

Lessons from 2 Thessalonians

ENCOURAGEMENTS AMID PERSECUTIONS

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-7

Introduction:

- A. This church had been formed by Paul, Silas and Timothy following only three weeks of witnessing, preaching and teaching to the people living in the very wicked city of Thessalonica. (Acts 17:1-4)**
- B. This great church planting team was forced to leave after only three weeks. They soon were found to be in Athens. Paul's concern for the young church caused him to send Timothy back to visit the Thessalonian church to see how the membership was doing.**
- C. Paul was well pleased with Timothy's report with the exception of two weaknesses noted in his first letter to the church. 1) 1 Thessalonians 3:10 reveals his desire to visit them and "perfect that which was lacking in their faith – their weak faith. 2) 3:12 reveals his concern over their love for each other and for all people.**
- D. This second letter reveals a growth worthy of commendation.**

I. LEARN THAT GODLY CONCERN BEGINS WITH ENCOURAGEMENTS. Vs. 1, 2

- A. The whole church planting team joins in calling attention to the truth -- you belong to God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ. V. 1**
- B. Then the church is reminded that God's grace is upon them and they are resting in peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- C. Whatever comes your way, remember that God is your Father and that you are covered by the grace of God and you are at peace with God.**

II. LEARN THAT GODLY CONCERN BEARS FRUIT. Vs. 3, 4

A. These whose faith needed to be perfected and whose love needed to increase and abound are now commended.

- 1. Verse 3 reveals that their faith had grown exceedingly. They were now a people of strong faith**
- 2. Also, the love of every one of them abounded toward each other.**

B. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet.

- 1. The church planting team was so impressed by the growth of the church that they “were bound” could not help themselves; they just had to thank God for this newly planted church which was undergoing much persecution.**
- 2. This team did not just thank God and forget it – their thanksgiving was always.**
- 3. “as it is meet” This team wanted the church to know that they deserved these commendations.**

III. LEARN THAT PERSECUTIONS AND TRIBULATIONS HAVE ALWAYS COMPANIED TRUE CHRISTIANITY. V. 4

A. It began in the first family – Cain rose up and killed his brother Able – and it has continued to this day.

B. The Thessalonian church had witnessed persecution in its very beginning as they saw Paul, Silas and Timothy forced to flee for their lives.

C. Now, they are suffering like persecutions and tribulations.

D. The history of the dark ages is filled with accounts of ungodly, cruel persecutions of God’s chosen people by those who claimed to be, but were not.

E. This nation was settled by God’s people fleeing from religious persecution; but this persecution followed them.

F. The persecution of Christians is on the rise all around this earth on which we live.

IV. LEARN THAT BOASTING BEFORE OTHER CHURCHES OF A CHURCH'S GOOD CONDUCT IS SCRIPTURAL. V. 4

- A. "We ourselves glory in you in the churches"**
- B. "so that we are always boasting of you among the churches of God" (Williams translation)**
- C. These church planters did not hesitate to praise the Thessalonian church publicly and before other churches for their patience and faith in their persecutions and tribulations.**
- D. They also wanted this church to know they were proud of them and that they were encouraging other churches to do likewise.**
- E. This was not an isolated case. Paul boasted of the generosity of the churches of Macedonia in his letter to the Corinthian church in an attempt to get the Corinthians to fulfill a promise they had made. (2 Corinthians 8)**

V. LEARN THAT SUCH CONDUCT AMID PERSECUTIONS AND TRIBULATIONS MAKES US WORTHY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. V. 4

- A. It is God's judgment that these were counted worthy of the kingdom of God because of their patients and faith in the face of persecutions and tribulations.**
- B. Peter and John had set such an example in the early history of the church age. Acts 5:40, 41. After being beaten and commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus Christ, they departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus Christ.**

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. Present day Christians living in America think this could never happen here; but it could and it will if the Lord does not come back to this earth within the next twenty years.**
- B. God's people need to be warned, be strengthened, and be ready for the persecution that shall come before the Lord returns. I speak not of the wrath of God – that is not mentioned in Revelation until Chapter 16. The rapture is found in chapter 14.**
- C. Maybe not in our life time; but we need to warn our children that they may be prepared.**

THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS OF GOD

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12

Introduction:

