

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **2Thessalonians 1:5-10**.
- B. In the first letter to the Thessalonians Paul stressed the following things:
 - 1. Salvation and assurance (Ch. 1).
 - 2. Service and soul-winning (Ch. 2).
 - 3. Stability in Xian living (Ch. 3).
 - 4. Strength in sorrow (Ch. 4).
 - 5. Sanctification in life (Ch. 5).
- C. In 2Thessalonians, Paul becomes a little more specific about things to do and not to do in preparation for the second coming.

I. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRAISE.

- A. Scripture text: 2Th. 1:1-4.
Paul and 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 the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3** We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater; **4** therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.
- B. No doubt the Thessalonian brethren did not consider themselves to be all that spiritual (1:3). But you and I are the worst ones to evaluate our own lives. Many times others can see the spiritual improvement when you and I miss it completely.
- C. A faith that is not tested cannot be trusted (1:4). Faith, like a muscle, must be exercised to grow stronger. Tribulation and persecution can be turned into positives when we realize that they may actually strengthen our faith.
- D. Praise is very important in helping others to grow. Make it a practice to give praise whenever possible. God encourages us so that we can encourage others (2Cor. 1:3-5).
Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; **4** who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. **5** For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PROMISE.

- A. Scripture text: 2Th. 1:5-10.
*This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. **6** For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, **8** dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, **10** when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed--for our testimony to you was believed.*
- B. Several things to be learned from this passage concerning the coming of X and the judgment to follow:
 - 1. It will be a righteous judgment.
God never makes a mistake, and will take everything into consideration.
 - 2. God will take vengeance on those who do harm to the church.
No reason for us to try to "get even." Even if people do not treat us right, we must do what is right. God will repay.
 - 3. God will give relief to those who are suffering.
One fellow said that preaching is, "Afflicting the comforted, and comforting the afflicted." The Xian has such a great promise here. The promise of eternal life and relief from suffering.

- Judgment it actually something to be anticipated with joy!
4. Jesus will come from heaven with mighty angels and fire.
What a sight this will be! Jesus all powerful and the first-born will be revealed in a fabulous way. There will be no mistake when He comes, everyone will know it is Him.
 5. Jesus will punish evil doers.
God has given judgment unto Jesus (Jn. 5:26-27). So when He comes he will be able to do the separating of the sheep and the goats (Mt. 25:31-33). It is a fearful thing to go to God in the judgment unprepared (Heb. 10:30-31). This punishment is everlasting (the eternal hell).
(Jn 5:26-27) "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man.
(Mt 25:31-33) "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 "And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.
(Heb 10:30-31) For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
 - a. Those who do not know God will be punished (no atheists in heaven).
 - b. Those who do not obey God will be punished (Jn. 12:48).
"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day."
 6. Jesus will be glorified in His saints.
The world will know the great glory and majesty of Christ because of the wonder of all the saints that will be with Him (Rev. 15:3-4; Col. 3:23).
(Rev 15:3-4) And they sang^ the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. 4 "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THEE, For Thy righteous acts have been revealed."
(Col 3:23) Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;
- C. Why is all of this an encouragement to the Thessalonians (and to us as well)? Because no matter how difficult life becomes for these brethren they have a glorious and secure future (and so do we). Those outside of X have a future filled with tribulation, vengeance, flaming fire, and everlasting destruction.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRAYER.

- A. Scripture text: 2Th. 1:11-12.
To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; 12 in order 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 has quite a prayer for them to live up to. It would seem while he prays for these things to happen to the Thessalonians, he expects them to do it.
- B. They are to be **worthy**.
 1. Faithfulness means worthiness (Rev. 3:4-5).
'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy. 5 'He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.
 2. Godly conduct means worthiness (Phil. 1:27).
Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
- C. They are to be **walking**.
 1. We have been called to a high standard--walk worthy of it (Eph. 4:1).
I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which

- you have been called,...
2. Walking means pleasing X, bearing fruit, and increasing in knowledge (Col.1:10).
...so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;...
- D. They are to be **working**.
1. Every part of the body of X is to be working *together* (Eph. 4:16).
...from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.
 2. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).
So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;...

CONCLUSION & INVITATION.

- A. Encouragement should play a vital role in our being ready for X's return.
- B. We should encourage each other by giving praise, knowing God's promises, and in prayer.
- C. In view of His return and what will happen, are you encouraged to live for Jesus?
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.