

“Encouragement In Persecution”
2 Thessalonians 1:1-12
8/31/25
Message 1

Introduction

- Title Of The Message: “Encouragement In Persecution”

- **Question?**

- **Show of hands... How many like “Persecution, Suffering, Trouble?”**
 - Yep... No one likes them!!!
- **As a Matter of Fact...**
 - As a matter of fact we will do almost anything to Avoid them!!!
 - We might even think we have DONE SOMETHING Wrong!!!
 - The REALITY
 - Persecution, Suffering, Trouble are a huge PART of God’s Will
 - God sees them a lot different than we do
 - It is critical we need see them from His perspective
 - You see these things produce GROWTH

- **The Thessalonians had a lot of Persecution, Suffering, Trouble**

- **So MUCH Persecution, Suffering, Trouble**
 - They thought they were in the TRIBULATION

- They had false teachers telling them they were in the Tribulation
- **They NEEDED Some Encouragement**
 - Paul set out to do just that with his second letter to them
- **We ALL Need Encouragement**
 - Wednesday Night / Psalms 9-11 – Troubled Times, Confidence In God
 - Psalm 11 BROUGHT great comfort to me
 - Many Psalms Bring Great Comfort

Psalm 23:4 (NKJV)

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 27:1 (NKJV)

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 46:1 (NKJV)

1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

Psalm 55:22 (NKJV)

22 Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

• Background To this Book

- **1. Date - Written**
 - From Corinth A few months or even weeks after Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians
 - AD 48-52
- **2. Purpose**

▪ **1. Their Persecution – Chapter 1**

- It had begun while Paul was there and was still going on!!!
 - Left under heavy persecution
- Here he is reminding them that everything is okay
- So Chapter 1 = Encouragement

▪ **2. False Teaching in regard to The End Times**

- Deceived by false teachers who confused them about the Lord's return
- When we studied 1 Thessalonians, we saw that Paul taught them about the End Times and the Rapture
- Yet they were still a little confused
- Mainly because
- Some false teachers had come in and taught that they had missed the Rapture and were in the Tribulation period
- These false teachers even taught that Paul, Silas & Timothy were now teaching this also and even forged a letter supposedly from Paul to support their lies
- He reassures them that the Tribulation period hadn't started
- So in Chapter 2 Paul = CALM their FEARS and CLARIFY his teaching

▪ **3. The Problem Of Idleness**

- To address the disobedient of those refusing to work.
- Some simply said – since the rapture is coming – why work?
- This became a problem because now they don't have money for food, shelter, etc...
- So Chapter 3 = Get to work!!!

• **Now This Morning let's take a look at 3 Wonderful Encouragements in Persecution**

- Encouragement # 1 – Praise For Their Growth In Christ vv. 1-5
- Encouragement # 2 – Remember The Promises Of God vv. 6-10
- Encouragement # 3 – Prays That They Glorify God vv. 11-12

Encouragement # 1 – Praise For Their Growth In Christ vv. 1-5

• **First: Customary Greeting vv. 1-2**

- **1. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy v. 1**

▪ 1. The Cast

2 Thessalonians 1:1 (NKJV)

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

- Apostle Paul
 - Started the Church
 - Second Missionary journey Acts 17
- Silvanus (also known as Silas)
 - Was a companion of Paul.

- He traveled with Paul on his second missionary journey
- Was imprisoned and set free with Paul in the Philippian jail (Acts 16:19-27)
- Timothy
 - Was a resident of Lystra, a city in the province of Galatia (Acts 16:1-3)
 - He was the son of a Greek father (Acts 16:1)
 - And a Jewish mother named Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5)
 - From his youth, he had been taught in the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5)
 - Timothy was a trusted companion and associate of Paul, and he accompanied Paul on many of his missionary journeys.
 - Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians

▪ **2. To the church of the Thessalonians**

2 Thessalonians 1:1 (NKJV)

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

- Geographical Location
 - Thessalonica
- Spiritual Location
 - IN God OUR Father and The Lord Jesus Christ

- This shows us Paul believed in the deity of Jesus Christ

- **2. Grace and Peace v. 2**

2 Thessalonians 1:2 (NKJV)

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

- Can't be at PEACE with God until you know the GRACE of God

- **Second: Their Growing Faith v. 3a**

- **1. We are BOUND to thank God always for you v. 3a**

2 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV)

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,*

- **Bound**

- Greek: ***Opheílō***
- Means: To be bound or obligated to perform a duty, meaning I ought, must
- Of what is required by law or duty in general

- **Giving of thanks to God for HIS great work was an Obligation –**

- He was bound to do so, and it was fitting
- Because of the work God did in the Thessalonian Christians

- **2. Because your faith grows exceedingly v. 3b**

2 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV)

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,*

- **Giving Thanks for**

- Exceedingly Growing Faith.
 - A Main Reason for such GROWTH
 - PERSECUTION, SUFFERING, TRIALS

- **Exceedingly**

- Greek: *huperauxánō*
- Means:
 - To increase, grow. To flourish, increase exceedingly or greatly
 - Out of bounds or It is off the Charts
 - A growth or increase that was above the ordinary!
 - It's a very noticeable progress

- **Application**

- It's very Encouraging
 - To see people, GROW in the FAITH!!!

