

Salutation & Thanksgiving
2 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Introduction

This morning we begin a sermon series on 2 Thessalonians. It is only three chapters, but there is a lot of important doctrine in this book, so even though it covers many of the same themes as 1 Thessalonians, it will still take us a little over two months to examine the riches within it. My reason for this study is actually very simple. Our world has radically changed in the last year and especially in the last few months, and we need to be well prepared for what will be coming in the future. This study is part of that effort.

Even using a very broad definition of the term “Christian,” it is has been a long time since we were a majority of the population. Membership in all religious institutions including non-Christian ones dropped below 50% last year. Christian influence has diminished to such a point that politicians, media and big businesses freely disparage us and our concerns in pursuit of their irrational philosophies and policies. Here are some quick examples.

Christians are concerned about truth. Our society disparages any information that contradicts their narrative while cultivating lies in order to justify the pursuit of their depraved desires. That is why mainstream news, social and entertainment media, and educational institutions seek to block and drown out any information or voice that does not promote or follow what they have predetermined should be said, and their allied pressure groups will seek to destroy you if you try. As I have said in the past, if your source of news is social media or any of the mainstream news organizations, then you are worse off than being ignorant because you have been taught to believe lies.

True Christians are concerned about life as seen in the states where there still is a large Christian influence passing all sorts of laws seeking to restrict abortion and promote life. In the secular states and federal government, it is going the opposite direction in promoting and celebrating abortion and euthanasia while restricting pro-life organizations.

True Christians are concerned about morality. We are aghast at the sexual deviancy and depravity that now dominates society. Homosexuality is tame compared to what is now promoted. Children who show any signs of gender confusion are physically abused by chemical alteration and surgical mutilation in the futile attempt by the adults that should be protecting them to transform them into the opposite sex. Many governments now threaten those who want to help such confused children adjust to the reality of the sex God has made them. But that is the real issue. Humans are rejecting what God has decreed and attempting to transform themselves into whatever their twisted minds desire. The results are psychologically damaged people who often have permanent physical damage as well. Christians have compassion on people caught in such tragedy, but we cannot contradict reality and join in the delusion of lies.

True Christians are concerned about the welfare of others, but that means dealing with reality and following the principles of God’s word. Socialism destroys people and their ability to provide for themselves. Those in actual need are to be the recipients of charity, not entitlements. We care about the health of others, so we seek to follow true science in medicine, not science fiction and lies such as have been promulgated this last year about the danger of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 or the safety of the so called “vaccines.” Blood is on the hands of government officials whose policies needlessly put the most vulnerable people in harms way and then prevented proper treatments to save their lives. Medical professionals that have turned their back on their training to instead dutifully follow government

protocols and mandates are just as guilty. It is a shame on them that a guy with just a BS in Biology working with a couple of PHN's could figure out in advance what to do and then beat a bad case of COVID-19. I would have been in grave danger if I had followed the treatment protocols set forth in this state.

True Christians are concerned about proper relationships among people of diverse backgrounds and know from the Scriptures and by experience that the answer is in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by which people are adopted into God's one family no matter what their ethnic, social or economic background or standing. We understand that God views partiality given in any direction to be sin. We stand against the radical new racism being promoted by governments, media and businesses falsely being called "diversity" and "social justice" as they follow the marxist lies of critical race theory of oppressors and oppressed. God will judge according to character and action. We are to follow His example.

Finally, true Christians are concerned about the worship of God and strive to follow His commands in meeting together for worship and edification. Our commitment is to maximize the number of people that can worship together on site while still using reasonable cautions to minimize risk for those who may be more vulnerable. That is why I will be preaching outside again when the weather permits, why we have multiple rooms with varying levels of restrictions, and why we stream the service. Most governments have used PST (Pestilential Socialistic Totalitarianism) to trample all over civil rights while promoting unjustified fear in the population leading to all sorts of additional detrimental restrictions some of them self imposed. Sadly, as of two months ago, roughly 1/4 of churches in the United States have not reopened at all and many that are open have such stringent protocols that only a portion of the congregation can attend. I was told at the Sunrise service of a church in our own area that has not held an in person service in over a year.

