

A GROWING CHURCH
--2nd THESSALONIANS 1:1-5--

INTRODUCTION:

As we begin our study of 2nd Thessalonians this morning, we will see the Thessalonian church highly commended by Paul as he gives thanks to God for them. This second letter was written a few months after the first and seems to have been prompted by another report about the situation in Thessalonica. The source of this report is unknown, but the contents of the report can be deduced from the issues Paul writes about in this letter. Paul opens this letter with praise and thanksgiving for the report on the strong spiritual character of the church. A church that Paul could be proud of as they continued to grow in faith, love, and hope.

- I. SALUTATION (2nd Thessalonians 1:1-2)
 - a. Paul opens this second _____ announcing that it is from himself and Silas or in Greek, Silvanus, and Timothy.
 - b. Paul then addresses the letter to the _____ of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c. When Paul speaks of our being in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, he is speaking of that personal, spiritual, and eternal _____ with God. (1 Peter 1:4; Galatians 2:20)
- II. THANKSGIVING (2nd Thessalonians 1:3)
 - a. Paul, Silas, and Timothy give _____ to God for the Thessalonian believers. (1 Thessalonians 3:10-13)
 - b. As Paul begins to give thanks to God it is for their prayers that God has _____.
 - c. Their faith had grown even in the face of intensifying _____, but it also grew because of the persecution. (Matt. 13:20-21; Luke 22:31-32; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 5:10)
 - d. Paul was not only thankful to God for their growing faith, but he was also thankful for the _____ of each one of them toward one another that was growing ever greater. (John 13:34-35)

- III. BOASTING (2nd Thessalonians 1:4)
 - a. Paul informed the church that he was so thankful to God for them that he was speaking _____ of them among the churches of God.
 - b. Paul was proud of these believers because they had a proper perspective on suffering and so _____ with hope. (Matthew 13)
- IV. A PROPER PERSPECTIVE (2nd Thessalonians 1:5)
 - a. Paul in verse 5 focuses on the area of _____, an area where Christians are often tempted to give up.
 - b. First, before going any further we must understand what this term “_____” means.
 - c. He then explains that their steadfast faithfulness in the midst of persecution and afflictions is “_____ of the righteous judgment of God.”
 - d. If we continue to trust God through our trials and afflictions, then that perseverance of faith in those trials is evidence that God’s _____ has been passed upon us and we are a part of His kingdom.
 - e. If Paul is saying that we have been judged by God and declared righteous, and our suffering is evidence of being _____ of God’s kingdom, then this view should completely and drastically change our perspective of suffering.
 - f. This was modeled for us by the Thessalonian believers, they were _____ and faithful in suffering.
 - g. Our _____, our steadfastness makes us worthy of the kingdom because we have been judged righteous and this proves that righteous judgment.

CONCLUSION:

I want you to understand that God has designed suffering to work for us and not against us. He has designed it to change us, to consume our dross and refine our gold. He will supply His all-sufficient grace through the fiery trials of life, and those trials are actually evidence

that God is for us and not against us. This is very important for our Christian life. If we view suffering as a part of being in the kingdom of God, if we see our afflictions as a part of a just process, then we will see trials as part of the work of God in our lives. We must understand that God is not angry with us. His judgment is good, and He has justified us, declaring us righteous and forgiven, demonstrating that we are worthy of His kingdom.

If we view suffering in this way, then we view suffering through the lens of the gospel because God poured out His wrath against sin upon Jesus Christ on the cross. All our sins were nailed to the cross. Not part of them—all of them. All of God's wrath against sin was poured out upon Christ on the cross. Not part of it—all of it. So whatever suffering we experience now, whatever circumstances or trials we may be going through, whatever affliction is weighing on us, those things are not God's wrath against sin.

The only way Paul could make a statement like the one he does in verse 5 is because Jesus died on the cross for our condemnation. When we suffer for our faith by faith, trusting God, then we can be confident that God is on our side, that He loves us, and that He knows what He is doing beyond our ability to see. It is all because of the Gospel. The gospel should drastically transform our views of suffering.

The Thessalonian believers got it. Their perspective on suffering was corrected by the cross. They were pressing on and picking up their cross to follow Jesus. In those actions, they were being counted worthy of the kingdom; they were proving the genuineness of their faith. What about you?