**2 Thessalonians Introduction**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**2 Thessalonians 1:1-12**

**Wednesday Evening**

**February 26, 2020**

**Purpose**

To clear the purpose of the second coming of Christ

**Author**

Paul

**Audience**

The Church at Thessalonica and all believers everywhere

**Date Written**

Approximately A.D. 51 from Corinth 2nd of Paul’s letters to this Church

**Setting**

The Church at Thessalonica was a very young Church only been established only a few short years after this Church was established. The Thessalonians Christians had to mature in their faith. In addition there was a misunderstanding on the second coming of Christ. Some thought Christ would return immediately and thus were so confused when their loved ones died before hand. Also they were heavily persecuted.

**Key Verse**

**2 Thessalonians 3:5**

“Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ”

**Key People**

Paul, Silas and Timothy

**Special Features**

This is a follow up second letter from 1 Thessalonians. In this letter, Paul indicates various events that must precede the second coming of Christ.

**Introduction**

“BUT I thought he said . . . ,” “I’m sure he meant . . . ,” “It is clear to me that we should . . . ,” “I disagree. I think we must . . .”

Effective communication is difficult; often the message sent is not the message received in the home, marketplace, neighborhood, or church. Even when clearly stated or written, words can be misinterpreted and misunderstood, especially when filtered through the sieve of prejudices and preconceptions.

Paul faced this problem with the Thessalonians. He had written them earlier to help them grow in the faith, comforting and encouraging them by affirming the reality of Christ’s return. Just a few months later, however, word came from Thessalonica that some had misunderstood Paul’s teaching about the second coming.

His announcement that Christ could come at any moment had caused some to stop working and just wait, rationalizing their idleness by pointing to Paul’s teaching. Adding fuel to this fire was the continued persecution of the church. Many felt that indeed this must be the “day of the Lord.”

Responding quickly, Paul sent a second letter to this young church. In it he gave further instruction concerning the Second Coming and the day of the Lord.

Second Thessalonians, therefore, continues the subject of 1 Thessalonians and is a call to continued courage and consistent conduct. The letter begins with Paul’s trademark—a personal greeting and a statement of thanksgiving for their faith. He mentions their perseverance in spite of their persecution and trials and uses this situation to broach the subject of Christ’s return. At that time, Christ will vindicate the righteous who endure and will punish the wicked.

Paul then directly answers the misunderstanding concerning the timing of the events of the end times. He tells them not to listen to rumors and reports that the day of the Lord has already begun, because a number of events must occur before Christ returns.

Meanwhile, they should stand firm for Christ’s truth, receive God’s encouragement and hope, pray for strength and for the spread of the Lord’s message, and warn those who are idle. Paul ends with personal greetings and a benediction.

Almost 2,000 years later, we stand much closer to the time of Christ’s return; but we also would be wrong to see his imminent appearance as an excuse for idle waiting and heavenward gazing. Being prepared for his coming means spreading the gospel, reaching out to those in need, and building the church, his body. As you read 2 Thessalonians, then, see clearly the reality of his return and your responsibility to live for him until that day.

**God Will Repay**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**2 Thessalonians 1:1-12**

**Wednesday Evening**

**February 26, 2020**

**1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:**

Saints, this second letter to the church in Thessalonica begins just like 1 Thessalonians. Paul was the head of the missionary team that had brought the gospel to that city. Silas is called a prophet and was highly regarded in the Jerusalem church. Paul had chosen Silas to accompany him on his second missionary journey.

**Acts 15:32**

“Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words”

**Acts 15:40**

“but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God”

Silas is mentioned in the salutation of both letters to the Thessalonians, and he worked with Timothy in Corinth,

**2 Corinthians 1:19**

“For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us--by me, Silvanus, and Timothy--was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes”

At this point, all three of these men were in Corinth.

**Acts 18:5**

“When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ”

Thessalonica was the capital and largest city of the Roman province of Macedonia. The most important Roman highway—extending from Rome to the Orient—went through Thessalonica.

This highway, along with the city’s busy seaport, made Thessalonica one of the wealthiest and most flourishing trade centers in the Roman Empire. Thessalonica was a free city, meaning it was allowed self-rule and was exempted from most of the restrictions placed by Rome on other cities.

Paul had planted the church when he and his companions had visited Thessalonica on the second missionary journey. The Thessalonian believers had strong faith, for despite persecution, they had endured.

**2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Saints, Paul often would begin his letters with a greeting of grace and peace.

**“Grace” is God’s unmerited favor bestowed upon sinful people; “peace” refers to the peace that Christ made between believers and God through his death on the cross.**

Saints, by calling God our Father, Paul presented God as the Father of all believers, shown by God’s sovereign authority and his loving care for his children.