The world is radically different than it was in 2019 and it is not going back. Those who stand up for Biblical principles and morality can expect to be persecuted by those who are evil. It has actually always been that way (2 Timothy 3:12), but blatant and wide-spread persecution of Christians in the United States is still fairly new for us. I have not been thrown in jail yet for preaching, but others have, and how long before it happens here is unknown. This church has not been physically shut down, but others have, and how long before it happens here is unknown. You have not been physically assaulted or lost your job because you stand firmly to live according to what God states in His word, but others have, and how long before that happens to you is an unknown. Now is the time to prepare for such persecution instead of waiting for it to become reality. That was the reason for the three week study in Habakkuk.

I hope that study was helpful to you. While the particular situation and promises only belong to that time period and Israel, the principles in it are universal. God will punish nations that fail to fulfill His purposes for government in giving praise to those who do right and bringing wrath upon those who do wickedness (Romans 13:3-4). Our nation has been exceptionally blessed by God in the past, but our wickedness in the present is a clear manifestation of God's wrath already being upon us (Romans 1:18-32), and we are heading for either self destruction or take over by another nation. While that is a very disturbing prospect, you can be like Habakkuk with a firm faith in God so that even if there is a complete economic collapse and destruction of this nation, you can say with him, "*Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds feet, And makes me walk on high places*" (Habakkuk 3:18-19).

We saw in our study of 1 Thessalonians that through that church was born in the midst of adversity, they quickly grew and matured to become a model for other churches in evangelism as well as their work of faith, labor of love and steadfastness of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. In 2 Thessalonians we will see that they continue to mature even while enduring increased persecution. Though Paul has to address their continued confusion about the Lord's return and also rebuke some of them for their behavior, the church as a whole remained a model church. They are still a good example for us to emulate in our own time.

Salutation - 2 Thess. 1:1-2

The book begins ¹ *“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.”*

By way of quick review, Paul was on his second missionary journey accompanied by Silvanus (AKA Silas from Jerusalem) and Timothy (from Lystra). After planting the first church in Macedonia at Philippi and being persecuted there (Acts 16:11-40), they made their way along the Egnatian Way eventually traveling the 90 miles (144 km) southwest from Philippi to Thessalonica which was the capital of its region. It was a major port and commercial center of trade to areas east and west throughout Macedonia as well as south to Achaia, and by ship to any where along the coast of the Aegean Sea and beyond. Acts 17 records that they went to the synagogue for at least three weeks to reason with the Jews from the Scriptures that Jesus is the promised Messiah and that He had to suffer and rise from the dead to fulfill the prophecies. Some of the Jews along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and leading women were persuaded joined Paul and Silas. Other Jews rejected the message largely because they were jealous of Gentiles being welcomed into the kingdom of God, and they turned against them eventually forming a mob that made it so dangerous for Paul that the brethren there sent Paul and Silas away to Berea, a small city about 40 miles (64km) to the southwest of Thessalonica. The same trouble makers eventually went to Berea to stir up trouble and Paul was sent to Athens while Silas and Timothy stayed behind to join Paul later as soon as they could do so.

After Timothy did catch up with Paul in Athens, Paul was so concerned about the Thessalonians because they were a new church and Paul had to leave so abruptly, that he sent Timothy back there to strengthen and encourage them and find out how they were doing. Paul then went to Corinth and Timothy eventually brought his report to Paul there which was the occasion for Paul's first letter to them expressing his joy and thanksgiving for how well they were doing as well as addressing some particular issues. That would put the first letter in late A.D. 50 or early 51.

This second letter is written in A.D. 51 after Paul receives a report on how the Thessalonians were doing after receiving his first letter. It is written by Paul, but like the first letter, he includes Silvanus and Timothy as co-authors for they are co-laborers in ministry and share Paul's concerns and desires for them. He uses the pronoun “we” 18 times in just three chapters. That should be the heart and unity of any group of church leaders since church leadership is about service to the Lord Jesus Christ as His slaves and not about power and authority.

