

**Pray**

**A. Intro: Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians about a year after his first letter.**

**1. It didn't take long for someone to try and deceive the Thessalonian Christians.**

**2. The Thessalonians were confused, shaken and had lost hope because of what they were hearing.**

**a. Some said, "the current persecution was proof the tribulation had started."**

**b. Some who supposedly prophesied in the Spirit and others who forged a letter from Paul saying, "the tribulation had begun."**

**i. So it's easy to see why the Thessalonians were confused, shaken and had lost hope.**

*Hope is one of, if not, the most important ingredients that makes up the health and welfare of the human soul.(Hibbs)*

*2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

**c. Paul's letter was in response to this forged letter that instructed the Thessalonians that their current persecutions and sufferings were a result of the great and awesome "day of the Lord."**

**d. In Paul's previous letter, they were instructed that their deliverance could be expected as a gathering together with Him prior to this day.**

*1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

**e. So this second letter is written to instruct the Thessalonian Christians that our gathering together to Him will precede the Day of the Lord.**

**i. 1 Thessalonians has more in view the rapture of the church, while 2 Thessalonians, "the day of the Lord" which will follow it.**

**ii. So here in chapter 1, Paul writes to comfort them in their persecution and then in chapter 2, he will instruct them in regards to "day of the Lord" and the man of sin.**

**B. Greeting - Paul begins with a his typical greeting**

**1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,**

**To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:**

**Paul, Silvanus And Timothy**-Paul lists Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy....these men traveled with Paul, contributed to ministry and were co-contributors to this letter.

1. Silas was with Paul and was imprisoned while they were in Philippi.
2. Timothy was a young man that Paul met in Lystra, who was extremely faithful.
  - a. To Paul, Timothy was more than a co-laborer in the faith....He called him a son in the faith.
    - i. Timothy joined Paul in many of his missionary journeys....just a faithful servant of the Lord.

**To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:-** Paul founded this church...yet he acknowledges the One source really responsible for the church.

1. Paul was forced to leave after only 3 weeks....yet this church was alive and active.
  - a. Paul commended them for their work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope.
    - i. This was the work of God and the Lord Jesus....

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

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**-This is Paul's typical greeting....but it speaks of something far deeper than, "hello."

1. Grace and peace come from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - a. In order for us to experience peace....we have to first understand grace.
    - i. The Thessalonians were confused and shaken....yet Paul reminds them of the grace extended to them.
- What is grace?
2. If we were in their shoes, how would we respond?
  - a. In terms we can understand....or in today's realities.
    - i. We aren't facing death yet....but clearly there are Christians who do face death daily. (Nigeria, China, etc.)
    - ii. But we are seeing glimpses of what's coming....the current anti-semitism against the Jews is a precursor to what we will see.
    - iii. Economic persecution....digital currency will be the tool to get us to comply.

b. The whole point is...would you be shaken if tomorrow you woke up and began to experience persecution, death threats, and mocking.

i. What if you went to the store and they said, "christian money is no good here."

ii. What about deception? Many churches today believe we're in the tribulation.

### C. God's Final Judgment and Glory

**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,**

**Because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other-**The Thessalonians did well under difficult persecution.

1. It was fitting for Paul to commend them and to thank God because of their work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope in his first letter.

a. But note: Here, Paul only commends their growing faith and love for each other.

i. What happened to hope?

ii. That's the enemies goal...to cause doubt and create hopelessness...he's the great deceiver.

b. Have you ever been in a situation where you've lost hope?

i. Maybe today, you're feeling hopeless??

c. In difficult times, how do we not only keep the faith but grow in faith and keep hope??

i. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God.

ii. I'm reminded of David's conflict with the Amalekites.

*1 Samuel 30:6 Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.*

-How did David respond?...

*Psalms 42:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.*

-Paul instructed the Philippians:

*Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

David said:

*Psalms 27:13 I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.*

d. The world's hope involves doubt....in english we usually say, "I hope so."  
 i. In the OT, hope is the word *batah* which has the meaning of confidence, security, and being without care.

*Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (NIV)*

-Hope carries with it all of the confidence that comes with knowing for sure, with no question, what we have been promised by God in His Word.

*Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**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,** 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-Even as these Thessalonian christians were being beat up and martyred, Paul simply says, "we're so proud of you....we are boasting to all the churches about you enduring hard times."...your growing faith and love are tremendous examples....

**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;** Which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God-It's patience and faith in hard times that illustrates the righteous judgment of God. That you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer-Paul says, "your suffering is visual proof that you're a part of the kingdom." "That you've been counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake."