- A. The basic meaning of the word judgment is “settling accounts”; decisions based on the conduct of those being judged.**
- B. “Of God” establishes the truth that God is the One who shall make the decisions. God is a jury of ONE.**
- C. Righteous, simply put, means that the decisions God makes are all-to-gather right.**
- D. John 5:22 declares “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” Thus, we are talking about the righteous judgment of God in the person of the blessed Son of God.**

I. LEARN THAT IT IS RIGHT FOR GOD TO JUDGE MAN.

- A. Since God created man and man is responsible to God for what he does with his life, it is right for God to judge each person for how he uses his life.**
- B. The Bible has a great deal to say about the judgments of God.**
- C. In these verses, Paul spoke of the two most significant judgments. Judgments that would take place in God’s good time – not at that time. This message to the Thessalonians is a message to each true church in existence during this church age.**
 - 1. V. 7 – “rest with us” --The judgment seat of Christ where the saints of God shall be judged. 2 Corinthians 5:10.**
 - 2. V. 6 – “tribulation to them that troubled you” – This look forward to the Great Whit throne judgment – Rev. 20:11-15.**
- D. Our God is without fault – His judgments are right without error.**

II. THE TIME OF GOD’S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- A. In studying the time, we must keep in mind – Paul’s letters to the churches were written for the admonition of all true churches – then and now. This could well have been addresses to The church at Long Branch, Texas.**
- B. Therefore, as long as churches read and study this letter, the judgments are in the future.**

C. V. 7 identifies the time as “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels.”

D. Jesus had already set this time in three references in Matthew.

- 1. Matthew 16:24-27**
- 2. Matthew 24:29-31**
- 3. Matthew 25:31-46.**

III. THE NATURE OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD

A.V. 7 declares “you who are troubled REST with us.” Rest from the times of trouble.

- 1. Matthew 25:31-40**
- 2. 2 Corinthians 5:10**
- 3. 1 Corinthians 3:9-15**

B.V. 8 declares that the righteous judgment of God shall be “flaming fire vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey NOT the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

C. V. 9 declares that this judgment shall be “everlasting punishment from the presence of the Lord. Revelation 20:11-15

IV. THE RESULTS OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD.

A.V. 10 Jesus shall be glorified in His saints –

B. Jesus shall be magnified above all; He shall be praised.

C. He shall be admired – held up in wonder and admiration.

D. All this shall be “in His saints” and “in all them that believe in that day.”

E. All creation shall look upon the believing saints of our Lord and praise Jesus Christ for what He has done with and through weak, sinful human beings. – all this because the testimony of God’s people was believed.

V. LEARN THAT CARING PASTORS PRAY FOR GOD’S PEOPLE.

A. V. 11 -- We pray always for you – that God would count you worthy of your calling received from God; and that God would fulfill all your good pleasures or purposes which are prompted by faith.

B. V. 12 -- We pray that the name of the Lord Jesus may become more glorious through you, our people.

C. V. 12 – We also pray that you shall be glorified in Him according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSIONS:

A. Afflictions and troubles shall come upon all of God's people – "All that will live godly shall suffer persecutions."

B. But these afflictions can not defeat a people of faith – faith is the victory that overcomes and wins the praise of the great Judge of all men.

THE DAY OF CHRIST AND THE MAN OF SIN

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Introduction:

- A. The day of Christ is the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- B. The man of sin is the antichrist – the son of perdition.**
- C. Even at this time – 2,000 years after this letter was written to the Thessalonian church – the coming of both continues to be future.**
- D. This letter could well have been written to the Long Branch MBC.**
- E. Let us accept the teachings of this letter with its challenges and warnings as our own.**

I. LEARN WHAT IS REVEALED CONCERNING THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST.

- A. The time of His coming is the time of the rapture of His people.
Verse 1 “our gathering together unto Him”**
- B. Thoughts about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ can be troubling. V. 2. Paul instructs God’s people:
 - 1. Be not soon shaken in mind; don’t be troubled in mind.**
 - 2. Be not troubled by spirit – some prophetic utterance of some individual claiming authority for divine revelation.**
 - 3. Be not troubled by word nor by letter as from us that the day of Christ is already come.****
- C. Verse 3 cautions the people against being deceived by any of these means because two things will take place before the day of the Lord comes.
 - 1. First, there shall come a falling away (of God’s people)**
 - 2. The man of sin, the son of perdition, shall be revealed.****

II. LEARN SOME TRUTHS CONCERNING THE MAN OF SIN AND HIS COMING.

- A. V. 4 He shall oppose all that is called God, all that stands for God – Christianity.**
- B. V. 4 He shall exalt himself above all that is called God; he shall set himself up in the temple of God and declare that he is God.**
- C. V. 7 All this is already at work, but continues to be a mystery to God’s people**
- D. V. 7 Reveals that the God of heaven will prevent the coming of the man of sin until the time God has set.**

E. V. 8 Then, in God's on time, that Wicked one shall be revealed.

F. V. 9 The coming of the man of sin will be after the working of Satan – with Satan's power and signs and lying wonders.