This letter also shares some of the same themes as the first letter. Chapter 1 is thanksgiving for God's work in them while encouraging them as they endure persecution. Chapter 2 is further explanation of the Day of the Lord and what occurs within it assuring them that it had not yet arrived. Chapter 3 is full of exhortations for them to be ready for the Lord's return with a specific rebuke of those that were not working.

The letter is written to the church, the ἐκκλησία /ekklāsia, the called out assembly, but not just any assembly, but the one that is in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is specifically written to those who have been reconciled to God through their faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ for that is the only way that relationship can be formed. No one can come to the Father except through Jesus (John 14:6), and no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). The church is not a social club, a political group, or a special interest association. It is the people of God who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ that are gathered together as an assembly of believers.

Paul makes a stronger emphasis about this here than he did in the first letter since he repeats this phrase using it before and after the greeting, and he also adds in the designation that it is *“the God and Father of us.”* The “us” stresses the personal relationship they share with God. Just as in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples, God is only *“our Father who art in heaven”* to those who are part of His family. He is God, He is Creator, He is judge of all the earth for every human, but He is only Father to those who

meet the criteria of John 1:12-13,¹² *“But as many as received Him [the eternal Word made flesh - Jesus Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”* Because the Thessalonians also believed in Jesus Christ and received the right to be children of God, then they are fellow members of that family with Paul and his companions. It is our Father, not my Father or your Father. He is Father to all whom He has adopted into His family.

The greeting is simple, but profound. *“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* The grace and peace wished for them comes from a double source. It is co-jointly from both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ for a single preposition is used, “from,” connected by the conjunction, “and.” As a Hebrew of the Hebrews (Phil. 3:5), Paul would have been a strict monotheist and would not have connected God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in this manner unless he accepted the deity of Jesus.

The elements of grace and peace are included in the opening greeting in all of Paul’s letters. Grace is the extension of a benefit to you that is not deserved. In this verse it is specifically the wish of God’s undeserved blessing upon you. God’s grace is essential to Christian life, for salvation from sin is by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9), we are to stand firm in God’s grace (1 Peter 5:12), and we are to extend that grace to others even in our speech (Ephesians 4:29).

Peace here is much more than the absence of conflict. It is the tranquility that comes from hearts and minds that are in harmony. Such peace can only come from God our Father because He is the one that has extended His grace to us in Jesus Christ to pay the penalty of our sins so that we can be reconciled with Him and have peace. Because true Christians are justified by faith, they have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). We can have peace in the midst of any circumstance because we can bring our prayers and petitions to God and cast our anxieties upon Him because He cares for us (Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Peter 5:7). We can also be at peace with one another for as Paul explains in Ephesians 2:14-16, Christ Himself is our peace who by His own death on the cross puts to death the enmity that existed between Jew and Gentile to establish them in peace as one new entity, the body of Christ, the church. That is true for every other way in which humans divide themselves. Your melanin count may be more or less than mine. Your standing in society maybe higher or lower than mine. Your financial wealth may be more or less than mine. You may have a different ethnic background speaking a different language and liking different foods, be short or tall, thin or fat, male or female, but in the church, each of us are brothers and sisters in Christ who love each other just as Christ loved us. Because of Jesus Christ, we are at peace with God, at peace in the circumstances of life, and at peace with one another. We have harmony, not conflict.

That is a wonderful greeting for a church to receive that was experiencing such persecution. It is still a wonderful greeting to extend to believers anywhere at anytime including our own, for it is the reminder of both what we have already received in Christ in salvation, and the state in which we can live regardless of our circumstances as we walk with Christ. As I have pointed out previously, God is good, and because He is good, His grace and peace give us a hope we can extend to others as we proclaim the gospel to them. That is the example seen in the Thessalonians, and an example for us to follow and in which to excel still more.

