

NT LESSON 31

“AND SO WERE THE CHURCHES ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH”

Acts 15:36-18:22; 1 and 2 Thessalonians

by Ted L. Gibbons

INTRODUCTION: Paul was a superb missionary. He understood that the Lord was perfectly serious when he commanded his emissaries to open their mouths.

The book of Acts and the epistles of Paul indicate some of the places where Paul opened his mouth. Some of the locations were Antioch in Pisidia, Antioch in Syria, Athens, Berea, Caesarea, Corinth, Damascus, Derbe, Ephesus, Galatia, Iconium, Jerusalem, Lystra, Melita, Miletus, Mysia, Paphos, Philippi, Phrygia, Ptolemais (Acco), Rome, Salamis, Thessalonica, Troas, Trophimus, and Tyre.

However, Luke shows us something more interesting than the cities where Paul preached. For within those cities, Paul taught in many synagogues (see Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1-2, etc.), in "all the coasts of Judea" (Acts 26:20), "by a river side" (Acts 16:13), in a prison (Acts 16:25-32), on Mars' Hill (Acts 17:22), in the market (Acts 17:17), in a certain man's house (Acts 18:7), over all the country (Acts 18:23), in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9), at a sacrament meeting (Acts 20:7), from house to house (Acts 20:20), on the stairs (Acts 21:40), in the castle (Acts 23:10), in the judgment hall (Acts 23:35), on a ship (Acts 27:21-26), in the quarters of the chief man of Melita (Acts 28:7-8), and in his own house (Acts 28:30-31).

The Lord commanded His disciples to take the witness to "all the world" (Mark 16:15) and "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). But in this worldwide ministry, the instruction was to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). That one-by-one ministry to individuals happens in places smaller than cities and countries. The sons of Mosiah reported that they had preached to the Lamanites in many places: "And we have entered into their houses and taught them, and we have taught them in their streets; yea, and we have taught them upon their hills; and we have also entered into their temples and their synagogues and taught them" (Alma 26:29).

In the process of testifying, as I mentioned in the lesson last week, Paul presents us with some wonderful curricula about missionary work. No missionary could ever go

far wrong who took Paul's experiences as a guide. In this lesson we will review a number of precepts regarding missionary work from the 2nd missionary journey of Paul, and then we will examine his own teachings in 1st Thessalonians about what great missionaries do. I have often called the missionary instruction in Thessalonians *Paul's Missionary Handbook*.

I. PAUL, SILAS, AND TIMOTHY PREACH THROUGH MACEDONIA AND GREECE.

Here are some of the principles from the 2nd missionary journey of Paul that show us how to be great missionaries and great disciples.

1. AVOID CONTENTION:

And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed . . . (Acts 15:36-40).

I know Paul thought he was right. Mark had abandoned them in Perga (see Acts 13:13). We do not know the reason, and in this context it doesn't really matter. Differences of opinion are acceptable. Contention is not. Paul, in his zeal, seems determined not to keep company with one less zealous than he was. That is all right. But the contention is not. We know where that comes from and how damaging it can be to missionary work.

2. BE RESTRAINED BY THE SPIRIT

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not (Acts 16:6,7).

The Holy Ghost warned Paul and Silas not to go to Asia or Bithynia. And they did

not go. I believe this experience is common among Church members, especially the young ones I work with. They go to see a certain movie, or watch a particular kind of TV show, and the Spirit says, *Don't go to that movie. You shouldn't be watching this rubbish.* Or, *Don't talk like that to your Mother.* Or, *That's not honest and you know it.* When the Spirit whispers "Thou shalt not . . ." we better not!

3. **BE CONSTRAINED BY THE SPIRIT**

There is a difference between *constrained* and *restrained*. Here the Spirit, by means of a vision, tells Paul where to go and preach.

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course... (Acts 16:9-11)

Notice that after seeing the vision, he tried *immediately* to make the journey. They departed and came to their destination "with a straight course . . ." What a useful lesson. When the Spirit says, "Move," we ought to move immediately and in a straight course. *Call your home teaching family. Apologize to your mother. Visit your neighbor in the hospital.* The following little account is a nice illustration of how this ought to work.

