

**March 23, 2025**

**God's Good News Story-The Church Alive & Growing**

**2 Thessalonians**

***Stand Firm, Stay Faithful, Bring Glory***

God's Good News Story - "The Church Alive & Growing" is our ongoing multi-year sermon series where we are working our way chronologically, historically, and missionally through the New Testament. Our goal is to have a clearer understanding of what the Bible says about the 1<sup>st</sup> Century church and its' growth, principles and lessons that we can learn from to keep the Church Alive & Growing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

For 6 weeks we were looking at Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Thessalonians:



Today we start a new book but from the same writer and addressed to the same church as our last series. Today we begin to study and learn what Paul had to say in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Thessalonians.

**Key Teaching:** A Challenge to Stand... (2 Thess.2:15) *Therefore, Stand Firm, holding to the traditions that you were taught).* <3862> παράδοσις (paradosis) a handing down or over, a tradition

Paul is writing to the believers in Thessalonica who had been shaken by false teaching concerning the end times. He commends, corrects & commands them to Stand Firm, no matter what may come their way.

Today, in our troubled, confused and uncertain times, we need to heed this advice so that we too, can stand firm, live faithful lives until the sure and certain return of Jesus Christ. Let's take our Bible's or your sermon inserts and let's look into God's Instructions and Challenges on how to Live Worthy & Holy Lives in Troubled Times.

**SLIDE**

<b>2 THESSALONIANS: STANDING FIRM WHEN YOUR WORLD IS SHAKEN</b>		
<b>This is the 53<sup>d</sup> book of the Bible, 14<sup>h</sup> in the New Testament and is one of 13 Books written by the Apostle Paul shortly after the 1st Letter @51AD.</b>		
<b>Three Things That Were Shaking the World of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church</b>		
<b>OPPOSITION FROM THE WORLD</b> <i>Chapter 1</i>	<b>CONFUSION ABOUT THE FUTURE</b> <i>Chapter 2</i>	<b>CARELESSNESS IN RESPONSIBILITY</b> <i>Chapter 3</i>
<b>Trouble From the Outside</b>	<b>Trouble From the Inside</b>	
<b>Persevere in Faith</b>	<b>Hope in God's Word</b>	<b>Behave in Godly Love</b>
<b>Encourage the Troubled</b>	<b>Enlighten the Confused</b>	<b>Warn the Careless</b>
<b>Commendation:</b> <b>For their persevering testimony of faith</b>	<b>Challenge:</b> <b>To stand firm against falsehood.</b>	<b>Command:</b> <b>To work faithfully until Jesus Christ comes.</b>
<b>Key Verse: 2 Thessalonians 3:5</b>		
<b><i>May The Lord Direct Your Hearts Into The Love Of God And Into The Steadfastness Of Christ .</i></b>		
<small>(preachingtoday.com/W. Wiersbe</small>		

## SLIDE:

Opposition From the World

*Chapter 1*

Trouble From the Outside

**Persevere in Faith**

**Encourage the Troubled**

Commendation: For Their Persevering Testimony Of Faith.

**2 Thessalonians 1:1-4**... <sup>1</sup>*Paul, Silvanus/Silas, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>3</sup> We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is only fitting, because your faith is increasing abundantly, and the love of each and every one of you toward one another grows ever greater. <sup>4</sup> As a result, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your patience/perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.*

Like the 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Church in Thessalonica, this 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter was a partnership/team effort of Paul, Silas & Timothy. Timothy had recently returned to Paul in Corinth with an update after reading the 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Thessalonians. Paul and the team set about writing a 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to address the continued and increasing concerns of the Church of Thessalonica.

The Letter opens with the common greetings of grace and peace with the doctrinal reminder that the God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is Who hold formed them and holds them together.

Again, like Paul did in the 1<sup>st</sup> Letter he models for these new believers the attitude and practice of giving thanks. The way Paul words it seems to indicate that “the Christians in Thessalonica were the occasion of Paul’s thanksgiving, but God was the source, for it was God working in partnership with them to grow them in faith, hope & love.

Paul details the reasons for his thanks to God for them:

**Paul Gives 3 Commendations:**

- **Their Faith was Increasing (3a)**
- **Their Love was Growing (3b)**
- **Their Testimony was Uplifting (4a)**  
(of perseverance & faith)

Paul was greatly concerned, and rightly so, about the **faith** of these believers. As the scriptures say in **Hebrews 4:6**... *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

- **Their Faith was Increasing (3a)**

A **FAITH** that cannot hold up to testing is unlikely to be trusted. “Faith, like a muscle, must be exercised to grow stronger. Tribulation and persecution are often God’s way to strengthen our faith”. (W. Wiersbe, P. 192)

Paul expresses his thanks to God for working in and through the tribulations that the Thessalonians were facing because it was maturing and growing their faith. Out of this deep faith Paul continues to give thanks to God that

- **Their Love was Growing** (3b) and being freely expressed by these believers. Paul in his 1<sup>st</sup> Letter as well as this 2<sup>nd</sup> one was constant in his focus on love and faith. This combination of Increasing Faith and Growing Love....

- **Produced an Uplifting Testimony** (4a) from the Thessalonians to everyone around them.

What a beautiful and encouraging portrait of the Family of God, A Church where Faith was Growing, Love was Abounding, and a Testimony that Uplifts people and glorifies God.