Commending their Faith and Love - 2 Thess. 1:3

Paul commends the Thessalonians in verses 3-5,³ *“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.⁵ This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.”*

The first commendation is in regards to their faith and love and it arises from what Paul describes here as an obligation. An expanded translation would be something like this, *“To express gratitude, we are morally obligated to God at all times, brothers, just as is properly worthy, because your faith grows abundantly and love increases in each one of you all toward one another.”*

Why would Paul think it was a moral obligation to give thanks for what God was doing in the Thessalonians? Two simple reasons. First, God was doing the very work in the Thessalonians for which Paul and his missionary companions had gone to Thessalonica to accomplish. They were no longer there, but God was still at work accomplishing His will through others. Directly related to this, God was answering their prayers for the Thessalonians. Paul began his first letter to them mentioning they prayed for them with their work of faith, labor of love and steadfastness of hope in mind (1 Thess. 1:2-3). Their desire was for the Lord to cause the Thessalonians to increase and abound in love for one another (1 Thess. 3:12) and to excel still more in it (1 Thess. 4:11). They had also exhorted them in the Lord to excel still more in their walk with the Lord in pleasing Him (1 Thess. 4:1). That is why Paul states it was “fitting” or “right” or “meet” for them to do so. It was proper to give thanks to the Lord for all that He was doing among the brethren.

We should respond this way naturally out of joy in seeing God at work, but there is also a moral obligation to give Him thanks when you learn of how He is answering your prayers or accomplishing through others what you properly desire to see accomplished. There is no room in the body of Christ for jealousy because both the work and the glory of it is about God and His kingdom and not you. We are His slaves and we are to take joy in the glory of our master. Never let jealousy rise up in you because God does through others something you wanted to do. The gift, ministry and empowerment God gives to each individual is completely up to Him, and each of them are for the building up of the body of Christ as He desires. Paul was never jealous of God using others. As he explains in 1 Corinthians 3:6-8, it is God that causes the increase regardless of who plants and who waters. Paul expressed gratitude to God for what the Lord was doing, we ought to do likewise. That is part of the joy of praying for others.

To what degree were the Thessalonians responding to God’s work in them? Beyond expectation. Paul had prayed their faith would grow, and expresses that growth with the word ὑπεραυξάω / huperauchaō which means to increase exceedingly, flourish abundantly, to hyper grow. He also wanted them to excel still more in their love, and here he expresses that growth with the word πλεονάζω / pleonazō which means to exist in abundance, to increase considerably, to super-abound. And that love was of each one toward one another. Even those that Paul will have to correct are included in this description of what God was doing among the brethren in Thessalonica. And notice that Paul once again calls them brethren. He will use that designation seven times in this letter. Believers are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are family.

Boasting of their Steadfastness - 2 Thess. 1:4

Paul continues his commendation in verse 4 boasting about their steadfastness in these things despite their circumstances. 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.”*

In 1 Thessalonians Paul warned them about coming persecution even as they were beginning to already experience it. In 1 Thess. 2:14-16 Paul comments that they were enduring the same kind of hostility from their own countrymen that Paul and the missionaries had experienced from the Jews when they preached the gospel. They had hindered them from speaking and drove them out. 1 Thess. 3:3-4 Paul sought to prepare them for affliction by telling them in advance so that they would not be disturbed when it came.

Here in 2 Thess 1:4 Paul remarks that the Thessalonians were handling the persecution and tribulation so well that they were boasting about them to other churches. This would be similar to what

he wrote 1 Thess. 2:19 using a related word that they were their “*crown of exultation.*” This is not bragging as for self exultation of Paul and his companions as if they were responsible for it. This is rather an exulting in the maturity of the Thessalonians in being able to handle the difficult circumstances that had come upon them. What were those circumstances?