While sitting in the meeting, listening to the preaching, being much interested in what was being said, the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and revealed that I was to visit the minister of the Anti-Masonic party, Judge Cushing, and tell him of his foolishness and wickedness in increasing the spirit of division between those who ought to be united as brethren in one common interest. It rained hard at the time, and feeling rather taken up with the preaching, I thought I would delay until the close of the meeting. This mission to me was a very hard task. How was I, a man from the thrashing-floor, to reprove a minister, and, moreover, a judge? But a few minutes had scarcely elapsed, before the Word of the Lord came to me again, with greater power than before, that I was to go at once! I had covenanted with the Lord, and I felt determined to fulfill, if it killed me; so I sprang to my feet, took my hat, and departed from the meeting (Benjamin Brown Testimonies For The

Truth (1853), p.3).

Here is another illustration.

Amidst the terrible hostilities in Missouri that would put the Prophet in Liberty Jail and see thousands of Latter-day Saints driven from their homes, Sister Drusilla Hendricks and her invalid husband, James, who had been shot by enemies of the Church in the Battle of Crooked River, arrived with their children at a hastily shaped dugout in Quincy, Illinois, to live out the spring of that harrowing year.

Within two weeks the Hendrickses were on the verge of starvation, having only one spoonful of sugar and a saucerful of cornmeal remaining in their possession. In the great tradition of LDS women, Drusilla made mush out of it for James and the children, thus stretching its contents as far as she could make it go. When that small offering was consumed by her famished family, she washed everything, cleaned their little dugout as thoroughly as she could, and quietly waited to die.

Not long thereafter the sound of a wagon brought Drusilla to her feet. It was their neighbor Reuben Allred. He said he had a feeling they were out of food, so on his way into town he'd had a sack of grain ground into meal for them.

Shortly thereafter Alexander Williams arrived with two bushels of meal on his shoulder. He told Drusilla that he'd been extremely busy but the Spirit had whispered to him that "Brother Hendricks' family is suffering, so *I dropped everything and came [running]*" (Cited by Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Handful of Meal and a Little Oil," Ensign, May 1996, 31).

When the Spirit whispers to constrain us to a particular course of action, the idea ought to be to drop everything and come running.

4. EXPECT OPPOSITION

Paul was troubled in Philippi by a damsel with a "prophetic" evil spirit who kept crying out that he and Silas "were servants of the most high God" (see Acts 16:17). Paul evidently preferred not to have this kind of testimony born about him.

And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks (Acts 16:18-24)

We understand the nature of the unseen world well enough to know that when men or women commit to a course of righteousness, and when they insist on declaring their witness and warning to the world, enemies will arise. Remember our discussion of James and Peter in Acts 12 from lesson 30.

5. WHEN OPPOSITION COMES, BE PATIENT AND SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them (Acts 16:25).

One of the great images of the New Testament is of the moment when Paul and Silas, stripped and savagely beaten, thrown into a Philippi prison and placed in stocks, "sang praises unto God" (Acts 16:23-25). Patience and long-suffering indeed! He was truly a man willing to be a witness in all things.

But why not sing praises in prison, or anywhere else? Paul's great love was not for his own life, but for Christ (see Acts 20:24; 21:13). That love became his motivation from his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus until the day of his martyrdom. It was a love he taught eloquently to others:

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the

fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:17-19).

This is one of my favorite events from the New Testament: Paul and Silas, their bruises throbbing and their wounds bleeding, thrown into prison and placed in stocks, praying and singing praises. Had I suffered as they suffered, I suspect I might have been doing something else besides singing praises. But these men probably heard the same message the sons of Mosiah heard.

And the Lord said unto them also: Go forth among . . . thy brethren, and establish my word; yet ye shall be patient in long-suffering and afflictions, that ye may show forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls (Alma 17:11).

Their good example continued. Like Alma and Amulek (see Alma 14:27), the missionaries were freed by an earthquake

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed (Acts 16:26).

The Jailor was about to commit suicide, but even with the doors open and their bands loosed, these wonderful men stayed in the prison.

And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here (Acts 16:27,28).

This discipline gave the missionaries yet another opportunity to be missionaries and to become instruments in the Lord's hands.

And [the jailor] brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway (Acts 16:30-33).

Earlier, during his first missionary journey, Paul showed this patience and long-suffering in another place. You will remember from lesson 30 that he was stoned and left for dead in Lystra by a mob incited by bitter Jews from Antioch (see Acts 14:19).

But he was healed by the disciples and rose up and went to Derbe.

And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:20,21).

Paul met serious opposition, but returned to the places where it happened in order to demonstrate by word and deed (by example) “that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

6. SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES DAILY

And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures daily*, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few (Acts 17:10-12, emphasis added).

