

“Paul’s Second Letter to the Thessalonians — ‘To You Who Are Troubled, Rest’”

Review:

- ***Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It’s Privileges***
- ***Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It’s Priorities***
- ***Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It’s Prospect***
- ***Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It’s Privileges:***

1 Thess. 5:11-13

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. [And] be at peace among yourselves.

- ***Verses 9 & 10 give us the needed teaching on how under grace and not law we today shall “live together with him” even if we may be “sleeping” and not “watching” when the Lord returns for us. Such grace is contained in these words of grace and truth and these words should be a constant encouragement to each of us always. Amen.***
- ***This resting in him and his grace will also change our lives as verses 11 - 13 teach. Believers ought to “Love their leaders for their work’s sake”. Were it so.***
- ***Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It’s Priorities:***

1 Thess. 5:16-18 [These words are so relevant to our daily living and are really so powerful and transforming.]

16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

16 “Rejoice evermore.”: ***Privileges should lead to a resetting of priorities, or “rights demand responsibilities”, as we have heard and that is so true. The question is this, will we enter into the sphere of his working? One step at a time here. Firstly, his joy. Will we enter into that?***

17 “Pray without ceasing”: ***Praying here is not asking for what we want — but for what God wants. It is perfectly compatible with the rejoicing in the previous verse. It is an act of worship! And is to be practiced without interruption and is a state of mind that should never be given over to worldly endeavors and all their evil. Redeeming the time for the days are evil!***

18 “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”: ***Again, in every-thing, yes, in every circumstance of life give thanks. Why, for it is God who worketh in us and in all things according to his will and our good! These may be the most important words here, at least in the practical sense. They are life changing indeed!***

19 “Quench not the Spirit”: ***For he is the one dwelling in us to “will and to do of his good pleasure”. God works in us by the power and working of the Holy Spirit. Don’t try to put out his fire is Paul’s very strong recommendation.***

- **Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It’s Prospect:**

1 Thess. 5:23-24

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Faithful [is] he that calleth you, who also will do [it].

- ***Here is the famous “three part” reference to the human nature composed of body, soul and spirit. God will surely bring each of us to that final endpoint as written. We shall reach that because “the God of peace [will] sanctify us wholly [Lit. “complete until the end”. So wonderful indeed.]***
 - ***There is nothing here on what we must do. It is focused entirely on what God has and will do himself. That is made clear in the following verse with these words: “Faithful [is] he that calleth you, who also will do [it]”: In the eyes of the Lord, we are already justified and therefore righteous. No claim may be brought against us since the Lord himself is our advocate and intercessor. Here in this life we lack much in body, soul, and spirit, but that shall all be rectified at his upward calling, at the Rapture. That his final teaching in this letter centers on his gracious working in catching us up to be with him forever, is most wonderful.***

So exalted this is, so heavenly in perspective. And it is so filled to overflowing with truth and grace. Amen.

1 Thess. 5:28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you. Amen.

- ***With these familiar words Paul ends this letter. May they have had an indelible impact on us for now — and eternity.***

Our Scripture Today: 2 Thess. 1:1-12

Our Outline Today:

- ***The Apostle's Thanksgivings for the Persecuted Church Are Well-Founded***
- ***The Sufferings of the Church Are A "Token" of God's Coming Judgments***
- ***The Blessings of God for the Persecuted Church Shall Come As Promised***

I. The Apostle's Thanksgivings for the Persecuted Church Are Well-Founded:

[READ] 2 Thess. 1:1-3

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

- ***The Salutation:*** "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" ***As Paul opens this short letter, he highlights two others who were with him, Silvanus (called Silas elsewhere) and Timothy. Silvanus may have written the letter as Paulo dictated it.***
- ***The Blessing:*** "Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" ***This is Paul standard salutation. It is very appropriate since the grace and peace of the Thessalonians is so central to the apostle's objective in writing this.***
- ***The Thanksgiving to God Almighty: For them (always), their faith (growing), and their love (abounding):*** "... that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth" ***So far this letter has focused on thanksgiving and praise***

for them. That will soon change as that will not continue to be the apostle's main focus as we shall soon see.