Paul specifically cites here persecution and affliction. Persecution, (διώκω / diōkō), is organized oppression and harassment. Affliction comes from a word, (θλίψις / thlipsis), that means to “press” or “squash” and so means trouble that involves direct suffering. In the next verse he also points out that they were suffering, which refers to experiencing physical pain, for the kingdom of God (1:5). The retribution that God will bring upon those who were causing such affliction is very severe indicating that the suffering caused by the affliction was also great.

Paul marks out three characteristics of how they were handling the oppression, pain and suffering. First they had perseverance, (υπομένη / huomenā), which has a root meaning of standing still, remaining firm. It is continuing to bear up under difficult circumstances in order to stick to a deliberate purpose. It is to be steadfast. Second, they were marked by faith. They believed God and trusted Him even in the midst of persecution and affliction. Third, they endured, ἀνεχομαι / anechomai, which is “to receive, take up, bear and endure.” This speaks of their responding in patient godliness instead of either responding with anger and lashing out or running away to hide.

Proof of their Worthiness - 2 Thess. 1:5

After Paul commends them for this in verse 4, he points out it is proof of their worthiness of being in the kingdom of God in verse 5. “*[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.*”

This verse can be difficult for the interpreter because there are a lot of grammatical issues within it, but the great problem stems from the connotation of the idea of judgment to be only negative as if a synonym of condemnation, but it is not. Paul is also looking back to what he has already said about the Thessalonians while also looking forward to what God will be doing in the future.

First understand that the word judgment (κρίσις / krisis) refers to a legal decision by a judge whether for or against. It refers to the decision being made with the context usually indicating if it will be a positive or negative outcome. When the word is used in a context of judging sin, the outcome will be condemnation which is why there is so often a negative connotation. The context here is God’s righteous judgment concerning the suffering Thessalonians which results in them being considered worthy of the kingdom of God. That is a positive outcome. This is more akin to John 3:19-21 in which Jesus says, “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world.” He then goes on to explain that those who are evil will hate the Light and stay away from it while those who “*practice the truth come to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.*”

The “plain indication,” “proof,” “evidence” (ἔνδειγμα / endiegma) refers back to the reason that Paul was giving thanks to God for their response of perseverance and faith in enduring the tribulations and afflictions that had come upon them. The Thessalonians had demonstrated godliness in response to their circumstances. The righteous judgment of God refers forward His rewarding them as worthy of His kingdom. It is not that their suffering has made them worthy to be in heaven for the tense here is passive, but that their suffering is the demonstration, the evidence of God’s working in their lives and reckoning them worthy. We have lived in a nation in which being a Christian has been considered as an advantage in society so we forget that what has been normal throughout history and is normal throughout most of the world today is that Christians will suffer. That is why the Scriptures give so many warnings about it and encouragement for when it does come.

Paul warned in 2 Timothy 3:12, “*Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*” Jesus said in John 16:33, “*These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*” Jesus also said

in Matthew 5:10–12,¹⁰ *“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*¹¹ *“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”*¹² *“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

Christians should expect to be persecuted, but we do not have to be fearful of it. Jesus has overcome the world and will bless us even in the midst of tribulation. The persecution and affliction the Thessalonians had already endured were proof they belonged to God and He had made them worthy of His kingdom. God’s righteous judgment would be, “Well done . . . enter the joy of your master.”

Sermon Notes - April 11, 2021
Salutation & Thanksgiving - 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Introduction

Our world has radically changed in the last year, and we need to be _____ for the future
Even loosely defined, Christians are a _____ in the United States
Christians are concerned about _____ - society blocks truth and embraces lying and deception
Christians are concerned about _____ - society embraces death of the most vulnerable (abortion / euthanasia)
Christians are concerned about _____ - society embraces sexual deviancy and depravity
Christians are concerned about the _____ of others - society embraces a fantasy world & science fiction
Christians are concerned about _____ harmony - society embraces blatant racism under marxist euphemisms
Christians are concerned about _____ of God - governments are using PST to restrict & oppress churches
You may not have experienced blatant persecution yet, but others have, how long until you do is _____
Habakkuk is an example of firm _____ in God even while expecting devastation to come
The Thessalonian church was born in the midst of adversity and _____ rapidly to become a model