I include this because it is the only place I know of in the standard works where the phrase “searched the scriptures daily” is used. And the result of this searching of the scriptures, in this case, was that many received the testimony of Christ, both men and women.

II. PAUL PREACHES ON MARS HILL TO THE ATHENIAN PHILOSOPHERS.

7. BE PREPARED ALWAYS TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

Paul was in Athens and his preaching came to the attention of lazy intellectuals who

took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? (Acts 17:19).

Paul didn't need an invitation to preach. He only needed an audience that would hold still long enough. But here was an invitation, and he wouldn't pass it up. He preached with both power and clarity to these idolaters the true nature of God

[He] made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation . . . (Acts 17:24-26).

The Areopagus at which Paul was speaking was on Mars' Hill. I have been there and climbed that hill. The steps to the top were steep and cut from the solid rock. The weather had been rainy and the stone was slippery. I nearly killed myself climbing. Only the tour member behind me saved me from a long and hard fall. Paul, in this place, surrounded by people who "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing," does not hesitate an instant.

8. **BE PREPARED TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device (Acts 17:29).

Even though this verse is a part of Paul's sermon on the nature of God, I have included it separately because it is so important that we share the message of the Fatherhood of God.

I got lost when I was about 6. I was walking home from my friend Mike's house and it got dark and I got scared and hid in some bushes next to the Wilson School and cried. Finally someone heard me. A man parted the bushes, looked down and me and said, "What's wrong, son?"

I told him I was lost. "What's your name?" he asked.

“Teddy Gibbons.”

“Are you A.H. Gibbons’ son?” he said.

“Yes sir,” I replied.

“Well, I know your father,” he told me, “and I know where he lives. Come with me and I will show you the way home.” And he did.

There are people all over your town and the world who are hiding and trembling in the bushes because they do not know the way home. Some don’t even know they have a home. We must find them and say to them, “Are you Heavenly Father’s child? I know him and I know where he lives. You come with me and I will show you the way home.”

9. **STAND BLAMELESS AND WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE**

While Paul was in Corinth,

he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles (Acts 18:4-6).

One of the truly remarkable things about Paul is his determination to tell everybody what he knows to be true. He reasoned and persuaded until all hope was gone, shook his raiment, and went where the fields were greener (whiter?). This is the message of D&C 4:2 and Jacob 1:18,19. We must declare the word “with all diligence,” and with all our “heart, might, mind, and strength.”

10. **DON’T HOLD YOUR PEACE**

Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God

among them (Acts 18:9-11).

Most of us have at one time kept our mouths shut when they should have been open. But not Paul. And not in Corinth or anywhere else. While he was in Athens he was waiting for Timothy and Silas to meet him, but he could not simply wait.

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him (acts 17:16,17).

Even on the stairs of the Antonia Fortress where Roman Legionnaires were taking him to save him from a mob determined to kill him, Paul asked permission to speak.

But Paul said . . . I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue . . . (Acts 21:39,40).

We had rules about not *holding our peace* in my mission. We rode busses almost everywhere (except when I was with Mike Fletcher, who had no sense of financial restraint. Then we took taxi's). We had a rule, unwritten but legitimate: *we could not sit by our companions on a bus. We were required to sit by someone else and ask for an opportunity to preach.* That is how I met Isaltino Carvalho, who had become bishop of the Sorocaba 1st Ward in 1995 when I was in Brazil.

III. PAUL WRITES LETTERS OF COUNSEL TO THE SAINTS IN THESSALONICA.

As I mentioned in the introduction, I think the best handbook on missionary work in the scriptures is in 1st Thessalonians, chapters 1 & 2. It is not a powerful record of missionary experiences like those of Ammon and his brethren, or of Paul and his companions in Acts, but the text teaches spectacular collection of missionary attributes. Here they are:

1:2--We give thanks to God always for you all . . . Missionaries, good ones, are always grateful for the golden contacts, the responsive investigators, and particularly for those whose lives have been changed by faith on the messages of the emissaries

of the Lord. The word *always* is important. Paul, in the midst of his continuing tribulations never forgets to give thanks for the privilege of serving, and for the multitude of joys associated therewith.

1: 2--*Making mention of you in our prayers . . .* This is more than gratitude. Missionaries pray for their investigators and converts, for their ability and willingness to repent, for their continued faithfulness, for their steadiness and diligence in the kingdom. When investigators are trying to repent and in need of spiritual sustenance, missionaries often pray harder for them than they pray for themselves, and fast for and with them too.