My prayer and I hope yours is too, that FBC Broussard will be a Church like this. AMEN!

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Paul then begins to address the troubles and concerns they were facing. He gives a double-barreled address containing (1) A Promise & (2) A Judgment.

They were struggling with the struggles and pressures they were facing and trying to get a grasp on how to stay faithful and encouraged when the evil around them seems to prosper and thrive.

**2 Thessalonians 1:5-10**...<sup>5</sup> *This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you indeed are*

*suffering. <sup>6</sup> For after all it is only right for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, <sup>7</sup> and to give relief to you who are afflicted, along with us, when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God, and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> These people will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, <sup>10</sup> when He comes to be glorified among His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—because our testimony to you was believed.*

#### **Paul Responds with Three "R's"** (Wiersbe)

- **Reward** (vs. 5)
- **Recompense** (vs. 6, 7b-9)
- **Rest** (vs. 7a,10)

Though we should not be living our lives as a Christian solely for the REWARDS we get, it is very encouraging and joyful to know that God Promises a REWARD to His followers. Our reward is that we have the privilege to be a part of the Kingdom of God, children of God and beloved Disciples of Jesus Christ. God clearly understands our often-weak human spirit and He gives us this encouraging hope that no matter how difficult this life may be, it is worth remaining faithful to Him.

Take note of this verse in **Romans 8:18**... *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

It was comforting and encouraging to the Church of 1<sup>st</sup> Century, just as it is to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that God will reward us. Next 'R' ...Recompense

2<sup>nd</sup> God gives some clarity about justice and judgment or **RECOMPENSE**... (vs. 6,7b-9)

Not only we as God's followers going to receive a reward, the guilty ones, the persecutors will receive their just recompense (judgment/payment)  
Listen to these verses from Psalms 37 that address this same subject matter.

**Psalms 37:7-11**... <sup>7</sup> *Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not get upset because of one who is successful in his way, Because of the person who carries out wicked schemes.* <sup>8</sup> *Cease from anger and abandon wrath; Do not get upset; it leads only to evil-doing.* <sup>9</sup> *For evil-doers will be eliminated, But those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land.* <sup>10</sup> *Yet a little while and the wicked person will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there.* <sup>11</sup> *But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.*

Just as we can trust God to be loving and faithful to REWARD those who are His followers. We can also trust that God will be righteous, just and holy in dealing with sinful people. In God's time and manner, He will bring all things to justice. This Psalm also links us to the next point **REST**

Thirdly, we not only can be encouraged by the promised **REWARDS**, & righteous **RECOMPENSE** we can also be confident of an eternal **REST** where we will be free from all worries, problems and trials and be at

peace, resting in the love of God and Jesus Christ. (vs. 7a, 10.)

We all enjoy times of REST right? Well, to those who follow God and trust in Jesus, we will be **REWARDED** with an eternal **REST**. **That sounds awesome!**

Hallelujah, fix those promises in your heart and mind and you will be able to **STAND FIRM, STAY FAITHFUL & BRING GLORY** in this world of troubles.

In the last two verses Paul closes with some exciting and encouraging words.

**2 Thessalonians 1:11-12**... <sup>11</sup> *To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will consider you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,* <sup>12</sup> *so that the Name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, in accordance with the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul continues with the use of '3's'

**Three Prayer Concerns:** (Wiersbe, adapted)

1. **Their Worthiness (vs. 11a)** (*Character*)
2. **Their Work (vs. 11b)** (*Conduct*)
3. **Their Witness (vs. 12)** (*Calling*)

Paul reinforces the need for prayer if we are going to STAND FIRM. He has already stated his joy and thankfulness for their faithful living,



**WORTHINESS** – <sup>11a</sup> *To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will consider you worthy of your calling,*

it seems a little odd for Paul to word his prayer in the way he does, but it appears that Paul is challenging the Thessalonians **with the fact that if they Stand Firm, & Stay faithful** they will naturally **Bring Glory** to the to God the Father and Jesus the Christ. Paul is cheering them on to bring honor to God by continuing to be a faithful people. As Christians, we are called to bear the Name of Christ, let's do so with honor & integrity to the Glory of God. CHARACTER Matters!

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**WORK** – <sup>11b</sup> *and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power.*

Just as your **CHARACTER** Matters, so does your **CONDUCT!**

**Luke 6:45**...*A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.*

Out of your character your actions/conduct proceed. Paul had many times commended these believers at Thessalonica for their faithful love and care. It is obvious that these believers were 'characterized' by faith, love hope and faithful devotion. Paul also emphasizes that in order to **Stand Firm, Stay Faithful, & Bring Glory** to God we must allow the Power of God to build and strengthen our faith. Strong Faith and Right Conduct require **GODLY POWER**.

Your **CHARACTER & CONDUCT** Matters!

Why? Because it determines whether you will fulfill your **CALLING! ... BRINGING GLORY TO GOD!**

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**WITNESS** – <sup>12</sup> *so that the Name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, in accordance with the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Your **CALLING** Matters! Bring Glory to God in every area of your life.

Paul, along with the other writers throughout the Bible, are consistent and adamant that we understand and fulfill our calling to Bring Glory to God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are a lot of things we can spend our time, money and efforts on. We may all have different goals and desires, but it is simple and straight-forward when it comes to God's calling for His followers....

**STAND FIRM, STAY FAITHFUL, BRING GLORY!**

SO, how are YOU doing with your calling?