

Roger Simpson What to pray for in our new Chaplain.

INTRODUCTION

1 We're going to look at 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 this morning. Can we put it on the screen. The theme of this chapter " how pastors and leaders,should serve" very RELEVANT for us as we pray for the appointment of a new pastor here. What should we be praying for?

CONTEXT.

1 there were many enemies of the gospel in Thessalonica. Just as there are here in Grenoble. They wanted to. DISCREDIT. Paul as an apostle. They mounted a campaign against him.

2 they said that he was INSINCERE. That he ran away as soon as he faced opposition. They also said that he was UNCARING. And he didn't care for the new Christians. that he had abandoned them.

SO PAUL DESCRIBES AND DEFENDS HIS MINISTRY two things stand out about him.

a. HIS OPENESS

1 Look at how often he uses the little phrase "you know". V1,2,5 etc READ He is appealing to their knowledge of him. He saying to them "I'm an open book ". I have nothing to hide. Nothing to be ashamed of. No facade. This would've spoken volumes to the Thessalonians. The city was full of people 'doing their own thing.'"We need to pray for PASTORS . who are open. Transparent. Young people in the U.K. are very quick to spot hypocrisy. We need to pray for someone who is sincere. Who is vulnerable and open. About their weaknesses and strengths.

b HIS SUFFERINGS.

Paul suffered for his faith. He had suffered previously in Philippi. In fact, everywhere he went, he suffered for the gospel. In Phillipi He was beaten with Rods . He was stripped and flogged. He was thrown into prison. He suffered in Thessalonica too. But it didn't stop him preaching. His SUFFERING. was a mark of his genuineness. People only suffer for what they really believe. these two characteristics of OPENNESS and SUFFERING characterised Paul's ministry .

We need to remember that many of our brothers and sisters who are pastors and leaders in the world are suffering because of their faith in Jesus Christ.right now. In Iran, in North Korea , in Eritrea. In Pakistan and India and China. In Vietnam (where I've met many of them . House church leaders who have suffered greatly for their faith in Christ.

Paul then DESCRIBES HIS MINISTRY . He uses 4 pictures which will help us as we pray for our new pastor

1 PICTURE A STEWARD (V4. READ

a. A STEWARD The job of the steward is to look after something. In this case it was the gospel. Paul wants them to know that his methods and his motives were sincere and true. He didn't try to please people. He wasn't looking for money or power or prestige. V5-6 READ again.

b His one aim was to please God . Notice he says we speak as those approved by God.

They weren't interested in pleasing people, but please in God. God had tested their hearts. So we need to pray for a pastor who wants to please God above everything.

2 PICTURE A NURSING MOTHER

v7-8 READ. Isn't it amazing that a man like Paul. Who was so tough and resilient and strong. Could use the picture of a nursing mother to describe his ministry among them. What was it about a mother that he highlights? Her love and sacrificial care for her children.

We have just been with our families in England for the last week or so. They have very young children. Lots of them. And what struck me a fresh was the love and care and patience that they had with their children. Getting up in the night to look after them. being patient when one of them was upset. Or fighting with their brother or sister. Very hard work. The mother is always concerned for her children's welfare. Paul was like that with the Thessalonians. It's such a tender picture.

3 PICTURE A FATHER (v9-11)

A He moves from the picture of the mother to that of the father. And he highlights his hard work. He toiled night and day for them. He didn't want to be a burden on any of them. He lived a holy and righteous life among them. He was an example to them, and then he dealt with them as if they were his own children. ENCOURAGING, COMFORTING and URGING them to live lives worthy of God.

b Again it was so lovely for me to see our sons. Encouraging their children. Spending time with them. Building things with them. Talking to them. Disciplining them when they needed to be disciplined. Filling up their little tanks when they got empty. With words of encouragement. And affirmation. Give giving them hugs , (rocket launcher) Eye contact. Words of affirmation. Put your phones away. Saddens me to see parents with their young children on their phones. We need to put them away and focus on our children. You used to be so good at that in Africa.

4 PICTURE THE HERALD v13-16.) notice what he says in verse 9. READ. We preached the gospel of God to you?

The job of the Herald is to speak out the word. He describes it as the word of God. Not a human word. But Gods word. And it was at work in them changing them. (V 13) READ So he is claiming that his word was Gods word. An amazing claim ! Paul speaks with Gods authority .

So so we need to pray for a pastor who believes in the word of God. (you've probably all heard of the joke about the pastor who is "six days, invisible, and one day in comprehensible."!) Paul was the complete opposite.!

RECAP. So Paul likens himself to A STEWARD who faithfully hands on God's word, the gospel to the people. He protects it and guards it, he doesn't change it or adapt it.(we don't want to change the product , though we can change the packaging !! A MOTHER who cares for her children with gentleness and love. And looks after them

A FATHER Who exhorts, and encourages his children, as well as disciplining them.A HERALD who declares Gods word to them. Not a human word, but the word of God.

CONCLUSION

I want to speak personally to you now. It is so important that we pray regularly for our new

pastor who is to join us. What should we be praying for? I want to suggest two things.

SOMEONE WHO LOVES GOD and loves THE GOSPEL

We need to ask God to send someone who loves him. Someone who loves his word and studies it. Someone who will explain it clearly and simply so that we can understand it. Someone whose life is based on God's word. Someone who is open and vulnerable. Someone who is sincere. Someone who wants to please God . Someone who is full of the Holy Spirit.

SOMEONE WHO LOVES PEOPLE

It's no good, having someone who loves God but who does not love people. (It's a bit like a teacher who loves their subject, but does not love children!) So we need to ask God to bring us someone who loves people. Who cares for them. Who looks for the lost to bring them back to the Shepherd Someone who is concerned for the flock. someone who loves their family. Who is concerned for the weak and the powerless. The outsider. The fringe.

Can I say this is so important and we need to be praying together about this. I know we're praying as individuals. So were going to start AZoom prayer meeting this Tuesday 8.30-9

Let us pray.