

2 Thessalonians

Note:

In this teaching, the following terms are used: “new creation”, “new man” or “new self”, “Christ in You”, “holy spirit” and “gift of holy spirit”. All these terms refer to that which is received and born in a person when he or she becomes born again.

Turn to 2 Thessalonians chapter 1.

This epistle was written shortly after 1 Thessalonians and is a continuation of that initial correspondence.

2 Thessalonians 1:1

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

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

3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

How can their faith be growing abundantly?

Romans 12:3, in the King James Version says that we are “...to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man (and woman) **the measure of faith**”. This is referring to the faith of Jesus Christ. There is no more faith to receive – it is complete. Colossians 2:9 and 10 says:

Colossians 2:9

9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him (or, you are complete in him), who is the head of all rule and authority.

For each believer it is God in Christ in YOU, and you are complete in him, Christ! If we are complete, then we are complete!

Ephesians 4:13 speaks of the “...unity of the faith...”. Collectively, as believers, we will not attain the unity of the faith until we are gathered together with Christ, when he returns for us. This unity of the faith is the functioning, conduct, behavior, practice, and example as believers in the body of Christ. This is walking in newness of life, walking by the new spiritual self, which is also known as walking by the spirit.

The believers in Thessalonica were increasing in their spiritual expertise and maturity. As a result, they were able to increase in their love for one another. God worked in the believers so that they could love each other in the manner that God wanted them to be loved.

Paul had asked them to increase in their love for each other in 1 Thessalonians 4:9 and 10. He even mentions that they had been taught by God to love one another. This is an indication that the believers were continuing to receive instruction from God, Paul and his fellow workers. They received the word from them, not as the word of man, but as the word of God.

This is also an indication that those serving as visionaries and administrators in Thessalonica are discharging their service appropriately and faithfully. They are leading by example and the believers are continuing to grow.

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1:4

4 Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith (*faithfulness*) in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

Paul had taught them that the world would persecute and afflict the believers. The persecution was not a result of wrongdoing on the part of the believers – they had not done anything wrong at all! It is interesting that Paul did not teach them how to stop the persecution either. He taught them how to be ready for it and how to stand steadfast. The believers put these teachings into practice and endured. This is one reason that the teaching of the hope of righteousness was so important to their lives as believers.

2 Thessalonians 1:5

The believers steadfastness, faithfulness and endurance (is)

5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

In order to understand what this verse is and is not saying, we need to understand what we have received because of the accomplishments of Jesus Christ. For this you can study Romans chapters 4 through 6. To be sure, verses 4 and 5 **CANNOT** be saying that you must suffer to be worthy of the kingdom of God.

Romans 5:1 says:

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This epistle begins by mentioning grace and peace from God. Our peace with God comes through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ. Justification is a legal judgment that disposes of the charges that were held against us simply because we were children of Adam by the flesh. All legal charges against us have been dismissed.

Romans 5:17 says:

For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

It is the righteousness of God which each one of us has received; in our newly created spiritual self, we are as righteous as God.

Finally, Colossians 1:12 and 13 says:

Colossians 1:12

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

Are you qualified to be a joint heir? Yes you are, because God qualified you.

We have already been delivered from the exercised rulership of darkness and we have become citizens in the kingdom of his beloved son. This is also known as the kingdom of God.

2 Thessalonians

Applying this knowledge to 2Thessalonians 1:5,

“This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God”. What judgment of God can this be referring to? It is our justification which we received by the accomplishments of Jesus Christ. We have already been judged - not guilty! Moreover, it was a completely legal and righteous judgment which cannot be reversed or overturned.

Verse 5 continues:

“that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God”. What happened to make us considered or accounted worthy of the kingdom of God? Our justification and the free gift of righteousness which we have received by the grace of God. This is how God qualified us to be joint heirs with the believers. He rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and made us citizens in the kingdom of his dear son.

So, are you worthy of the kingdom of God? Of course you are! It is by way of the accomplishments of Jesus Christ our savior which made us worthy!

So, putting this all together, 2 Thessalonians 1:4 and 5 can be understood as communicating the following:

Your steadfastness and faithfulness in all the persecutions you are enduring is evidence of your justification, righteousness and worthiness of the kingdom of God. It is because of this (your *justification, righteousness, and worthiness*) that you are suffering.

2 Thessalonians 1:6

6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,

It is righteous justice for God to balance the accounts and repay those who afflict you with affliction. Now, who are those that *really* afflict you? For the answer, turn to Ephesians 6:12

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Are 'people' the cause of the persecution? Certainly not! It is the spiritual forces of evil! We are able to love people, but we do not love, obey, or enable the evil that functions in some people.