Salutation - 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2

Paul & companions planted the Thessalonian church on the _____ missionary journey
Persecution arose _____ forcing Paul to go to Berea, then to Athens.
Timothy's _____ on the Thessalonians prompted the writing of 1 Thessalonians
A few months later, another _____ on the Thessalonians prompted the writing of 2 Thessalonians
Similar _____ in both letters: Encouragement in persecution. The Day of the Lord. Exhortations to be ready
The letter is to the _____ of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
“_____ Father” stresses the common personal relationship they have with God
The blessing wished is double source coming from _____ God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
Grace is a blessing you _____ - you are saved by grace, are to stand firm in grace, extend it to others
Peace is the tranquility of _____ - it comes from God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ
_____ grants us peace in any circumstance as our anxieties are cast on the Lord.
Christianity grants peace between _____ because we become one family
God is _____ & because He is good His grace & peace give hope that can be extended to others in the gospel

Commending their Faith and Love - 2 Thessalonians 1:3

The commendation arises from an _____ to give God thanks for His work in the Thessalonians
_____ was doing the work Paul & companions had gone there to do, and He was answering their prayers

There is no room for _____ in the body of Christ because our lives are about His glory, not our own

The Thessalonians were _____ beyond expectation - faith that increased exceedingly, love super abounded

Boasting of their Steadfastness - 2 Thessalonians 1:4

Paul had warned them about coming _____ even as they were already experiencing it - 1 Thess. 2:14-16

They were handling persecution & tribulation so well that Paul was _____ about them to other churches

Persecution, διώκω / diōkō, is organized _____ and harassment.

Affliction, θλίψις / thlipsis, is to “press” or “squash” and so means trouble that involves _____ suffering

Suffering includes physical _____

Perseverance, υπομένει / huomenē, to stand still, remain _____, continue to bear up in difficult circumstances

Faith: They believed God and _____ Him even in the midst of the persecution and affliction

Endured, ἀνέχομαι / anechomai: “to receive, take up, bear & endure,” respond with _____ godliness

Proof of their Worthiness - 2 Thessalonians 1:5

Judgment, κρίσις / krisis, refers to a decision by a judge whether for or against - the _____

Judgment in John 3:19-21 is the Light coming into the world _____ it between evil & those of truth

Their endurance in affliction & suffering is the _____ of their godliness & God reckoning them worthy

We forget that suffering is and has been _____ for Christians throughout history and in other lands

2 Timothy 3:12; John 16:33; Matthew 5:10-12 - _____ tribulation, but you will be blessed by God for it

God’s righteous judgment of the Thessalonians - “*Well done . . . _____ the joy of your master*”

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God’s Word to your children’s lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – count how many times the Thessalonians are mentioned. Talk with your parents about what made the Thessalonians a model church even for today.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. What are the differences between Christian concern and practice and the desires and actions of society on the following issues: Truth; life; morality; welfare of others; true science; racial harmony, the worship of God? How did the church in Thessalonica get started? When did persecution arise there and what were its results? Why did Paul write 1 Thessalonians? Where was Paul when he wrote 2 Thessalonians and why did he write it? To whom is the letter written? What is the significance of the phrase, “our Father”? How does a person become a child of God? What is grace and what role does it play in the life of a believer? What is peace? With whom does a Christian have peace? How is such peace gained? Why is Paul obligated to give thanks to God? How should you respond when you see God at work? When He answers your prayers? To what degree were the Thessalonians responding to God’s work in them? Why does Paul speak proudly about them to other churches? Define each of the following: Persecution, affliction, suffering, perseverance, faith, endurance. How did the Thessalonians’ endurance of suffering give evidence of God judging them to be worthy of His kingdom? Should a Christian expect to be persecuted? Why or why not? How should a Christian respond when affliction comes? What do you want to hear God say when you stand before Him to be judged?