- **3. Application –**

- **1. What is Faith**

- Greek: *pístis*
- Means:

- Firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness (though rare).
- That which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith.
- *Got Question; “This definition of faith contains two aspects: intellectual assent and trust. Intellectual assent is believing something to be true. Trust is actually relying on the fact that the something is true. A chair is often used to help illustrate this. Intellectual assent is recognizing that a chair is a chair and agreeing that it is designed to support a person who sits on it. Trust is actually sitting in the chair.”*
- *Understanding these two aspects of faith is crucial. Many people believe certain facts about Jesus Christ. Many people will intellectually agree with the facts the Bible declares about Jesus. But knowing those facts to be true is not what the Bible means by “faith.” The biblical definition of faith requires intellectual assent to the facts and trust in the facts.”*

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- Simply put, the Biblical definition of faith is
 - Trusting in “something” God you cannot
 - To trust in God: a firm persuasion based upon hearing!
 - It’s growing in knowing and trusting God
- **2. Faith is Meant to GROW!**
 - Faith is not to be stagnate

- We must be growing in faith
 - It's been said that
 - “A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted”
- Our faith, like a muscle, must be exercised to grow stronger
 - Tribulation and persecution are God's ways to strengthen our faith
 - An easy life can lead to a shallow faith
- **3. What does a GROWING Faith look like?**
 - 1. Gideon's Faith grew
 - He goes from questioning God's calling on his life –
 - Who me
 - Laying out fleeces
 - To Tearing
 - Down the idols
 - To Leading
 - God's Army – against incredible odds
 - Not incredible enough for God – Don't like these odds – me either – too many - 30,000 whittled down to 300
 - Gideon's life teaches us:

- That a Growing Faith is WILLING to TAKE RISKS
- When is the last time we took a risk for God
 - Did something for God outside your comfort zone?
 - Every Christian needs to experience of doing something so big that if God is not in it, it is doomed to fail
 - It is too easy to settle for mediocrity
 - NO more Status quo / Do something great for God!
- 2. Abraham's Faith grew
 - Started when he left his home in Ur of the Chaldeans to follow God
 - Was sent to a land he didn't know existed
 - But Abraham believed God and followed by faith
 - Later God asked him to Sacrifice his son –
 - Abraham intended to do it
 - Wood the fire and Isaac up to Mt Moriah
 - Believing that if God had him go thru with it
 - He would raise Isaac from the dead
 - Abraham's Life teaches us
 - That a Growing Faith

- Obeys even though it doesn't understand!!!
- Is there an area of your life where God has been prompting you to do something
 - Change something, make a sacrifice
 - But you have been reluctant to obey because you don't understand?
 - Listen that step of faith might be the very next step that God wants to use to ignite your faith
- 3. David's Faith grew
 - Started with Lion and Bear
 - NEXT A GIANT
 - David's life teaches us that a Growing Faith
 - Overcomes the biggest of obstacles thru the Lord
 - What obstacle is in your life today
 - Have you been crippled by a situation that looks impossible?
 - Believe today that one way or another God is going to get you thru
- 4. Paul's Faith grew
 - Began as he sacrificed all of his
 - Fame / position / prestige as a religious leader in Israel to follow Jesus

- He Serves Jesus (Lost all his friends in the Process)
- Paul's Life Teaches us To Endure great suffering for the cause of Christ
 - Paul hung in there for Christ didn't run
 - Paul's life teaches us that a growing faith
 - Is willing to sacrifice for Christ
 - Willing to Endure great difficulty
 - It lives for the greater reward of hearing Jesus say:
 - Well Done!!!
- Endure Suffering as a good Soldier
- 5. Peter's Faith grew
 - Peter goes from Denying Christ
 - To Preaching before a Mob
 - To touch a lame man – He was healed!
 - Peter's life teaches us that a growing faith
 - Is one that rebounds after failure
 - Is marked by boldness!
 - Perhaps you have been crippled today by **a Failure**
 - Your life has been placed on the sideline / on the shelf

- Guilt and condemnation have become your constant accusers
- The Lord is saying today
 - Believe Forgiven / Forgotten / Rise up
 - Allow me to use you once more!
- How their faith grew and How Our faith grows
 - The person's faith grew as their UNDERSTANDING of God grew
 - Understanding of His Grace
 - His love His Power
 - His Plan & Purpose for their lives grew
- **4. How does our understanding Grow?**
 - 1. Through the Word

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- The Word
- Our understanding of God and His Plan and Purpose – comes thru the word as well.
- Faith comes by hearing – it grows thru study – but not study alone
- 2. Through Experience
 - The second Ingredient to a growing faith is APPLICATION
 - Tried and proven!

- Has your faith in Christ Grown?
 - Have we become bolder or more timid in the Lord?
 - When is the last time that we took a risk because God was prompting you to do something?
 - Have you been crippled by a past failure or shook up by a heavy trial and now you are left you sitting on the sideline?
 - Believe God today
 - Hymn
 - Rise up, O man of God
 - Be done with lesser things
 - Give heart and soul and mind and strength
 - To serve the King of kings.

