

## *The Strength of Truth and Trust*

1 Thessalonians 2: 1- 8 (October 29, 2017)

### ***1 Thessalonians 2: 3-4***

3For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, 4but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts.

### ***Historical Context***

The occasion for chapter 2 was the slander Paul had received from those who claimed he was only out for personal gain. So Paul reviewed their ministry to silence these attacks, not because he was concerned about the Thessalonians' approval, but to protect the work the Lord had accomplished through him and his partners.

### ***Theme: The Strength of Truth and Trust***

One of the most significant features of the current political situation in many Western countries is a serious breakdown of public trust. This loss of trust penetrates down to the very founding principles of our societies. Scandals, revelations of abuse, and manifest corruption, incompetence, or self-interest in office have produced growing distrust. As the healthy movement of truth in the body of society depends upon a circulatory system of trust, the breakdown of trust will produce the crisis of truth that we currently face. Arresting the progress of this disease is an immense challenge, especially after the advent of online media. Without a clear vision of forthright and trustworthy discourse and robust and healthful social relations that can bear the weight of truth, it can be difficult to address such social sickness.

Yet a vision of a society marked by the strength of truth and trust is what Paul presents in 1 Thessalonians. It is a society seen in God's entrusting of his truth to human messengers, who entrust themselves in turn to the recipients of their announcement. It is a society seen in the power of the communication of truth itself as a social bond. The genuine communication of the truth requires the communication of ourselves, reinforcing the trust that allows it to circulate. Untruth and distrust can cause a society to disintegrate. Truth and the mutual trust and entrusting it produces are health to society's flesh and marrow to its bones.

### ***Gospel Story as a Case Study (Matthew 22:34-46)***

Here we have another story of a challenge and confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders. Jesus calls us to love God with all that we have and all that we are—trusting that God's love and care for us will always be there. And, Jesus calls us to love our neighbor—also trusting that if our neighbors are loving their neighbors, then they will be loving us in return. And in THAT holy confluence, love abounds.

The "love" Jesus is talking about is trust, loyalty, and attachment. You may actually hate your neighbor, but you will still love them in the Biblical sense if you continue to act for their well-being and refuse to cut off your relationship with them.