(Revelation 16)

G. V. 10 He shall come with all kinds of wicked, counterfeit signs and miracles to deceive the people who are lost and are perishing because they do not receive and love the truth that they might be saved.

III. LEARN WHAT SHALL BE THE END OF THE MAN OF SIN.

A.V. 8 The Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth – The Lord shall just speak and the man of sin shall be consumed.

B.V. 8 the man of sin shall be destroyed with the brightness of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Revelation 19)

IV. LEARN WHAT SHALL HAPPEN TO THOSE DECEIVED BY SATAN.

A.V. 11 Because people have permitted Satan to deceive them and because they have not accepted the truth that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusion, heresies, that they might believe lies.

B. V. 12 God shall do this to those who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness that they might be judged – condemned – doomed.

V. LEARN THAT GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED AT WHAT IS TAKING PLACE ON THE EARTH.

A.V. 5 Remember ye not –Paul had told this people all about this and now calls on them to remember. God's people in our day have sufficient revelation of the future that we should have good understand of what the future hold and should not be overly concerned with the happenings in our present time.

B. V. 6 We should know that the future is in God's hands and the coming of the Lord and the man of sin shall be revealed in God's on time.

CONCLUSIONS:

A. Are you troubled at the thought of the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Make sure you have repented of your sin and have trusted Jesus to save you. There is no reason for God's people to be troubled.

B. Do you wish to know more about the coming of the Lord? Spend more time in prayer and study.

CHOSEN – CALLED – CHARGED – COMFORTED

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Introduction:

- A. After having spent much time revealing the terrible things connected with the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul reveals some of the deep things connected with God's plans and purposes concerning His saints who shall still be on earth in the beginning of this activity.**
- B. Paul calls our attention to two works of God that had brought them to their present status. In verses 13 and 14, he tells them that he is thankful that they were chosen and called.**
- C. Following this, in verse 15 Paul charged God's saints to a life of dedication in the last days before the Lord's return.**
- D. Paul concludes by promising them the comfort of God in their work.**

I. WE THANK GOD THAT YOU ARE CHOSEN.

- A. To what were we chosen? All of God's saints were chosen to salvation – to deliverance from the power of sin and from the presence of sin.**
- B. Chosen is in the past tense. When were God's saints chosen?**
 - 1. V. 13 God has from the beginning chosen you.**
 - 2. The beginning of what? The beginning of God's work in creation.**
 - 3. That would establish the choosing taking place in eternity.**
- C. What was the basis of our being chosen in eternity past?**
 - 1. V. 13 Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.**
 - 2. On the basis of our having believed the truth, and the Holy Spirit having cleansed us and sealed us.**
- D. How was this possible? It was accomplished through the foreknowledge of God.**
 - 1. Our omniscient God knew the end from the beginning.**
 - 2. God knew from the beginning who would repent of their sin and believe the true gospel and be saved.**
 - 3. On the basis of His foreknowledge, He chose us "from the beginning."**
 - 4. Romans 8:28-30**

5. That brings us to the next blessed work of God – we are called.

II. WE THANK GOD THAT YOU ARE CALLED.

A. To what were we called?

1. Whereunto He called us. Whereunto refers back to that for which we were chosen. – to salvation – deliverance from the power of sin and also from the presence of sin.
2. V. 14 goes on to say “to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. What we are called to OBTAIN is the resurrection body just like the body of our risen Lord.

B. By what were called? By the gospel of Jesus Christ-- How that Christ died for our sins according the Scripture and that He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scripture.

C. Every promise God has ever made man was made in Christ Jesus. 2 Corinthians 1:20 – All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him A-men.