II. The Sufferings of the Church Are A "Token" of God's Coming Judgments:

- ***This brings us to the central teaching here, and it is a major one indeed, as we shall soon see.***

[READ] 2 Thess. 1:4-5

4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

5 [Which is] a manifest **token** of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

[READ] 2 Thess. 1:6-10

6 Seeing [it is] a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

- “a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God ...”: ***Lit., and “indication” or “showing forth”***
- “... counted worthy of the kingdom of God”: ***The question here is "worthy" in what sense? The answer is in verses 4 & 6. It was their great trials and sufferings at the hand of the unbelievers who persecuted them always, it seemed. The Kingdom mentioned here is not the Millennial Kingdom but the eternal and heavenly kingdom we have been promised as our inheritance. This will be our presence with the Lord in the heavens forever.***
- “for [on behalf of] which ye also suffer”: ***This language settles it! It was due to their suffering that was ordained. See 1 Thess. 1:6, 3:6 & 7. These had suffered more than we can understand and so have the saints down through the centuries.***

Rom. 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; **if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together.**

- ***Our present suffering and persecution points forward, if we could see behind the scenes, to the future judgment of unbelievers who do not “obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”: God will not be mocked. His righteousness will be accomplished and “right will prevail” — in the end.***
- ***There is a fundamental principle at work here that we may never have realized. Suffering “to be glorified together”, or, “to be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye suffer” demonstrates a fundamental principle of the working of our God, and one we may not have realized before:***
 - ***Not appointed to wrath - 1 Thess. 5:9, but salvation AND to suffer for his sake.***
 - ***If we compare scripture with scripture here in Paul’s letters we find that this is a major theme of the apostle. One teaching on this stands out in my mind, but there are many others as well:***

[READ] Phil. 1:27-30

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear [to be] in me.

- ***So there is “righteousness” with God, it seems, even in these matters. “Why do bad things happen to good people?” is often discussed (by unbelievers as well as believers) but the answer to that question is here in Paul’s letters (if only more would seek their answers here).***

Now we do suffer — but our time of glory shall surely come.

They, who reject the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, may not suffer now — but their day will come. That is Paul's magnificent teaching here in this first chapter. Amen and amen. To be on the right side of that equation is so critically important.

- ***This principle is stated directly in verse 6 and part of 7:***

1 Thess 1:6-7a

6 Seeing ***[most assuredly it is]*** a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us ... (when ***[or that ...]*** the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven ...)

- ***The principle is clear then. We suffer physical trials now but heavenly glory then while they enjoy our trials at their hand now but will suffer incalculably later and forever, separation from the Lord and from the glory of his power.***
- ***So their punishment is sure and will occur:***
 - ***It is “everlasting”: That is it will be eternal. They will suffer perhaps here as well (the Tribulation for some) but from the very presence of the Lord when he appears or when they are resurrected for their judgment at the Great White Throne.***
 - ***It is “from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power”: What a difference between being with the Lord at the Rapture verses being face to face with him at the judgment! These words express it so well.***
- ***Just for a moment, though, let's look at these verses starting with the words “... when the Lord”. Unfortunately, this is one of the places where the KJV translators allowed their views of the end times scenario (for they were apparently a-millennialists) interfere with their translation and parentheses need to be added to clarify the meaning for us non-Greek speaking readers. Interestingly, they did add parentheses in verse 10 to help with our understanding, but put them in the wrong place, I believe:***

7 “... (when [in] the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power)”

- ***The word translated “when” here should be translated “in” or “in that” not specifying any particular timing of these events but just the fact of them. The timing will be seen in chapter 2 here beginning next time we meet, lord willing. But here it is the fact that Paul is stressing. And that is illustrating the principle he has stated here regarding the “fairness” of God, as it were, with this principle of divine justice. So we should be awed and considered privileged to suffer now, he writes, considering all that is yet to come in God’s eternal program.***
- ***Now verse 10, following the previous parenthetical section beginning with the word “when” meaning “in that” in verse 7 and ending just before the same word in verse 10, and this is a bold statement again of the Blessed Hope, the Rapture of the Church which is His Body:***

Verse 10 — ...) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. [How blessed indeed. Rejoice. His grace is always sufficient!]

III. The Blessings of God for the Persecuted Church Shall Come as Promised:

[READ] 2 Thess. 1:11-12

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of [this] calling, and fulfil 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 ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ***Ah, this is a most blessed prayer for the saints of God!***
- ***“that our God would count you worthy of [this] calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of [his] goodness, and the work of faith with power”: This is glorious indeed. Again, this is not about working for or even towards one’s salvation as many might have it. This is God’s thinking, God’s viewpoint concerning the saints, that they might be “counted worthy” by God of his eternal blessings (“... of [this] calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of [his] goodness, and the work of faith with power”). Again, this is about God, not us. The teaching in***

1 Cor. 3. Yes, there will be a refining at the judgment, but all of us who have believed “shall be saved”. Praise God.

See: 2 Tim. 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began

- “... That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ”:
Take note here that this is all of grace and his love. Our salvation is according to grace and in no way is it conditioned on our works. Thereby Christ himself may be glorified and not ourselves.