

2 Thessalonians 1

-This is the second letter to the Christians in Thessalonica and to all Christians.

-God through Paul wrote this second letter to the Thessalonians shortly after his first letter to them.

-It was during his second missionary journey while he was in Corinth.

Let's read 2 Thessalonians 1:1

1-Paul, Silas, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

-Silas was imprisoned with Paul in Philippi.

-Timothy was Paul's "son" in the faith of Christ.

-They had both journeyed to Corinth to be with Paul.

-God through Paul writes to the church IN God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

-As Christians, we are IN God and IN Christ.

-What does it mean to be IN God and IN Christ?

-This means that we are one with God the Father and one with Christ.

-In eternity past, God was perfect, and needed nothing.

-Although God needed nothing, He decided to choose us Christians to believe in Christ.

-Why did God decide to choose us Christians to believe in Christ?

-So that He could save us from sin.

-So that He could share His holiness with us.

-So that He could be one with us.

-God has not only saved us from sin, but has also shared His holiness with us that we, too, would live holy lives, and be one with Him.

Let's read 2 Thessalonians 1:2

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

-Grace and peace come from our oneness in God and Christ.

-Grace is from God alone, and if we believe in Christ, it is that which saves us from eternal death.

-Peace is also from God alone, and comes from the understanding of God's grace in our lives.

-For us Christians, it is because of the grace of God that

we can have the peace of God

Let's read 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

3-We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.

4-Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

-When Paul, Silas, and Timothy first came to Thessalonica and started teaching, both Jews and Gentiles believed in Christ.

-The remaining Jews, however, became jealous and very angry.

Let's read Acts 17:5-8

5-But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.

6-But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here,

7-and Jason has welcomed them into his house.

They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus."

8-When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.

-Thus, Paul, Silas, and Timothy were forced to leave Thessalonica, and went to Berea.

-Even though Paul and his companions were no longer there, the remaining Jews and Gentiles continued to persecute the new Christians in Thessalonica.

-In 1 Thessalonians 1:6, we read that the Thessalonian Christians suffered very much:

-“In spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.”

-In 1 Thessalonians 2:14, we learn that the Christians suffered from their own people outside the church:

-“You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches [in Judea] suffered from the Jews.”

-In spite of the persecution from their own people, the faith of the Thessalonian Christians remained strong.

-For those who are not true Christians, persecution will cause them to return to their old ways.

-For the true Christian, however, what does persecution do for us?

-Persecution pushes us closer to God.

-Persecution helps us to depend on God more and more.

-Persecution makes our faith grow more and more.

-Job was persecuted by Satan, but it only made his faith in God stronger and stronger.

-In Job 13:15, Job said this about God:

-“Though he [kill] me, yet will I hope in him.”

-Jesus told Peter that Satan wanted to sift him like wheat, but after Christ rose from the dead, Peter’s faith in God grew stronger and stronger.

-For the true Christian, can suffering destroy our faith?

-No.

-For the true Christian, why can suffering not destroy our faith?

-Because when Christians are persecuted, Christ Himself protects our faith.

-When Satan wanted to destroy Peter, this is what Christ said to Peter:

-“But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may

not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:32).

-Even though Satan wanted to destroy Peter, Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail.

-Because of our Christ, it is impossible for even the greatest persecution to destroy our faith.

-As Romans 8:38-39 tells us:

38-“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

39-neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

-Like God and Paul with the Thessalonian Christians, we should be thankful if our faith is growing more and more.

-Why does God allow problems in our lives?

-God only allows problems in our lives for our good.

-God only allows problems in our lives to strengthen our faith.

-God only allows problems in our lives to make us like the Lord Jesus.

-Here is an illustration:

-What do baby chickens do when they see a hawk coming to eat them?

-They run to their mother and hide under her wings.

-In the same way, the Lord wants us to run to Him to help us with our problems so that He can strengthen our faith.

-Just as God used persecution and problems to make strong the faith of the Thessalonians, God uses problems in our lives to strengthen our faith.

-We must, however, allow our Father to do this.

-Will God strengthen our faith if we blame Him for our problems?

-No.

-Will God strengthen our faith if we fight against our problems?

-No.

-Will God strengthen our faith if we do not allow Him to help work out our problems?

-No.

-If our faith is not growing, where are we going?

-We are going backwards.

-Here is an illustration:

-If you are in a canoe going up the river, but you do not paddle, where will you go?

-Backwards down the river.

-In the same way, if we do not go forward in our faith, the river of this evil world will pull us backward.

-As the Thessalonian Christians were growing in their faith, Paul shared this truth with other Christians in other churches.

-This was not done to hurt other Christians, but rather to encourage them.

-We all need encouragement, and when we see that other Christians are growing in their faith in Christ, this encourages us as well.

