Introduction

How do you measure the success or failure of a ministry?
How do you measure the success or failure of an individual life?
Apparently there were people who viewed Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica as a failure.
What is it that God expects from his people?

Faithfulness

“It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” I Corinthians 4:2

In that regard, Paul was a model for ministry.
God wants us to be faithful in four areas.

I. Faithful in our calling. Verses 1-4

Paul didn’t consider his visit to Thessalonica a failure and neither should they.
We see Paul’s priorities reflected in verse 4. God comes first!
Courage, obedience and a Godward focus marked Paul’s life.

II. Faithful in our message. Verses 3-6a

The message that we have been given is the gospel.
The gospel is God’s message.
We have been “entrusted with the gospel”.
When you entrust something to someone you expect them to take care of it.
Next to himself, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God has given us the most valuable gift he could give us – his Word.

- Guard it well. II Timothy 1:4
- Handle it well. II Timothy 2:15
- Preach and teach it well. II Timothy 4:2
- Live it well. I Timothy 4:15-16
III. Faithful in our love for God’s people – the church. Verses 6b-11

Paul describes his work as a labor of love.

- We were gentle, like a mother caring for her children.
- We worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone.
- We dealt with you as a father does his children.

You can’t do ministry without love.

IV. Faithful in our character and ambition. Verses 10-12

Paul appeals to them to think about what they saw in Paul and Silas’ life.

They saw:

- Men who were holy, righteous and blameless.
- Men who worked hard to not be a burden.
- Men of courage.
- Men of integrity.
- Men who genuinely loved God and loved his people.

Paul’s ambition was to see them become mature believers in Christ.

“We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. And for this purpose I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.” Colossians 1:28-29 NASB

Conclusion

How do we measure the success or failure of a ministry or a person’s life?

It is by our faithfulness:

- In our calling.
- In the gospel.
- In loving one another.
- In character and ambition.
God’s Hall of Fame

by Alf Hutchinson

Your name may not appear down here,
In this world’s hall of fame
You may be so unknown
Few even know your name

Fame and fortune pass you by
And are given to a few,
But if you love and serve the Lord
Then there is good news for you.

This Hall of fame is only good
As long as time shall be;
But keep in mind, God’s Hall of fame
Is for eternity!

To have your name inscribed up there
Is greater yes by far
Than all the Halls of Fame down here
And every man made star.

This crowd on earth they soon forget
The heroes of the past,
They cheer like mad until you fall,
And that’s how long you last

But God he never does forget,
And in His Hall of Fame,
By just believing in his Son,
Inscribed you’ll find your name.

I tell you friend I wouldn’t trade
My name however small
That’s written there beyond the stars
In that celestial hall

For every famous name on earth
Or glory that they share;
I’d rather be an unknown here
And have my name up there.