



## Home Discussion Questions

### Sermon: [The Shape of Gospel Ministry](#)

#### 1 Thessalonians 2:1-7

#### Songs on You Tube:

- [How Great Thou Art](#)
- [This is Our God](#)
- [Psalm 23 \(Surely Goodness, Surely Mercy\)](#)
- [Living Hope](#)

Find all of our songs on the [Living Stones Hymnal](#) on Spotify.

#### Summary

This sermon explores how Christians should share the gospel with both boldness and gentleness, using Paul's ministry in Thessalonica as a model. Pastor Josh examines how Paul defended his ministry not through credentials but through character, showing that effective gospel ministry requires boldness rooted in God rather than personal confidence, pure motives free from manipulation or people-pleasing, and gentleness that reflects Christ's love. Using the metaphor of a lighthouse that stands firm and shines steadily regardless of storms, the sermon emphasizes that Christians are called to be lights that guide people safely to Christ. The ultimate message is that believers are free to minister boldly and gently because Jesus has already perfectly pleased the Father on their behalf.

#### Begin with Prayer

Whatever your setting, as God to guide your thoughts by the truth of His Word.

*Model prayer: Heavenly Father, as we gather together to study Your Word, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us today. Help us to set aside our own agendas and preconceptions, and make us receptive to Your truth. We pray that through our discussion, You would shape us more into the image of Christ and equip us to be faithful witnesses in our daily lives. Guide our conversation and help us to encourage one another as we grow in faith together. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

#### Key Verses

1. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-7
2. 1 Corinthians 15:58

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Have you ever agreed to something and later realized there was a *catch*? What was it? Since then, when do you tend to become skeptical of someone's advice or motives? What triggers suspicion for you?
2. How does the suspicious nature of our culture influence your boldness to share your faith?
3. Paul emphasizes *motives* more than methods in this passage. Why do you think motives matter so much in gospel witness?
4. Paul mentions that their boldness came from God, not from their own abilities or circumstances. What are some sources people typically draw boldness from, and how is boldness rooted in God different?
5. The sermon lists several wrong motives for ministry: error, impurity, deception, flattery, greed, and seeking glory from people. Which of these do you think is most tempting in our current culture, and why? For you, personally?
6. Paul uses the metaphor of a nursing mother to describe gentleness in ministry. How does this image challenge or change your understanding of what it means to be gentle while sharing truth?
7. The lighthouse illustration shows something that stands firm and shines steadily regardless of storms. What are some 'storms' that might tempt us to either dim our light or become harsh in our witness?
8. Paul says he spoke 'not to please man, but to please God.' How can we tell the difference between healthy concern for how we communicate and unhealthy people-pleasing?
9. How can we maintain both boldness and gentleness when discussing difficult or controversial topics with non-believers?
10. What would it look like for you to “shine like a lighthouse” this week—standing firm, shining clearly, and loving gently?

### Life Application

This week, identify one relationship or situation where you've been either too silent out of fear or too harsh in your approach. Pray for wisdom and courage to engage with both boldness and gentleness, remembering that your approval comes from God, not from people's responses. Consider having that conversation you've been avoiding or adjusting your tone in an ongoing relationship to better reflect Christ's character.



### **Key Takeaways (add your own!)**

1. The gospel advances through boldness rooted in God and proclaimed with gentleness by people determined to please God alone
2. Faithful gospel ministry requires both boldness and gentleness - boldness without gentleness becomes brutality, while gentleness without boldness becomes timidity
3. Pure motives in ministry mean avoiding error, impurity, deception, flattery, greed, and people-pleasing
4. Christians are free to minister courageously and lovingly because Jesus has already perfectly pleased the Father on their behalf
5. Like a lighthouse, believers should stand firm on the foundation of Christ and shine steadily regardless of the storms around them

### **Ending Prayer**

Close by praying together:

- For freedom from people-pleasing
- For courage rooted in God
- For gentleness shaped by Christ