

Loving People

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Have you ever experienced times when you are trying to do what you believe to be the thing that God wants you to do only to have one bad thing after another happen to you? And you think to yourself, “Is this really what I’m supposed to be doing?”

For example, maybe you prayed and you feel like you are supposed to volunteer at a soup kitchen, so you do it only to find out that people are put off by you telling them about Jesus and they complain and you are asked not to come back.

Maybe you prayed about going down town to witness to people and after getting down there your car is broken into and you get mugged by the very people that you are trying to help.

Loving people is hard sometimes!! How do you know if you are truly succeeding or failing at the whole “Loving People thing?”

Lets take a look at the way Paul looks at success this morning. I hope it changes the way you share your faith.

Let me give you a little background into Paul’s missionary trip. In Acts 16 Paul wanted to go to Asia but was prevented by the Spirit from doing so. He had a vision of a man from Macedonia telling him to come and preach, so Paul took it as the Lord leading him so he went.

Paul shares the Gospel there and a few ladies believed. He then drives out a demon from a slave girl and it causes the masses to turn on Paul and Silas. They get severely flogged and thrown in jail. They shared the gospel with the jailor and he and his entire family come to Christ. They were let out of jail the next day and told to never come back.

Yay Missions!!!!!!

Paul went on to Thessalonica where he preached and a number of people got saved. So far so good right? The Jewish leaders became jealous and started a riot and Paul had to escape in the dead of night.

Yay Missions!!!!

He then went to Berea where he preached and leaders from Thessalonica stirred up trouble and he was once again forced to flee for his life!!! Boy it's hard to love people!!!!

IF you are looking at the circumstances Paul could be saying, Boy I missed that or was I really supposed to come this way? Some people got saved but it sure was a lot of trouble just for that.

Lets look in **1 Thessalonians 2: 1-12** to see how Paul measured success.

Even after all of the trouble, the riots, being put in jail and escaping in the dead of night didn't hinder the way he saw his trip. Paul saw his trip as a success. That is because of the way Paul measures success and the way God wants us to measure success when dealing with people.

So how do we measure success? First we need to measure success by our faithfulness to God. **1 Thess. 2: 2-6** Paul was faithful to God to preach even when faced with strong opposition.

How does this speak to us? Application: if God has spoken to us about sharing our faith, then just be faithful to do it despite the outcome! You're not responsible for salvation, that's Jesus' job. Whether they pray the prayer of salvation or curse you out, be faithful to what God told you to do.

We also measure our success by the way we treat people.

1 Thessalonians 2:6-12

How we treat people either helps our relationship or harms our relationships. Vs.6 says they could have been a burden, but instead, they were gentle among them, like a mother caring for her little children.

People should be comfortable talking with us, knowing that we will speak to them gently even if we don't agree.

This isn't how you show the love of Christ: show picture of Westboro Baptist church.

2nd Timothy 2:25 "Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth."

When we treat people gently and not harshly, no matter the outcome, we have succeeded regardless of their response.

When we go back to how we opened the message this morning, I talked about people who had prayed and sensed God directing them to do something and they were faithful to follow that. Even though the circumstances that surround those works were not all that good, by God's measure of success, they were faithful and they treated people in a way that was gentle, showed love as well.

What God does with it from there is his business.