

Second Hand Preacher 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time 11 5 17

1 Thessalonians 2:7b-9, 13

Did you ever meet someone with a type A personality? They are get-it-done people and are pretty valuable in any organization. I often like to tie myself to one of them, because I'm more of an ideas guy whose heart bleeds. Sometimes the strong personality can surprise you and they can possess a tender heart. They may try to lead well and get the most out of their people, but the good ones were also given an understanding heart.

St. Paul was definitely a gruff leader at times. He was bold in establishing communities all over the Gentile world. He confronted many hardships and had struggles along the way. I'm sure his limitations made him angry. I'm sure all these experiences gave him a hard outer shell. In his conversion, Paul received a changed heart. This heart was giving and forgiving. This weekend's reading to the Christian community in Thessalonica shows that softer side. In this letter he paints a beautiful picture of comparing his care to that of a mother who cares for her infant. He works night and day not to be a burden. Paul is extending the love that Jesus has for him. This is the same love that Jesus has for all people. Paul was called to give it to the Thessalonians who were in need of comfort.

Sometimes we are in need of comfort. Being a Catholic is not always easy. There are challenges because at times we are called to be counter cultural. Our belief in holding all life precious from conception can cause trouble in a disposable society. Thank goodness we have each other. We are free to worship and assemble as people of prayer. Sometimes clergy or pastoral ministers can serve the St. Paul role of being firm but compassionate. When we are in need of comfort, there are people to talk to with spiritual direction, individual counseling, and support groups of various types. If you need information about these services, feel free to contact me. We have a God of comfort that longs for us to be on the right path.