2 Thessalonians 1:7

7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels (*messengers of his power*)

8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

The event referred to in these two verses is not our gathering together. This is the event when our Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven, which is also known as “the Day of the Lord”.

Please turn to 1 Corinthians 6.

“The Day of the Lord” is not one day, but it is a period of time, which begins with our Lord Jesus returning to the earth with his saints, which is us, the believers in our new bodies. We continue to function as the church, which is the body of Christ, with Christ functioning as the head of his body.

2 Thessalonians

Verse 7 refers to us as the “messengers of his power”. As messengers of his power, we will function in various capacities which will “inflict vengeance on those who do not know God”. One aspect of our rewards for our labor in the Lord is our positions of responsibility, our access to move and function in the kingdom of God...for eternity.

In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul is admonishing the visionaries and the administrators for not handling conflicts between the believers. He reminds the believers of their future functions in the body of Christ in the “day of the Lord”.

1 Corinthians 6:1

1 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous (*to the secular courts*) instead of the saints?

2 Or do you not know that the **saints will judge the world**? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

3 Do you not know that **we are to judge angels**? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

By revelation, Paul reminds the believers of the teachings regarding “the day of the Lord” which he had personally shared with them. Our functioning within the body of Christ in the day of the Lord, is determined by our functioning within the body of Christ now.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 4

The doctrine and teaching of the church as a female, the bride of Christ, blinds the eyes of the believers to the truth of who they really are. This blindness robs the believers of their identity (*that's identity theft*) and the genuine hope of righteousness which is the source of great endurance. However, the testimony of the accuracy of the word of God is that the believers, the saints, will judge the world and will judge angels (*including the devil spirits*).

For those who are wondering, 1 Corinthians 12:27 says:

27 Now you (*collectively*) are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul is speaking about the persecution and afflictions that he is experiencing:

2 Corinthians 4:16

16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self (*the new spiritual self*) is being renewed day by day (*it never wears out or becomes old or weak*).

17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, (*these two things are incomparable*)

18 as we look not to the things that are seen (*the trouble of today*) but to the things that are unseen (*our hope and our rewards*). For the things that are seen are transient (*temporary*), but the things that are unseen (*our hope of righteousness*) are eternal.

Turn to 2 Thessalonians 1

All this truth is lost in darkness if we do not discern our identification with Christ, including our place and our functioning within the body of Christ.

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1:9

(Referring to these devil spirits who are the source of persecution)

9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

11 To this end (*our relief in the day of the Lord*) we always pray for you, (*here is a summary of their prayer*) that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith (*walking by the spirit*) **by his power**,

12 (*why?*) so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul and his fellow workers are praying that the power of God, holy spirit power, works mightily in the believers as they walk by the spirit. God's power working in us is the means by which God fulfills every resolve of ours for good. This is how we walk worthy of his calling. The flesh cannot walk worthy of his calling. We look forward to our relief that comes to pass on the wonderful Day of the Lord, while we walk by the spirit. God works in us as we work so that the name of our Lord is glorified in us and we are glorified in him!

2 Thessalonians 2:1

1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,

2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us (*a counterfeit*), to the effect that **the day of the Lord** has (*already*) come.

3 Let no one deceive you in any way (*how? By remembering what had been taught*). For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God (*this is a physical temple, not the body of Christ*), proclaiming himself to be God.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. (*the body of Christ is restraining him*)

7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. (*until the gathering together when the believers meet our Lord in the clouds*)

8 And then (*after we are gone*) the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth (*this is a functioning of the body of Christ*) and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all (*devil spirit*) power and false (*counterfeit*) signs and wonders,

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 2:10

10 and with **all** wicked deception (*the operation of deceiving and slumber devil spirits*) for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

The devil does not know when Christ will return and gather us together. Therefore, the devil must always be prepared for that time when we are gone and he is unrestrained in his functioning. The devil spirits are always fighting against the restraints and those who restrain them from bringing forth **all** wicked deception. This is the lawlessness that is already at work. After we are gone, then the lawless one will come.

2 Thessalonians 2:11

11 Therefore (*because they rejected the truth by their free will*) God sends them a strong delusion (*or allows them to be deceived*), so that they may believe what is false,

12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

13 But (*in contrast to those who reject the truth*) we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God ~~chose you as the firstfruits~~ (*chose you from the beginning*) to be saved, through sanctification by the spirit (*not works of the flesh, not our own efforts*) and belief in the truth.

14 To this (*salvation*) he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory (*exercised power*) of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our (*genuine*) spoken word or by our (*genuine*) letter. (*remember what you were taught*)

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace,

17 comfort your hearts and establish them in every **good** work and word.