1:5--*For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost . . .* Remember that the sons of Mosiah taught with the power and authority of God (Alma 17:3), and that Nephi preaching angered the Nephites, "even because he had greater power than they. .." Power comes from faith in Christ (1 Nephi 10:17), and power in preaching comes: from the Holy Ghost. Paul and his companions preached the gospel with power!

1: 5--*Ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.* Ammon and his brethren, the record says, "were treated as though they were angels sent from God to save [the Lamanites] from everlasting destruction." (Alma 27:4) Missionaries stand out. And it is not just the white shirts and ties: they really are different, and anyone who gets close enough will notice it.

2:2--*We . . . were shamefully entreated at Philippi . . .* We talked of this earlier in the lesson. At Philippi, Paul and Silas were both beaten and imprisoned. But when they were freed, they immediately traveled to Thessalonica and commenced anew to preach the gospel. This reminds me of the experience of Aaron and his brethren at Middoni which I spoke about last week. When Ammon and Lamoni arrived to free them from the prison there, they found that they "were naked, and their skins were worn exceedingly because of being bound with strong cords. And they also had suffered hunger, thirst, and all kinds of afflictions; nevertheless they were patient in all their sufferings. (Alma 20:29) When "they were delivered by the hand of Lamoni and Ammon ..they were fed and clothed. And they went forth again to declare the word

..." (Alma 21:14,15) The Lord warned the Lamanite missionaries about the possibility of these kinds of experiences when he charged them to be "patient in long-suffering and afflictions that ye may show forth unto them good examples in me." (Alma 17:11) Likewise, the Lord said of Paul to Ananias, "For I will show him

how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. " (Acts 9: 16) Missionaries must be willing to be "shamefully entreated" in order to spread the word. They must endure the rocks and the spitting and the name-calling—even the beating and the incarcerations if necessary to preach the word. And when it is over they must go forth again. And not just forth, but go forth as Paul did, boldly, for he said:

2: 2--*We were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God . . .* No timidity is allowed. We bear the most important message in the universe and we must present it with power and enthusiasm. And we must preach it at every opportunity. The opposite of this boldness is referred to by the Lord in D&C 60:2-- "But with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. "

2:4--*We were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel.* When was a greater trust than this ever given? Only one message exists in the universe that can bring the children of God back into his presence. There are plenty of other voices about, with messages that will lead in other directions (1 Cor. 14:10), but ours is the only one that will allow the eternal reunion of the family of the Father. And he has entrusted missionaries with that message. The very thought is enough to make the knees wobble and the joints turn to water. Imagine having such a trust and then, on judgement day, meeting those who would have received the message if we had had the willingness and courage to proclaim the gospel when we were with them. Imagine a baby-sitter losing one of the children charged to her care while the parents are away. How would she face father and mother when they came home, knowing she had failed their trust?

2: 4--*We speak; not as pleasing men, but God . . .* 2 Tim. 4: 3 speaks of a time when men will seek for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear, because they have "itching ears. " This is a prophecy literally fulfilled in our day. People who want to sin can find, with little or no effort, someone who will say that what they want to do is not a sin at all. We have listened to the voices--the loud voices--crying for the right to be perverted, sinful, decadent, debased, degenerate. And all of this noise without a shred of embarrassment. Missionaries do not tell people what they want to hear. They tell them what they need to hear. Of course, when they find someone for whom those two are the same, then they get to perform baptisms. The Savior exemplifies this quality continuously: notice his challenge to the rich, young ruler in Matthew 19, and his rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:23. We sing of this attribute in hymn #270: "I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord . . ."

2:5--Neither at any time used we flattering words . . . This is related to the previous two attributes: speaking boldly and speaking the words of the Lord.

But behold, if a man shall, come among you and shall say: , Do this, and there is no 'iniquity ; do that and ye shall not suffer; yea, he will say: Walk after the pride of your own hearts; yea, walk after the pride of your eyes, and do whatsoever your heart desireth-and if a man shall come among you and say this, you will receive him and say that he is a prophet. (Hel. 13:27)

We are not permitted to use language that changes people's actions without changing their hearts. Variations of the verb to *flatter* are used fifty times in the scriptures. Only three of those times is it used in what could be called a positive sense, and it all three of those it carries the connotation, as it does in all the rest, of getting someone to do something they should not or do nor want to do. 1 Thes. 2:11 tells us that Paul and Silas "exhorted and comforted and charged everyone" of their contacts according to their individual needs.