1. Paul said the same thing to Timothy:

*2 Timothy 3:12b...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

*1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;*

*James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,*

a. That message doesn't sound uplifting....to be worthy of the Kingdom, we must suffer??

i. But, we must understand that God's desire is to transform us into the image of Christ.

-If we want to be like Jesus, hard times are inevitable....

ii. It's the intense pressure upon coal that forms a diamond.

iii. Jesus' prayer in the garden reminds us of "even if" type of faith.

iv. Experience tells us that God's will is perfect....

-God is sovereign and righteous in His judgment....He can be trusted....

-We tend to think God is not just, when the wicked seem to go unpunished...

**6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,**  
 Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you-God is right in judging those who trouble His kids.

1. I believe Paul is pointing to the bigger picture here...He's pointing beyond the tribulation that the Thessalonians were experiencing currently.

a. He's pointing the great Tribulation spoken of in Rev. 6-19...**when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels**

b. The statement, "it is a righteous thing with God" reminds me of Genesis 18.

i. Genesis 18 speaks to the coming judgment upon Sodom where Abraham asked God, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

ii. God did pour out His wrath on Sodom....but before He did He raptured Lot.

c. Peter reminds us that God did destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and that they were an example to those who should live ungodly.

i. Peter also reminds us that God delivered just Lot, who was tormented day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds.

-In verse 9 Peter says:

*2 Peter 2:9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,*

ii. The word, “out of” is the Greek word ek.

-Paul’s message to the Thessalonians was that God will take His children out (**give you who are troubled rest**) before He pours out His wrath on a Christ-rejecting, sinful, corrupt world during the Tribulation to come.

**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. 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.**

**In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God-This is what the day of judgement will look like for those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

They don’t know Him...nor do the believe in Jesus’ sacrificial death and resurrection. (Gospel-John 3:16)

1. God will punish with eternal destruction...**from the presence of the Lord.**

a. The ultimate judgement for those who reject Gods gift of salvation will be to be removed from His presence eternally.

2. Paul says, this will happen.... **When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe.**

a. This speaks of the Day that Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation....John tells us....

*Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.*

i. Those who see Him will mourn...because judgement is upon them.

ii. Revelation 22:14-15 describes the contrast of those who believe and those who reject Jesus.

*Revelation 22:14 -15 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.*

-Blessed are those.... **Because our testimony among you was believed**, they're promised eternal life in heaven with Him....

-David Guzik describes it this way:

*From the presence of the Lord sums up the Bible's understanding of hell. Nothing must be said more about its horrors, other than hell will be completely devoid of God and every aspect of His character, except one: His unrelenting holy justice.*

**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,**

**Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling**-What is this calling?

1. This calling is to see Jesus glorified in us at His coming as noted in verse 10.....

a. One way we glorify Him is through suffering.

*1 Peter 4:12-14 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.*

b. The other way we glorify Him is to walk worthy of our calling.

-Paul instructed them in the first letter how they ought to walk and please God.

i. We live worthy of His call when we **fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness**.

-Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

ii. We live worthy of His call when we **fulfill the work of faith with power**.

-Prov. 3:5-6.....Psalm 119:105...the work of faith is obedience to His Word.

iii. We live worthy of His call when...as Paul says....

**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.**

**That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you**-This is more than just a bumper sticker....you're recognized by the world around you as having His character....we reflect Him in our actions and behaviors...

iv. **And you in Him**-Finally, we live worthy of His call when who we are in Jesus is more important than who we are in anything else....we are glorified in Him.

#### **D. Conclusion**

1. What is our comfort in times of persecution?...Because they are sure to come.

a. How are we to respond to the difficult days that are approaching us?

b. Clearly, Paul's message reminds us that God is sovereign.

i. He is in control and His promises and purposes will come to pass.

-There's nothing we can do to change the will of God...

-He's righteous in all His ways....He will bring Tribulation upon those who don't know Him and those who reject His Son.

c. So we should abound in faith, love and hope.

i. Walk worthy of your calling in these last days....

ii. Be a light in the darkness, so that others will see the glory of God.

2. What do we do while we wait and watch for His return?

a. Have our lamps full.....but don't sleep...be sober.

b. Remember the Parable of the Minas...

i. Jesus, our king, tells us to "do business until I come."

-But, if you want to get married, get married.

-If you want family, have kids....but raise them up in the Lord.

-If you want a career....find that job that you enjoy and that allows you to walk worthy.

-If you want a house....find a house....

c. The point is, we don't know when He'll return....we don't know what tomorrow will bring..

i. So until He comes do business....occupy....be successful so that you glorify Him.

ii. As Jesus said, "do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble".....hope in God...

*Hope carries with it all of the confidence that comes with knowing for sure, with no question, what we have been promised by God in His Word.*

Pray.