

*2 Thessalonians 1:1 -12*  
*Counted Worthy of the Kingdom of God*

*Satan's primary strategy in Thessalonica was to turn up the heat of persecution. The persecution began the moment they heard the gospel, and it never let up (1 Thess 1:6-7; 2:14; 3:3-4; 2 Thess 2:3-4). The reality of this persecution is what makes Paul's opening words in 2 Thessalonians all the more meaningful. Even under the incessant pressure and intense pain of persecution, the Thessalonians' faith held strong. Persecution, pressure, and trials will always reveal the genuineness of your faith. As Peter puts it, present trials purify you even more, so that 'the genuineness of your faith—more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (1 Pet 1:6-7). While the heat of persecution will purify a genuine faith, it will always wither a false faith. Just as the heat of the sun will ultimately wither a plant that lacks deep roots, so also will persecution reveal the shallowness of a superficial commitment to Christ (Matt. 13:3-9). Mark Howell*

- I. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians were written to give us an understanding of the importance of staying true to the Lord no matter what this evil world system of belief might throw at us. The believers in Paul's day had to deal with not only the allurements of sensual idol worship, but also the persecution they received because of their refusal to bow to the world and its ways. Believers today are dealing with the same things. Our challenge comes from an ever increasing rise of the idols of A.I. and Social Media which are easily accessed through man's obsession with the use of Smartphones, the internet and social media sites like TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, to name a few, that offer everything that appeals to the sin nature of the heart. Adults, young adults, teens and children are caught up in them much to the delight of Satan. The challenge for the church today, if we are to be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, is to not only guard our hearts as adults, but also the hearts of teens and young children by saying no to Satan's insidious influence. We had better wake up to what is happening because if we don't, we will find that our refusal to stand firm in the faith will harbor the dire consequences of broken marriages, broken sexuality through pornography, transgenderism, homosexuality, and gender affirming surgeries, rebellion against God's moral standards and a complete breakdown of a nation that is no longer Christianized in any way.

2 Thess. 1:1-5

1 Thess. 1:10, 2:19-20, 3:13, 4:14-18, 5:23-24, 1 Jn. 2:28

Rom. 5:3-4

Ps. 66:10-12

1 Pet. 1:6-7

Matt. 13:20-21

*"His verb for 'groweth exceedingly' is an unusual one (here only in the Greek Bible), and gives the thought of a very vigorous growth." (Morris)*

*"Faith in God is not a static thing. Since it is trust in a Person, it is always increasing or decreasing. A growing faith indicates a growing Christian." Walvoord/Zuck*

II. Paul makes it clear in 1 Thessalonians that believers will never experience God's wrath because we are at peace with Him. We will be spared from the seven year tribulation because we have been made holy and blameless through Christ's imputed righteousness. It makes no sense then, to participate in what the world will be judged for. Why kiss the enemies of righteousness on the cheek, wink at their ways, or remain silent knowing that they will pay a heavy price for their godlessness. Their destiny is an eternity in hell, ours an eternity in the joy of the glory of God's kingdom. Theirs is a destiny of everlasting destruction shut out from the majesty of the Lord's power, ours is a destiny of God glorifying Himself through us much to our amazement, all because we believed in the truth of the gospel and lived accordingly.

2 Thess. 6-10  
Rom. 2:6-11  
1 Peter 1:6-7  
Rev. 20:11-12  
2 Cor. 5:10

1 Cor. 1:3-5  
Rom. 2:6-11

*"... this passage is not about the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18; John 14:2-3), for no judgment accompanies the Rapture. Instead, it is revelation of Jesus Christ in power and great glory (Psalm 2:1-9; Matt. 25:31), when He will set up His earthly kingdom (Rev. 19:11-20:4). At His return He will destroy the Armageddon armies gathered against Him (Rev. 16:12-16; 19:19-21) and will then judge living Jews (Ezek. 20:33-38) and living Gentiles (Matt. 24:31-46) (2 Thessalonians' Bible Knowledge Commentary, P. 716). Lahaye/Hindson*

III. We must keep one another in prayer to stand firm in the faith. Matthew 24:6-12 tells us that, *You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.*<sup>9</sup> *"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, (Matt. 24:6-12).* To stand firm in the faith then, means that we refuse to allow anything to cause us to turn from our love for the Lord and for one another. We must pray for one another to live in ways that are worthy of our calling. We must pray that God's will be fulfilled in us as a church and that we live in ways that truly glorify our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

2 Thess. 1:11-12

**Titus 2:11-14** *11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*