



2 Thessalonians: God who is Worthy

Memory Verse: 2 Thessalonians 3:13 "And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good."

Background

Second Thessalonians is the 53rd book of the Bible and the 14th book in the New Testament. Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians c. 51-52 AD, within a few months of his first letter to them. It would seem that there were false teachers in Thessalonica misleading new believers as well as some even forging letters trying to make them appear as if Paul had written them trying to convince believers that the Day of the Lord had already come (2:2). In response to this, Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church giving further instruction and details about the end times and the Lord's return. Paul also wrote this letter in his own hand so that the Thessalonians would know what his handwriting looked like and be able to identify which letters were truly his (3:17).

The Short Story

Christians should do good, be productive, and live holy lives while waiting for Jesus Christ to return.

What's the Big Idea?

In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he had talked much about the Lord's return and how it would be sudden and unexpected. Because of the lies from the false teachers and their own severe persecution and suffering, many Thessalonians were troubled at the thought that Jesus had already returned. Therefore, in Second Thessalonians, Paul answers their concerns and clarifies this misconception. He begins his letter by commending the faith of the Thessalonians and encouraging them to continue to stand firm. Paul shares that God knows what they are going through and that, "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. God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels." (1:5-7). Paul goes on to explain that the Day of the Lord has not come yet and will not come until "...the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." (2:3-4). This "man of lawlessness" is the Antichrist who will be "revealed at the proper time" (2:6). Believers need not fear because Jesus Christ will indeed return and when He does, the Antichrist will be overthrown by the breath of Christ's mouth and destroyed by the glory of Christ's return (2:8). Furthermore, the Antichrist will be thrown into the lake of burning sulfur (Revelation 19:20; 20:10). Until that day comes, however, Paul urges the Thessalonians to persevere in their faith and live positive and productive lives. It seems that some in Thessalonica had used their expectation of Christ's imminent return as an excuse to stop working and supporting themselves. Instead, they were taking advantage of others, relying on them for provision. Paul writes, "Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat." (3:12). Paul closes his letter with a blessing of peace and grace (3:16-18).

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

In the midst of suffering, persecution, and life in general, hope can be found in Jesus Christ; hope that is eternal and true. Jesus Christ will return some day and when He does, He will judge the world, rewarding the righteous and destroying the wicked (1:6-2:12). Because of this hope that we have, believers should be encouraged to stand firm, hold fast to God's Word, live holy lives, be productive, and do all the good that we can while we await His return. We do this not on our own, but with the help of the Lord. "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." (2:16-17).

**Material taken from various sources.*

Teaching Text

2 Thess 1:11-12 "So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ."

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- Why does Paul repeatedly stress in his writings that we should live a life worthy of Jesus?
- Why does he emphasize the need for the grace and power of God to do all the good things our faith prompts us to do?
- Where else in scripture can you think of an emphasis in the glory and honor of God? Why is that so important?

Practical Application

- What does living a life worthy of his call mean to you and look like in your daily life?
- Where have you recently felt prompted by faith to minister to a person or in a situation?
- When you consider the honor of Jesus Christ, how is that manifested in your everyday life?
- Where might you make adjustments in your personal, family or church life to enhance your spiritual legacy with the next generation?

Hitting the Highpoints

- 1:2 "May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. "
- 2:15 "With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you..."
- 3:1 "...Pray that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honored wherever it goes..."
- 3:12 "We command such people to settle down and work to earn their own living.
- 3:16 "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation. "

Bonus Features— Evangelizing Children

"The research is very clear: if Jesus is not already part of their lives by the time they leave junior high school, the chances of them accepting Him as their Lord and savior is very slim (6%, to be exact). With children, it is just the opposite. Because of the challenges and insecurities they face in life, they are very open to being a part of a community of like-minded people who grow together. Children have a tremendous influence within their families and on the choices they make in all areas of life... The greatest evangelical window currently available is among young children." — George Barna

Personal Takeaways and Notes