

# Speaking to the soul



## Failure

**You yourselves know, dear brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not a failure. 1 Thessalonians 2:1**

The church in Thessalonica certainly knew that Paul's visit to their city had not been a failure. But on the face of it, it hadn't gone very well. It ended up with Paul and Silas being

bundled out of the city in a hurry because of the threat from the mob. It must have left them feeling very anxious about the future of that infant church. But, as this letter reveals, in point of fact the church there had thrived and developed considerable strength very quickly and had become an example to many other churches.

This teaches us a valuable lesson. Things aren't always the way they seem. We would all love to live our lives walking from one success to another. But life isn't like that.

Sometimes the moments of failure turn out to be a glittering success, and the times of apparent victory turn out to be an abject failure. Through the ups and downs of life, what matters before anything else is that we maintain a strong relationship with God and always live with integrity. Paul goes on to say that their preaching was without any "deceit or impure motives or trickery" (v3). He clearly often faced a barrage of criticism for the way in which he ministered but he knew that he had always done things in a way that was honouring to God.

I wonder whether you would regard your present work for God as a wonderful success or a dismal failure. The truth is that we can't see the whole picture. That is only known to God. What matters is ensuring that we hang in there and always make sure that we are living close to God and are behaving honestly and honourably. We can leave the rest to God.

## **QUESTION**

How do you cope when you feel that you've been a failure?

## **PRAYER**

Loving God, thank you that you see the big picture and that you accompany us through the ups and downs of life. Amen