2: 6--Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others . . . It is interesting to notice how many times the Savior deferred to his Father, refusing to seek glory for himself, even though he certainly knew that it would come anyway. Look at John 4:34 and Matthew 19:17 for two examples. Missionaries must know that all they offer to the work is their time and their bodies: things they have covenanted to give anyway. The words are not theirs; the power is not theirs; the glory is not theirs; their talents are not theirs; the converting Spirit is not theirs. It is all a gift. Read Mosiah 2:21-24, which concludes with the question, "therefore of what have ye to boast. " Benjamin tells us clearly that no matter how long and how much we work, we will still be "unprofitable servants." (Mosiah 2:21)

2:6--We might have been [but were not] burdensome . . . We had elders in our mission who spent hours every day with members, and who always managed to get invited to lunch. Now I know that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and that those who feed the elders will be blessed, but to contrive to take advantage of the generosity of the members of the church is a sin. Paul refused to be a burden to his investigators and his converts. Members should be expected to keep their covenants and to impart according to the gospel, but they should not be expected to worship missionaries.

2:7--We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children. . . .

"Every man to his neighbor, " the revelations say, "in meekness and mildness." (D&C 38:41) Sometimes the missionaries, because of their superior knowledge of the gospel, and because of the reverent awe in which they are held by the members, are inclined to be overbearing--to set themselves up as **the** light, **the** authority. The pattern for this *gentleness* referred to by Paul may be the one demonstrated in John 8:11 (1-11) "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." The meaning of the word "nurse" in this verse is "one who nurses a child. " In virtually every case, this would be the child's mother. You have all seen the gentleness of a mother with a new baby. Her solicitude and awareness and *gentleness* are powerful testimonies of her love, as is the gentleness of a missionary for "his" investigators and converts.

2:8--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 you were dear unto us. Outside of the family, I think there is no pain like the pain that comes when an investigator who has felt the Spirit and shown honest interest in the word suddenly becomes resistant and indifferent. I remember the family who turned us out after all the discussions, and after committing to baptism, while we were in their home filling out the baptismal papers. A strong man and a lovely wife, who knew the work was true and said so, but who were concerned with the response of their families, turned away at the last moment. My companion and I did not leave saying, "That's a relief. It will free up some time on Sunday so that we can get a nap." We left crying, our hearts shattered into a million fragments of biting grief. We had given them more than the word. We had given them our souls. We loved them.

2:9--For ye remember our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Missionaries, recognizing the urgency of their message, and the amount of work yet to be done, work as hard as they can. In fact they are commanded to do so.

Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength, that ye may stand *blameless* before God at the last day (D&C 4:2, emphasis added).

Joseph and Jacob understood this matter of not being *chargeable*, of standing *blameless*. Jacob said:

And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if

we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found *spotless* at the last day. (Jacob 1:19, emphasis added)

It pleases me that Joseph and Jacob took "upon [them] the responsibility" and answered "the sins, of the people upon [their] own heads." The sense of the words is that they *chose* to do it. It was not a condition of their service that was forced upon them.

2:10--**Ye are witnesses, and God also, how *holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.*** What a lovely way to summarize this entire collection of missionary attributes: missionaries should be holy and just and unblameable. You have all heard the stories of missionaries who did not "behave themselves" in the work, and brought disfavour, even dishonour, on the work and the Church. Brigham Young spoke to departing missionaries in 1861. He said

"You will have all manner of evil spoken against you, and all I ask of you and all that God or angels will ask of you is that not one word spoken against you shall be true; and I want you for my sake and for your own sake and for the sake of Christ and the Kingdom of God to live so that the wicked shall have no cause to speak evil against you (*Wilford Woodruff's Daily Journals*, p. 413).

Conclusion: This has grown into the longest lesson I have ever written for the Internet. I apologize for that. Your time is valuable. I hope you can glean from it something of use in your study and—if necessary—your teaching. We could spend pages more on the material in Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians 5 has wonderful lessons about how to be *the children of light* (see 1 Thes. 5:5). 2 Thessalonians 3 teaches us how to avoid apostasy. Other chapters teach other lessons. If you have the time, spend the time and let the scriptures teach you by the Spirit in the way the Lord intended.

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