-God and Paul continue to encourage the Thessalonians:

Let's read 2 Thessalonians 1:5

5-All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

-Is it God who causes us to suffer?

-No.

- God is perfect.
- God has never had any sin nor will He ever have any sin.
- God only allows us to suffer.
- Where is suffering from?
- Suffering is from Satan, from this world of sin, and from our flesh that wants to do that which hurts us.
- To what does our suffering as Christians testify?
- That we are saved in Christ.
- If we are children of Satan, then Satan will leave us alone.
- If we are sinning like the world, then the world will leave us alone.
- If we are allowing our flesh to sin, then our flesh will leave us alone.
- If we are children of God, however, then Satan is our enemy, and he will try and destroy us.
- If we are children of God, then the world is our enemy, and the world will try and destroy us.
- If we are children of God, then our flesh is our enemy, and our flesh will try and destroy us.

- This is why our suffering as Christians testifies to our salvation in Christ.
- Our suffering as Christians does not testify that God has left us.
- God has promised us that He will never leave us.
- Before Jesus went to heaven, He promised us that He will always be with us (Matthew 28:20).
- Rather, our suffering as Christians testifies that God is with us.
- It is not, however, our suffering that makes us worthy of the kingdom of God.
- Only Christ's suffering on the cross makes us worthy of the kingdom of God.
- Yet, it is our suffering that helps us to understand that Christ has chosen us to be a part of the kingdom of God.
- It is Christ who declares that we are worthy because of our faith in the worthiness of Christ.
- As for those who persecute us, what will God do to them?

Let's read 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7a

6-God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you.

7-And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well.

-No one in this world is completely just except for our God.

-Our God cannot do anything that is unjust.

-All that God does in this world and in our lives is completely just, for our God is completely just.

-To be just means to not allow any sin to go unpunished.

-To be just means to not allow any evil to go unpunished.

-God must punish all sin and all evil as He is extremely holy.

-If God would not punish all sin and all evil, then He would lose His holiness, and God will not lose His holiness.

-God's holiness demands that all sin be punished, and be punished with death.

-This also means that God will pay back trouble to those who trouble His people.

-Even if people are not paid back for the trouble that they have caused here on earth, God will pay them back when

they stand before Him.

-However, how can God bring relief to Christians who are troubled, persecuted, and killed for their faith?

-The Word of God teaches us that there are at least two reliefs or rests for the Christian.

-First, there is the rest that salvation brings.

-In Matthew 11:28-29, Jesus promised this:

28-"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

29-Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

-This rest, however, is a spiritual rest because Christians still live on earth in an evil world.

-Secondly, there is the rest that eternity brings.

-When we enter into the presence of God, we will have complete and final rest.

-As Revelation 21:4 promises us who believe in Christ:

-"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

-It is this final rest in the presence of God of which the Word of God is speaking.

-When will this final rest happen?

-When Christ returns to earth.

-This is called the Second Coming.

-At the Second Coming of Christ, He will give rest and relief to all Christians who are still on the earth.

-For those, however, who do not believe in Christ, what will happen to them at the Second Coming of Christ?

Let's read 2 Thessalonians 1:7b-10

7-This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.

8-He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

9-They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might

10-on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

-At the Second Coming, the Lord Jesus will come down from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels.

-All people and all of the tribes of the earth will see Him coming (Mt 24:30).

-Christ will send His angels to gather those who refuse to believe in Him:

-“The angels will come forth and remove the wicked from among the righteous, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 13:49-50).

-These people will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord.

-Christ will also send His angels to gather those who have believed in Christ and are still on earth:

-“And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet blast, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other” (Mt 24:31).

-When Christ returns at His Second Coming, Christ will be glorified in all Christians, and we will marvel at Christ in all who have believed.

Let's read 2 Thessalonians 1:11

11-With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every

desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.

-As Paul prayed constantly, we should also pray constantly.

-Who is the only One who makes us worthy?

-Only God.

-It is the work of our God to save us, and it is also the work of God to make us worthy.

-As we have asked our God to save us, we also ask Him to make us worthy.

-And God will do so.

-As long as we live on earth, God will continue to work in our lives to make us holy like Him.

-As long as we live on earth, God will also work by His power to accomplish our desires for goodness and our works of faith.

-We must allow, however, our God to use His power in our lives to accomplish all that God wants to do in us.

Let's read 2 Thessalonians 1:12

12-We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the

grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

-How do we glorify the name of the Lord Jesus?

-By honoring the Lord Jesus and allowing Him to live His life through us.

-Even though people cannot see Jesus, they can see Jesus in us.

-When we honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, we are also honored and glorified in Him.

-As Jesus said in John 12:26:

-“My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

-How are we able to honor and glorify the Lord Jesus and live for Him?

-Only by the grace of God.

-When people see Jesus in us, should they think that we are good?

-No.

-We should tell them that what they see is only the grace of God in our lives.