

Crossing the Bridge

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The Chapel

November 10, 2024
12-Mile Bridge Sunday

Scripture Passage: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-14a

1 You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. 2 We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. 3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. 4 On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. 6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. 7 Instead, we were like young children among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8 so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. 9 Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. 14 For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus...

PERSONAL STUDY _____

Directions: Use this for your personal devotion time and/or to prepare for your Small Group discussion. Read the passage and record your observations.

1. What is the "big idea" of the passage? _____

2. What main life application question does the passage address/answer? _____

3. What is one way you can apply it this week? _____

OPENER

What bridges has God been calling you to cross, whether geographic, cultural, generational, or political? What has been holding you back from taking that step of obedience? How might this sermon challenge and encourage you to finally cross that bridge?

Q1 – Why You Should Cross the Bridge

- According to the passage, what are some wrong motives people can have for serving others and crossing bridges? How can we guard against having these impure motives?
- The right reason to cross bridges is “to please God.” How does this differ from trying to please people and gain their approval? What does it look like practically to serve with the goal of pleasing God above all else?

Q2 – How You Should Cross the Bridge

- According to the passage, Paul didn’t just come to share information or facts, but to “share our lives as well.” What does it look like to truly share your life with others as you serve them? What are the benefits of this approach?
- Pastor Dave used the analogy of a nursing mother to describe how we should care for and serve others. What insights does this analogy provide about the sacrificial, inconvenient, and messy nature of true care and service? How can we live out this kind of selfless, life-giving approach?
- People are often drawn more to the gospel when it is shared by those who truly love them. How can we cultivate a love for those we are seeking to reach and serve? What are some practical ways we can demonstrate this love as we cross bridges?

Q3 – What Happens When You Cross Bridges

- Paul observed that the Thessalonians accepted his message as the word of God, and it deeply changed their lives. How can seeing God’s hand in our efforts to serve encourage us to keep crossing bridges? Have you ever witnessed God’s word at work in someone’s life through bridge-crossing efforts?
- Paul says the Thessalonians turned from idols to serve God, showing real transformation. What are some “idols” or obstacles today that might hold people back from knowing and worshipping God? How can we support others in leaving these behind as we build relationships across bridges?
- Crossing bridges opens doors for people to experience lasting change. How can keeping an eternal perspective shape our approach to serving others? What changes have you seen in yourself or others that reflect the eternal impact of faithful bridge-crossing?