange a time to follow through. Avoid making a public project of someone’s private pain. Let the person experience sincere care.

We have heard the Gospel. We have received a trust. May the Lord make our words clear, our hearts humble, and our love patient. The people around us should hear the truth of sovereign grace and experience the kindness it teaches.

Read Scripture Together

1 John 4:19-21 (KJV)

19 We love him, because he first loved us. **20** If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? **21** And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

God’s prior love calls forth love for Him and for our brothers.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 (KJV)

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men , apt to teach, patient, **25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; **26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Gentle instruction depends upon God to grant repentance.

Galatians 6:1-2 (KJV)

1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. **2** Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Restoration requires meekness and a willingness to bear burdens.

Colossians 3:12-13 (KJV)

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; **13** Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Received mercy takes shape in tenderness, patience, and forgiveness.

Discuss and Respond

1. What does the nursing-mother picture reveal about the character of Paul’s ministry?

2. How do verses 2 and 7 correct the idea that boldness requires harshness?

3. What does sharing “our own souls” add to the proclamation of the Gospel?

4. Why must self-giving service never be confused with Christ’s unique work of redemption?

5. How does God’s prior love in 1 John 4 shape the way we treat one another?

6. What would restoration in a spirit of meekness look like when a believer is caught in sin?

7. How should 2 Timothy 2:24-26 change the way we respond to someone who opposes the truth?

8. Where might online speech or doctrinal debate reveal a desire to win more than a desire to love?

9. How can a congregation share burdens generously while maintaining wise boundaries?

10. What specific response will you carry forward from these six weeks in your faith, speech, and care for others?

Practice this week

As a group, choose one specific act of Gospel-centered care. Assign willing participants, protect the person’s privacy, and agree when you will follow through and pray again.

Prayer and application notes

Pastor Jason K. Boothe

Pastor Jason K. Boothe serves as pastor of Redeemer Church of Piketon, Ohio, where he has ministered since 2001. His preaching and writing proclaim God’s free and sovereign grace in Jesus Christ and seek to encourage readers through the faithful exposition of Scripture.

His pastoral work emphasizes the sufficiency of Christ’s finished redemption, the comfort of the Gospel for burdened consciences, and the church’s responsibility to speak the truth with courage and love. This study reflects those concerns through Paul’s description of faithful ministry among the Thessalonians.

Pastor Jason holds a Bachelor of Arts in U.S. History from Shawnee State University, a Master of Education in Secondary Education from Grand Canyon University, and a Doctor of Theology from Andersonville Theological Seminary.

Redeemer Church of Piketon, Ohio

Proclaiming God’s Free and Sovereign Grace in Christ.

768 State Route 220
Piketon, Ohio 45661

www.RedeemerPiketon.org

Learn More About the Gospel

The questions in this booklet lead us to a living Savior. Our deepest need is reconciliation with God, and our only sufficient hope is Jesus Christ. His obedience, His sacrifice, and His resurrection give us a sure foundation for faith.

Perhaps you have studied these chapters with many questions still in your mind. Keep opening the Scriptures. Ask for help. Speak honestly about your need. You do not have to make yourself worthy before looking to Christ. Hear His gracious promise:

John 6:37 (KJV)

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Visit www.RedeemerPiketon.org

We warmly encourage you to visit Redeemer Church online to learn more about the Gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ. Explore the church’s Gospel-centered teaching and find information about the congregation. Let this study become the beginning of continued reading, prayer, and conversation about the Savior.

If you are in the Piketon area, we would love to welcome you and your family. Come with your questions. Come to hear the Word of God. Everyone is invited.

www.RedeemerPiketon.org

A closing prayer

Gracious Father, thank Thee for Thy mercy in Jesus Christ. Grant us faith to rest in His finished work. Make us bold in witness, honest in our motives, and tender toward those we serve. Keep Thy Gospel upon our lips and Thy grace before our hearts. In Jesus’ name, amen.