The traditions they were taught by both the spoken word and written word refers to the truth of the great mystery, the believers identity with our Lord Jesus Christ, and the hope of righteousness. Paul is referring to walking in newness of life by way of the new self of the spirit. This is not referring to religious traditions or religious commandments contained in ordinances.

As you walk by the spirit, with the eternal comfort which God provides, your heart can be comforted and established. We do not have to lose heart and have our hearts broken regardless of the circumstances or challenges we face in the physical world.

2 Thessalonians 3:1

1 Finally, brothers (*and sisters*), pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be ~~honored~~ (*glorified*), as happened among you,

Turn to Mark 7

This is a reference to 1 Thessalonians 2:13 which says:

13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

2 Thessalonians

That is glorifying the word of the Lord.

Now, let us discover what religion does to the word of God.

Mark 7:1

1 Now when the Pharisees gathered to him (*Jesus*), with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem,

2 they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were (*ceremonially*) defiled (*unclean*), that is, unwashed.

3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, (*not God*))

4 and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.)

5 And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”

6 And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;

7 in vain do they worship me, (*did they worship? Yes, but it was in vain, profitless, fruitless*) teaching as doctrines the (*counterfeit*) commandments of men (*not God*).’

8 You leave the commandment **of God** and hold to the tradition **of men.**”

9 And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!

10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’

11 But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God *which is the temple and the religious organization*) —

12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother,

13 thus making void (*of no effect, no impact*) the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

The children were to support and care for their parents in their old age. But the religious organization deceived people into donating the savings they had set aside for their parents old age. Not only did the organization take this money, but then they would prevent the children from helping their parents any further. The God and Father of Jesus Christ never willed for this cruelty to happen.

Turn to 2 Thessalonians 3

These religious leaders did not receive or glorify the word of God. It was not at work in them at all. Religion negates and makes void the spiritual impact and profit of the word of God, both spoken and written.

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 3:2

1 Finally, brothers (*and sisters*), pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be ~~honored~~ (*glorified*), as happened among you,

2 and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith.

This is why he needed and desired their prayers; it's because not everyone believed. Paul desired greatly that he would meet others who had a great desire and humility for the word of the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

3 But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command.

5 May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

Our new spiritual self is enabled to listen to the directions from our head, Christ which directs our hearts to the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ. We can be as steadfast and loving as he is.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother (*regardless of his status*) who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because (*here is the tradition, the example Paul gave them*) we were not idle when we were with you,

8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.

9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

Now, why would Paul have to mention *his* example? Because as a visionary he provided a example to all those who would serve as visionaries, administrators, leaders, within the body of Christ.

Who would have it in their mind that they could get away with not working? Those who thought they would be supported by the believers.

Who would dare think that they should make it their business to poke their nose into your business? Those who imagined that they were supposed to minister in this way.

2 Thessalonians 3:10

10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

Now how were the believers supposed to accomplish this guidance? Well, regardless of the status of that believer (*visionary or not*) they would not feed or support that one who was not working. The actions of the believers were not to enable the idleness.

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 3:11

11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.

12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

Remember, these commands are not laws. In the present day, we have plenty of leisure time for people to pursue being busybodies and to cause trouble. Paul is demonstrating that the visionaries are to teach and guide the believers so that they do not walk disorderly, they do not become a burden to the body of Christ, regardless of their function.

Even in Paul's time, there were areas where some of the church leaders were supported financially. Rome is an example of such an area. What makes the difference? The spiritual maturity of the believers and the spiritual guidance given.

2 Thessalonians 3:13

13 As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

What is it to do good? Specifically, in Thessalonica it was to follow the detailed guidance from the visionaries. In this case, it was to work quietly and earn your own living. In addition, "doing good" includes performing the next two verses.

2 Thessalonians 3:14

14 If anyone (*regardless of their status*) does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.

15 Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

This good work sometimes takes endurance.

In our day, in our areas, the detailed guidance from God that ministers to the needs of believers will be different. We dare not attempt to apply these scriptures as religious law.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write.

18 The grace (*free, undeserved favor*) of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Turn to Romans 5

Jesus Christ gives us peace. This does not mean that we will have peace with the flesh or peace with the world.

Paul validated this epistle with his written greeting and signature. He implied in chapter 2 verse 2 that there were false, counterfeit letters being circulated, which were attributed to be from Paul. This epistle began with grace and peace. It ends with peace and grace. The last verse of this epistle refers to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians

Romans 5:15

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the **grace (free, undeserved favor) of that one man Jesus Christ** abounded for many.

16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin (**Adam**). For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man (**Adam**), much more will those who receive (*manifest*) the abundance of grace (*free, undeserved favor*) and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

We can manifest the abundant grace and the free gift of righteousness as we walk in newness of life, by the newly created spiritual self. In this manner we can reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. The free, undeserved favor of our Lord is with us indeed!