D. Them that God foreknew, He chose and them He chose, He called and them He called, He justified, and them He justified, He glorified – that is “to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. WHEREFORE, WE CHALLENGE YOU. V. 15

A. The word challenge is not in the text, but the principle is very clear.

B. Wherefore refers back to the choosing and the calling. Because God has chosen you and has called you to this high calling, You need to do certain things.

C. Brethren, you stand fast and hold the traditions (teachings) which you have been taught by WORD of mouth or by our LETTERS.

D. You don't need any new teachings; you need to stand fast on what we have taught you.

E. You need to stop listening to other teachings concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus as I have just said (2:1-3)

F. We challenge, we charge you –stand fast and hold onto what we have already taught you.

IV. A PRAYER FOR COMFORT AND STRENGTH Vs. 16, 17

- A. In his request for comfort and strength for himself and for this people, Paul addresses both the Lord Jesus Christ and God even our Father.**
- B. He also speaks of God's love and what God has given His saints – His love, everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.**
- C. Only then does he make known his request –**
- D. Comfort your hearts**
- E. Establish you, strengthen you in every good WORD and WORK.**

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. What great truths God's Word has handed us in these few verses.**
- B. Truths that are designed to comfort and strengthen His people.**
- C. Let us all accept the challenge to stand fast and hold on to the teachings of God's Word.**

GOD DIRECTED HEARTS

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Introduction:

- A. God is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. God is the One to who we are all responsible for how we live our lives. He is the One before whom we shall all stand to give an account on how we have spent our lives on the earth.**
- B. The heart of which we speak is not the blood pump in our chest. It is the inner man where all the decisions of life are made.**
- C. Directed means to guide, to make straight.**
- D. Thus, I speak of God guiding the inner man in the straight way – God’s way.**
- E. These words were written by inspiration of God to a New Testament church – to the members of that church – to this church – to the membership of Long Branch MBC.**

I. FIRST, GOD DIRECTED THEIR HEARTS INTO THE LOVE OF GOD.

- A. The Lord Jesus Christ had already done that during His earthly ministry.**
- B. A lawyer once asked Jesus, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”**
- C. Jesus answered, “Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Matthew 22:37.**
- D. In another place Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” John 14:23**

II. GOD DIRECTED HEARTS PRAY FOR GOD’S MINISTERS.

Vs. 1, 2

- A. They pray that the word of the Lord preached by the ministers may have free course to the hearers.**
- B. Free course is accomplished when hearts desire to hear – when hearts are not clogged with thoughts of self – or thoughts of the world – or with animosity.**
- C. They pray that the word of the Lord may be glorified – honored – respected.**

- D. True to the Bible preaching is God speaking through the preacher – it is the Lord speaking through the preacher to the hearer.**
- E. God directed hearts pray that the message preached will be received “as it is with you.” These had heard the word of the Lord – they had believed it – honored it – and lived by it.**
- F. God directed hearts pray that God’s ministers may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.**
- G. All men are not men of faith – then and now. This could be referring to people within the church as well as those without.**
- H. I could spend much time revealing how unreasonable men and women have made life miserable for ministers.**

III. THE LORD OFFERS ASSURANCE AND COMFORT TO PEOPLE WITH GOD DIRECTED HEARTS. Vs. 3, 4

A. Ministers want people to know:

- 1. That God is faithful – what He has promised, He will do.**
- 2. That God will establish them – strengthen them in the faith.**
- 3. That God will keep them from evil – protect them.**
- 4. All this is promised to those whose hearts are directed into the love of the Lord – those who permit God to guide their lives.**

B. V. 4 Ministers have confidence in those who permit God to direct their hearts.

- 1. Confident that you do and will do that which the Lord guides you into.**
- 2. The things which we command you in and through the Lord.**
- 3. When your pastor speaks to you concerning the many duties set forth in the New Testament, it is not your pastor speaking; it is the Lord speaking through him.**

CONCLUSION:

- A. Is there a time in your memory that God troubled your heart about your sin and your lost condition? Did you follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and repent of your sin and trusted the saving of your soul to Jesus Christ?**
- B. As a saved person, a member of this church, are you following the leadership of the Spirit of God? If not, why not?**

SCRIPTURAL LESSONS ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

Introduction:

