

26. August 2025

Human respect

1 Thess 2:1-8

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our visit to you was not in vain; but though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the face of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from error or uncleanness, nor is it made with guile; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please men, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never used either words of flattery, as you know, or a cloak for greed, as God is witness; nor did we seek glory from men, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

Proclaim the gospel with courage and boldness! That was the task then, and it remains so today. In order to fulfill this task, it is essential to rid ourselves of human respect and clearly acknowledge that we are accountable to God. Another fundamental aspect of authentically proclaiming the Gospel is preserving its purity, since any personal interest or ill intent will tarnish its inner beauty.

Where did the apostles find the strength to cling to the truth of the Gospel, even at the cost of their lives? We may ask ourselves the same question when we consider the "cloud of witnesses," comprised of countless individuals throughout history who bore witness to God and were willing to sacrifice their lives (cf. Rev. 12:11). In our time, we also hear of numerous testimonies of admirable Christians who cling to their faith despite the threat of death from Islamic extremism. The Church understands that, as Tertullian said, "the blood of martyrs is the seed of new Christians."

But let us return to the question: Where do martyrs get their strength? The Holy Spirit grants the spirit of fortitude to those who faithfully follow the Lord and do not allow themselves to be swayed by human respect.

On the other hand, human respect limits us and binds us to ourselves. Under its influence, we fear that the message of the Gospel, steadfastness in the truth, or profession of faith in Jesus may result in disadvantages. Deep down, we seek to be loved by others, which is why we are unable to say anything that might jeopardize the esteem we enjoy. If St. Paul, the other apostles, or their successors had been swayed by human respect, the Gospel would not have reached us. We must say this clearly! Acting out of human respect means that our own person is more important to us than the Lord Himself.

In our time, we must also overcome human respect when proclaiming the Christian message and defending the values derived from our faith.

Without a doubt, proclaiming the truth with love is essential; otherwise, our disordered passions will hinder those who listen to us from receiving the Gospel. However, we can never silence the truth!

The "politically correct" opinion, the so-called "mainstream," only accepts elements of the Gospel that align with its mentality. Conversely, when the Gospel questions or condemns what the world does, supposed tolerance quickly turns into hostility and rejection. If political correctness becomes increasingly aggressive—and there are signs that this is happening—our witness becomes even more necessary for the world will try to silence us.

Therefore, it is advisable to be prepared and ask now for the gift of fortitude so that we can bear witness that the truth is more important than recognition from people. In this sense, we should detect when our thoughts or feelings do not conform to the Gospel and identify our weak points—those in which we give too much importance to "what people will say." We must try to overcome these weaknesses!

St. Paul and the other apostles are examples of firm faith for us. Furthermore, they are our brothers who will help us when we face trials.