

Paul begins this second epistle to the Thessalonians in much the same way as he did the first epistle, by expressing his gratitude to God because of the reports that their faith and love were still growing even in the face of persecutions. He then declares that Christ will execute vengeance on the world at His return for the persecutions inflicted on His people. Paul also mentions his continual prayer that the Thessalonians would live lives worthy of the salvation to which they have been called so that they will bring glory to Christ.

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.

Paul begins this epistle in virtually the same manner as he did the first epistle to the Thessalonians (1 Th. 1:1-2). In his salutation he indicates that the epistle is from himself, Silvanus (Silas) and Timotheus (Timothy), Paul's traveling companions on his second missionary journey. Most commentators believe that Paul wrote this second epistle to the Thessalonians from Corinth several months (perhaps as long as a year) after the first one. He apparently was prompted to write this epistle because he had heard a report that there was some confusion and even false teaching in Thessalonica concerning the Day of the Lord that needed to be corrected.

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;

“We are bound [to owe] to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet [appropriate]” – Paul begins in similar fashion as he did in the first epistle (1 Th. 1:2), declaring his gratitude to God for the Thessalonians. He said that it was appropriate for him and his companions to thank God for the Thessalonians, mentioning a couple of factors that compelled them to do so.

“because that your faith groweth exceedingly” – The first reason Paul mentions is the good news that the faith of the Thessalonians was growing by leaps and bounds in the relatively short time since Paul had brought the gospel to them. Apparently the same report that gave him reason to write the epistle also brought the wonderful news of the growth of their faith and love.

“and the charity [agape: love in its highest form] of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth” – The Thessalonians' love for one another was also growing. These two factors were evidences that not only was the faith of the Thessalonians genuine, but it was also growing and flourishing.

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:

The fact that the faith of the Thessalonians was growing despite the persecutions and tribulations they were enduring for Christ was something that Paul held up as an example when visiting other churches. Paul used their “patience” (endurance) and the steadfastness of their faith as they suffered tribulations as encouragement to other churches to not give up when suffering persecution.

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

“Which is a manifest token [evidence; proof] of the righteous judgment of God” – Their patience (endurance) and faith in the face of persecutions and tribulations (v. 4) was evidence that God's judgment was righteous. Judgment in the Bible is not all condemnation. Rather, judgment means to make a distinction between the good and the bad, bringing justice to both. The righteous judgment of God vindicates the righteous and brings condemnation to the wicked.

“that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer” – “Counted worthy” could have two possible meanings: 1) God's judgment in allowing them to suffer persecution was causing their faith and character to grow, which in turn made them worthy of the kingdom of God; 2) the fact that they were suffering for the kingdom of God demonstrated that they were worthy of that kingdom. The latter meaning is more likely here in the context of judgment making a distinction between the righteous and the wicked. God's righteous judgment will show that the Thessalonians belong to God and that their persecutors do not.

“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense [repay; punish] tribulation to them that trouble you” – God's righteous judgment will reveal that those who have persecuted His children are wicked and He will punish them by sending tribulation upon them as a righteous and just payment for what they've done.

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;

“And to you who are troubled rest [relief] with us” – When God brings tribulation to the persecutors of the Thessalonians, He will also give relief to the Thessalonians, along with Paul, Silas, Timothy and all the other Christians in the world.

“when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels” – When will this judgment happen? We are not guaranteed that we will receive justice until the return of Jesus Christ. At that time (Rev. 19:11-21) Christ will return accompanied by his angels (and the saints of God, according to Rev. 12:14; Jude 14-15).

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” – Rev. 19:11-21 describes Christ's return when He brings judgment on the world against those who did not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by submitting themselves to His lordship.

“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” – There will be no opportunity for salvation for those who do not know Christ as Savior at His return. They will be eternally separated from God in hell (“everlasting destruction”), separated from His presence and His glorious 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.

“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints” – Christ’s return will be a day in which He will be glorified because of His wrath poured out against sin and for the salvation that the redeemed have obtained through Him.

“and to be admired [to wonder; to look at with awe; marvel] in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” – In that day the saints will look at Christ in awe and wonder for His righteousness, both in the judgment of the wicked and the salvation of the redeemed. Paul points out that the Thessalonians will be included in that number because they believed the testimony of Christ that was preached by Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

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:

“Wherefore also we pray always for you” – Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians has three major points of emphasis.

“that our God would count you worthy of this calling” – The “calling” is when God spoke to our hearts to draw us to faith in Christ. Paul is not praying that God would see their works and thus consider them worthy of retaining their salvation. Paul is praying that their walk with Christ would remain consistent with the calling that God has called them into. They cannot lose their salvation but Paul’s prayer is that they live a life worthy of that salvation.

“and fulfil all the good pleasure [that which brings delight or satisfaction] of his goodness, and the work of faith with power” – The second part of Paul’s prayer acknowledges that it is God who enables them (and us) to walk worthy of God’s calling to salvation. God demonstrates His goodness by accomplishing in us all the things that bring Him delight and satisfaction.

Ephesians 1:3-6 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”*

These things are done through God’s power that works in us through the conduit of faith. Paul’s prayer is that these things would not only be true of the Thessalonians, but that they would fulfilled to their completion.

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.

“That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him” – The end result that Paul is praying will be accomplished in the lives of the Thessalonians is that their lives would bring glory to the name of Jesus Christ. Christians who are not living obedient lives to Christ bring shame to His name. Paul also indicates that we also will be glorified in Christ, being His children that He has bestowed His love upon (1 John 3:1a *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God”*).

“according to [through; by the means of] the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” – All the blessings that Paul has been praying for can only be ours through God’s grace. No blessing from God can come outside of the grace of God that comes through Jesus Christ.