**“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jeremiah 3:15)**

**This verse is a promise made to the “backsliding children” of Israel (Jer. 3:11-14). There is much in this verse that describes the qualifications and responsibilities of pastors. First, the word itself: pastor means shepherd or overseer; a person who cares for God’s people. Next comes the responsibility: to feed God’s people with “knowledge and understanding”. When God’s people are not properly fed, the results can be disastrous:**

**“For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.” (Jeremiah 10:21)**

**“Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion underfoot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.” (Jeremiah 12:10)**

**“Woe to the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; you have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, says the Lord.” (Jeremiah 23:1-2)**

**“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” (Hosea 4:6a)**

**It is important – no, *essential* – that God’s people be properly fed with spiritual knowledge and understanding. If pastors fail to properly feed the flock, or if the flock refuses to accept the proper provision of God’s Word, the result is the scattering of God’s people.**

**I Thessalonians Chapter 2 reveals Paul as a pastor. Paul was, in fact, a “pastor of pastors”. As he traveled about, planting churches, he would identify certain members and prepare them for pastoring the flock when he moved on (Acts 14:21-23). The “Pastoral Letters” (I/II Timothy and Titus) were written by Paul and are still often used today as a guideline for pastor search committees. Let’s look at this chapter for insights into Paul’s “pastor’s heart”.**

1. **Read I Thessalonians 2:1-4. What is Paul’s assessment of his outreach to the Thessalonians? (v.1) Answer: It was . (See Deuteronomy 32:45-47; I Corinthians 15:58)**
2. **Did Paul and Silas allow their “shameful treatment” in Philippi to curb or diminish their preaching to the people of Thessalonica? (v.2) (See also II Timothy 2:8-10; 3:10-12)**
3. **What THREE things were NOT the motives for their preaching (“exhortation”)? (v.3) (See also Matthew 24:3-5,11,24; Acts 20:25-32; II Peter 2:1-3)**
4. **When Paul and Silas preached, WHO were they trying to please, and WHY? (v. 4)**
5. **Read verses 5-12. This passage reveals more truths concerning the “pastor’s heart”, as well as the motives (good AND bad) for being a preacher of the Gospel. What TWO things did Paul and Silas NOT use when they preached? (v. 5) (See Jeremiah 6:13; Ezekiel 33:30-31; Luke 12:13-15; Colossians 3:5)**
6. **WHO is their WITNESS? (v. 5) Answer: (See Psalm 44:20-21; Psalm 139:23**
7. **What did Paul and Silas NOT seek as they preached? (v.6) Answer: They were not seeking from . (See Acts 14:8-18) Do you feel that this is something that happens in the church today? Why or why not?**
8. **How did Paul and Silas treat the Thessalonian Christians? What beautiful example did Paul use? (v. 7) Answer: They were , like a who cares for (or cherishes) her little . (See also I Corinthians 3:1-2; I Peter 2:1-2; Hebrews 5:12-14)**
9. **In addition to the Gospel, what else did Paul and Silas “impart” to the church, and why? (v.8)**
10. **Pastors and preachers are often accused of “doing it for the money”. Could this be said of Paul and Silas in Thessalonica? Why? (v. 9) (See Acts 18:1-3; Acts 20:33-35; II Thessalonians 3:7-9)**
11. **What THREE WORDS did Paul use to describe his conduct AMONG the Christians at Thessalonica? (v. 10; see also I Samuel 18:5, 14-16, 28-30; Psalm 101:1-2; I Timothy 3:14-15)**
12. **Back in verse 7, Paul describes his “mother love” for the Thessalonians. In verse 11, how else does Paul describe his pastoral love? Answer: As a treats his children. Describe the difference.**
13. **What is the goal (ultimate purpose) of pastoral leadership in a church? (v.12) Answer: It that all Christians would “ of God.” (See also Ephesians 4:1-3; I Peter 5:1-4)**
14. **Read verses 13-16. How did the Thessalonians receive the preaching of Paul and Silas? (v. 13) Answer: They received the message not as the word of , but as the word of . (See also Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19)**
15. **What was the consequence of the genuine faith of these Christians? (v. 14) Is the same thing true of Christians today? Why or why not? (See II Timothy 3:10-12)**
16. **Describe the two groups of people who persecuted the church. Who else did one of those groups persecute? (v. 14-16) Is the church persecuted today? If so, by whom? (See also Acts 4:24-28; II Peter 2:1-3; Jude 1:1-4)**
17. **How will the Lord deal with those who persecute His Church? (v. 16) (See also Romans 1:18-19; II Thessalonians 1:6-10; Jude 1:14-16; Revelation 6:15-17; 14:8-11)**
18. **Read verses 17-20. This passage explains why Paul felt moved to write to the church at Thessalonica. Do you get the impression that Paul and Silas left the church voluntarily? (v. 17)**
19. **What (or who) kept them from returning to the church? (v.18) (See also I Chronicles 21:1-7; Zechariah 3:1-4; Matthew 4:1-11; Acts 5:1-3; Revelation 2:18-25)**
20. **The last two verses of this chapter show just how much the saints of Thessalonica meant to Paul. What FIVE words did he use to describe them? What does this tell us about the genuine “pastor’s heart”? (v. 19-20)**

**Conclusion**

**The calling of a pastor is a great honor, but it comes with an awesome responsibility. Pastors are stewards of God’s people. They came to Jesus by faith; they have been redeemed by His death and washed in His Blood. They come to Jesus as newborn babies in the faith, and must be fed, taught, and loved. They need comfort in times of distress, counsel in times of uncertainty, and reproof when they go astray. One day, the pastor will have to give an account of his/her stewardship of God’s people.**

**Paul shows us the heart of a godly pastor in this second chapter of his letter to the Thessalonian church. His affection for them can almost be felt, even though he penned this letter nearly 2,000 years ago. He establishes a model or pattern for the pastoral ministry today.**

**Being hindered by Satan from returning to the church, Paul sent his trustworthy assistant Timothy to check up on them. In chapter 3 of this letter, we will hear Timothy’s report and Paul’s reaction to it.**