- A. To understand the problem and its solution, we must understand the time and the attitude of the church people who Paul addressed.**
- B. Acts 1:6 reveals the thought process of the first church concerning Jesus and His kingdom work. The church people were expecting the Lord to return very soon.**
- C. Acts 2:44-47 reveal the results of such thinking – they daily spent their time in fellowship, eating and praying. They sold their possessions and lived off the proceeds.**
- D. The church membership met and ate their meals as a large family.**
- E. Acts 4:34-37 reveals that this basic attitude continued to be practiced; but now there was common storehouse established and church members in need of food could get food or money for food from the storehouse.**
- F. Acts 6:1 also reveals this practice created the problem that gave birth to the need for deacons. “there was a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.”**
- G. This attitude and practice contributed to the condition revealed in Romans 15:26. The poor saints in Jerusalem could have been poor because they had no way to make a living.**
- H. It appears that some of the members of the church at Thessalonica had been inclined to follow this same mind set – Why work, the Lord is coming soon. They continued to eat with the church family or to get food from the storehouse, but they refused to work to help keep the table supplied with food.**
- I. Paul had addressed this problem during the time he and Silas and Timothy were present with the new church. (v. 10)**
- J. Paul had also addressed the problem in his first letter to the church. (4:11 – And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you)**
- K. V. 11 reveals that the sin of idleness gives rise to additional sin. These had become busybodies in other men’s matters. An old saying proves true – An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.**

- L. We also need to understand the term “traditions.” Paul used it twice in this second letter to the Thessalonians.**
- 1. In Chapter 2 and verse 15 Paul used the plural traditions.**
 - 2. In Chapter 3:6 he used the singular.**
 - 3. The Greek word used here means “handed down” and refers to – teachings, instructions, rules.**
 - 4. 1 Corinthians 11:23 clarifies. Paul said, “I have received from the Lord what I have delivered unto you.”**
 - 5. As an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul received all his teachings and passed them on to the churches.**
 - 6. As members of the Lord’s churches today, we must accept and act on the teachings – the instructions – written down for our benefit and as direct instructions from the Lord, Himself.**
- M. Since some of the membership of the church had not heeded Paul’s teaching, even his commands, the time has come to take stronger measures. Our present study clearly deals with church discipline and sets forth some characteristics of scriptural discipline.**

I. IT IS DISCIPLINE DIRECTED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. V. 6

- A. This verse clearly stands as a command from the Lord Jesus Christ given through the Apostle Paul and those with him.**
- B. It was not a decision to be made by the church – the judgment had already been made by the Lord Jesus Christ and passed on to the church by the Apostle Paul.**
- C. The unruly had been warned in the previous letter. (5:14) Since the guilty had not heeded the warning, it was time to inflict punishment.**
- D. The only decision confronting the church was: will we obey the Lord’s command or not.**
- E. To fail to withdraw fellowship renders the church guilty of disobedience and thus disorderly.**

II. SCRIPTURAL DISCIPLINE IS CHURCH SEPARATION FROM THE DISORDERLY. V. 6

- A. The church was commanded: “brethren” “ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly.”**

- B. This is united action – the vote of the church. There must be unity in this action**
- C. Paul’s command called for the church to withdraw church fellowship.**
- D. This did not mean they could not attend church services. It did mean they could not fellowship with the church in any meal, especially the Lord’s Supper.**

III. SCRIPTURAL DISCIPLINE SPEAKS TO THE DISORDERLY.

Vs. 12-15

- A. Paul, by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, commands and exhorts the disorderly to work with quietness and eat their own bread – earn your own bread eat it alone.**
- B. He then calls on the church to observe the behavior of those who have been disciplined. Are they obeying the commands Paul had given them in this letter?**
- C. If any disciplined man continues to disobey our word by this letter, note him, and have no fellowship with him. V. 14**
- D. Do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.**
- E. This action should cause him to be ashamed – and to seek restoration.**

IV. SCRIPTURAL DISCIPLINE SEEKS THE PEACE OF THE LORD. V. 16

- A. There is no real peace in undisciplined families, in undisciplined churches or any other unit of fellowship.**
- B. One undisciplined member can destroy the peace of whatever he is a unit of.**
- C. Back in the days of the Judges when every man did that which was right in his own eyes, there was confusion – strife – wars.**
- D. The same is true in any of the Lord’s churches. One disorderly member left to conduct himself as he wishes can destroy a church.**

CONCLUSION:

- A. Scriptural discipline is for the good of the church.**
- B. It is then for the good of the disorderly member.**