• **Third: Their Abounding Love for Each Other v. 3b**

2 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV)

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,*

- **1. Their LOVE was ABOUNDING**
 - Abounding
 - Greek: *pleonázō*
 - Means:

- To have or cause to have much, or more than enough
- To overspread, as a fire or a flood covers everything in its path
- What was Abounding
 - Their Love
 - For the Lord
 - For Each other
 - For the Lost
- **2. Application - Are we Abounding In LOVE**
 - 1. Be seen in Forgiveness
 - Do we show others the same forgiveness we've been shown?
 - *Chuck Swindoll; "In light of all that God has forgiven us, to refuse to forgive anyone for anything is hypocritical."*
 - 2. Be seen in Sacrifice and Service
 - Invest in and pour into people!!!

• **Fourth: Their Enduring Patience v. 4-5**

- **1. Paul was boasting about the Patient endurance v. 4**

2 Thessalonians 1:4 (NKJV)

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,

- **Paul was boasting**

- Patient Endurance that was being modeled by this Church in the midst of their trials
- Paul commends them for their willingness to stand under the trial
- In persecution this Church was a light for all the other Churches to see!!!

▪ **Why the Persecution?**

2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV)

12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

- In most situations we have only two options – WIN OR OFFEND!
- People will either be brought to Christ or they will be offended by your love for Christ
- Those in darkness hate the Light because it exposes their evil deeds

▪ **Standing in the PERSECUTION – PATIENCE**

- Patience
- Greek: ***hupomoné***
- Means: to persevere, remain under. A bearing up under, patience, endurance as to things or circumstances.
- Has the literal meaning of "standing under."
- It doesn't just endure the circumstance but masters it!

▪ **People's Reactions**

- 1. MOST people try to get out from under their problems & difficulties.

- 2. The Patient Person
 - The person who is patient is able to stay under, and keeps on carrying the load.
 - Suffering gives us a unique opportunity to Shine!
 - Illustration
 - You want to shine like a diamond in the kingdom?
 - You know what a diamond is?
 - It's a chunk of worthless coal that has undergone tremendous amounts of pressure over many, many years.
 - **2. Which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God v. 5**

2 Thessalonians 1:5 (NKJV)

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;

- **We usually think that God**
 - Is absent when we suffer, and that our suffering calls God's righteous judgment into question.
- **Paul took the exact opposite position and insisted that the**
 - Suffering was evidence of the righteous judgment of God.
 - Where suffering is coupled with righteous endurance, God's work is done.

- The fires of persecution and tribulation were like the purifying fires of a refiner, burning away the dross from the gold, bringing forth a pure, precious metal.

Encouragement # 2 – Remember The Promises Of God vv. 6-10

2 Thessalonians 1:6–10 (NKJV)

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,

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.

• First: That Promise

- That PROMISE God Will Make Everything Right
- One day Jesus Christ will turn the tables and they will suffer while the believers are rewarded
- Don't lose hope!!!
- This is as bad as it gets for us!!! And sadly as good as it gets for those who don't know Jesus

• Second: Judgment is coming!

- This is what Paul wants them to understand
 - There are only 2 options for every human Being
- **1st Rest & Relief for those who Belong to Christ**
 - Looking forward to one day being glorified with Christ
- **2nd Retribution for those who Trouble you**

- Paul wanted them to realize that unless they repented their persecutors would not go unpunished
- When the Lord comes with His Angels – In flaming fire – it is going to be Judgment time!
- **3rd Description of the Judgment in V. 9**
 - Punished with everlasting Destruction / Eternity of Torment
 - Hell is not going to be a fun place folks / no parties / Not water skiing on the Lake of fire
 - It is Outer darkness / Screams / Fire not burn / Burning sulfur
 - Worst part Separated from God! / and knowing you rejected His love forever
- **4th Jesus spoke more about Hell than heaven – Why?**
 - He knew how bad it was going to be
 - He wants everyone to avoid it
 - Hell is a real place and real people go there / Choose to by rejecting Christ
 - NO Neutral GROUND / for Him or Against HIM

Encouragement # 3 – Prays That They Glorify God vv. 11-12

• First: Therefore, we also pray always v. 11-12

2 Thessalonians 1:11–12 (NKJV)

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,

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.

- **1. The Need For Pray**

- They needed Prayer
- We need Prayer
- Let's make sure were praying for each other

- **2. Worthy!**

- **The word “Count” can also be translated “Make”**
 - God takes sinners, worthy only of death, and makes them worthy of His kingdom by imputing Christ's righteousness to them
 - But Paul prayed that the Thessalonians would also prove worthy in practice
- **We live worthy of His call when...**
 - We fulfill
 - Living lives touched by His goodness
 - Displaying His goodness
 - Doing the work of faith with power
 - By being a representation of His character.

- **That God / Jesus Would be GLORIFIED**

Closing

- May Our FAITH Continue to GROW
- May Walk Worthy of His Calling
- May our lives Glorify Jesus in everything that we do