Paul calls Jesus Lord, meaning master, one who deserves obedience. The young Thessalonian church experienced God’s grace and peace during a time of trial. This strengthened their faith and made them an example to the rest of the believers in other cities across the empire.

**3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,**

Saints, Paul had prayed that the Thessalonians’ faith would deepen and that their love would grow and overflow.

**1 Thessalonians 3:9-13**

9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

11 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, 13 so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints

**4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,**

Saints, apparently, it was not Paul’s pattern to proudly tell God’s other churches about one group of believers in order to boast about certain characteristics.

In the case of the Thessalonians, however, Paul sang their praises, just as others had already been doing (1 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

**1 Thessalonians 1:7-10**

7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. 8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Saints, the Thessalonian believers remained faithful to God even in all the persecutions and hardships they were suffering. Paul had been persecuted during his first visit to Thessalonica. No doubt those who had responded to his message and had become Christians were continuing to face persecution.

**5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; 6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,**

Saints, Persecution and suffering are unavoidable for those who want to follow the Lord.

**John 15:20-21**

20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

Saints, therefore, the fact that the Thessalonians were being allowed to suffer for their faith, and the fact that in doing so their faith, love, and hope were increasing and strengthening was evidence that God was using this persecution to show his justice.

Through suffering, God’s people are strengthened. In suffering, they can remember that they would be made worthy of his Kingdom. Suffering is not a prerequisite to salvation, but suffering and subsequent faithfulness through suffering shows God’s work in believers’ lives and thus their worthiness for his Kingdom.

Sufferings also set up the perpetrators for punishment. In his justice, God will punish those who were persecuting them. God will act with complete justice when he punishes sinners. God will see to it that those who inflicted persecution and suffering will themselves receive much worse.

**Psalm 94:23**

“He has brought on them their own iniquity, And shall cut them off in their own wickedness; The LORD our God shall cut them off”

**Psalm 37:9-11**

9 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. 10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

**7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Saints not only will God punish the evildoers, but he will also provide rest for those who were being persecuted. Paul placed himself and his companions along with the Thessalonian believers as people who needed “rest” from God.

There are two dimensions of this “rest.” Believers can be relieved in knowing that their sufferings are strengthening them, making them ready for Christ’s Kingdom. They can also be relieved to know that all wrongs will be righted when God’s final judgment is executed.

**So, when will this happen?**

While those enduring suffering would wish for a quick judgment, it may be that the payback does not occur in this life. But this will happen for sure when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven.

**Exodus 13:21**

“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night”

**Isaiah 66:15**

“For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire”

**Matthew 25:31-34**

31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

**Matthew 25:41-46**

41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

44 "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

When the Lord Jesus returns, he will bring judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News. The act of punishment belongs to God alone; he will deliver the vengeance that sinners deserve.

**9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.**

Saints, Paul has explained when and who will be punished; this passage explains what that judgment will be. They will be punished with everlasting destruction, forever separated from the Lord. The word “punished” pictures what God will do to those who have been rebellious.

When Christ returns, he will receive glory and praise from his holy people. The day of grief for the rebellious will be a day of celebration for believers. The Thessalonian believers would be among those praising him on that day—as will everyone across the ages who has believed the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

**11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Saints, Paul and his coworkers kept on praying for the Thessalonian believers, just as Paul prayed for all the churches. Although the promise of future glory is sure, believers still have a battle here on earth and the need for constant prayer from fellow believers. What were Paul and his coworkers praying for?

First, that God would make them worthy of the life to which he called them. To be made “worthy” has the same meaning here as it did in 1:5. Salvation is sure, but the prospect of the glorious future should be an incentive to holy living—and believers will need one another’s support and prayers as they seek to live out their faith.

**1 Thessalonians 1:4-5**

4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

**In Closing:**

The “calling” from God is that his people become like Christ (Romans 8:29). This calling is a gradual, lifelong process that will be completed when we see Christ face to face (1 John 3:2). To be worthy of this calling means to want to do what is right and good.

**Romans 8:29**

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren”

Second, they were praying that God would fulfill all their good intentions and faithful deeds so that everyone will give honor to Jesus Christ. The ultimate goal of all believers ought to be to glorify Christ through their actions, words, thoughts, and motives. When believers live to honor Christ, Christ is honored in them.

This can happen because of the undeserved favor of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ. Believers cannot show Christ’s glory or be glorified in him because of anything they can do—it is only because of God’s grace. Only by God’s grace did Jesus come to die for sinners; only by God’s grace can people receive his sacrifice and be saved from their sins.

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**