

Scripture

1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

Summary

Paul shares his heart with the Thessalonian Christians. He tells them how much he cares for them and is concerned for their welfare, especially that they continue to be firmly established in the Gospel. That shows us that Christian ministry is not primarily professional; it is heartfelt and personal. He goes on to warn them about how Satan can hinder Christian ministry and relationships by, among other things, disrupting these relationships, and tempting

people away from the Gospel. Yet, God gives us the resources to keep these precious relationships, and to overcome the work of Satan through Gospel, which both establishes and exhorts us toward to stand firm in the midst of afflictions.

Sermon in a sentence

Christian ministry is not professional but intensely personal and relational, where we share both a joy and a burden for one another.

Main Points

- I. The affectionate heart of Christian ministry
- II. The Satanic hindrance to Christian ministry
- III. The sure hope for Christian ministry

Other Scriptures:

Acts 17:1-15; Romans 16:20; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 12:7

Questions

- 1. Would you describe your relationships with others in your Community Group and in RHC as "affectionate" (2 Thessalonians 2:17-20)? Why, or why not?
- 2. Satan hinders Christian relationships (2 Thessalonians 2:18). What does that tell you about how important relationships are? Give examples of when this may have happened in your life.
- 3. Satan tempts people away from faith in Christ (2 Thessalonians 3:5). How might this look like?
- 4. God establishes and exhorts his people through the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 3:2) to stand firm in the midst of affliction. What is it about the Gospel that helps Christians to stand firm in the midst of afflictions?

Think On This

"What would things look like if Satan really took control of a city? Over a half century ago, Presbyterian minister Donald Grey Barnhouse offered his own scenario in his weekly sermon that was also broadcast nationwide on CBS radio. Barnhouse speculated that if Satan took over Philadelphia, all of the bars would be closed, pornography banished, and pristine streets would be filled with tidy pedestrians who smiled at each other. There would be no swearing. The children would say, 'Yes, sir' and 'No, ma'am,' and the churches would be full every Sunday . . . where Christ is not preached."

Michael Horton, "Christless Christianity", page 15

RHC Core Values

Gospel-Centredness – To have the gospel in the centre of our ministry, and for everything we do to find its root in the gospel.

Experiential Faith – To actively seek the modern day work of the Holy Spirit, expecting him to move in our midst in signs and wonders, and to lead us to the will of God.

Theological Depth – To pursue a deep and soul satisfying knowledge and understanding of God through the Bible.

Community on Mission – To recognise that we are not here for ourselves, but are on a mission to bring the gospel to the world.

City Renewal – To see the gospel change every aspect of the city we are living in by doing social justice, integrating our faith and work, and seeing the city renewed culturally, socially and spiritually for the glory of God.