

**Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
Wednesday Sermon**

Date: July 1, 2020

Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Subject: Greeting and Comfort in Persecution

We all remember that we recently concluded our study through the first of Paul's letters to the church of God which was at Thessalonica. The first letter was written very quickly after Paul, Silas, and Timothy had been there – and were so persecuted that they had to flee the city. Many have thought this letter was written soon after the first one. I agree.

2 Thessalonians 1:1 (KJV) *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

Paul's salutation to the church is very much like the one of the first letter. See, it is written to the church – not to the officers of the church, but to the church. The local, visible church which was a relatively new church was in need of further instruction and encouragement – every member.

2 Thessalonians 1:2 (KJV) *Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

There is none other source for unmerited favor and peace for us except from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. God is the God of all grace and the God of peace.

1 Peter 5:10 (KJV) *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

Hebrews 13:20-21 (KJV) *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, **13** Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

God's only begotten son, Jesus Christ, brought grace and truth to us and he is the Prince of Peace.

John 1:17 (KJV) *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

Isaiah 9:6 (KJV) *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

2 Thessalonians 1:3 (KJV) ***We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;***

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, -- We are bound to thank God. That is, we are limited. It has to be thus. Since God is the fount of every blessing; the source of all that is good and right. Notice this, please: ***always for you, brethren, as it is meet,*** -- This suggests spontaneous, importunate prayer for the church of the Thessalonians. It is meet for them to do so, that is, it is fitting for them to thank God always for the church of God which was at Thessalonica. How fitting it is that ministers pray for the churches and give hearty thanks for them.

because that your faith groweth exceedingly, -- How did Paul and his companions know this? They were more confirmed in the truth of the gospel and the manner of their salvation. Undoubtedly, they expressed more confidence in the promises of the LORD to those who believe. Their views and living expectations of the ages to come had been embellished by their studies and hearing of the word preached. The growth of their faith appeared by the works of faith; and, where faith grows love to others grows and good works increase.

and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; -- What a testimony! They had grown in love toward one another. What better thing could there be? We show our love for the LORD when we love his people abundantly. Is this not what the master taught us? Think about it – the LORD is speaking to his apostles in this passage.

John 13:34-35 (KJV) *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

O, brothers and sisters, we want our love one to another to increase more and more. If we want all men to know that we are Jesus' disciples, this is the way we do it. By all means let us keep our doctrine and practice pure! Let us mind our separation from the world and unto the LORD! But, let us grow in love, as the master loves us, to one another and make it abound!

2 Thessalonians 1:4 (KJV) ***So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:***

Paul did not boast of the Thessalonian brothers and sisters with respect to their carnal things; he did not glory in their flesh, nor in

their riches, nor wisdom, nor strength, nor any external gift. No, he gloried in their graces and of the exercise and increase of them. These were not things which came of themselves but were the gifts of God to them and in them. God's grace in them gave them great patience and faith in their persecutions and tribulations. They endured them while seeing Him who is invisible and they had great respect to the recompense of the reward that lay before them.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 (KJV) *Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*

Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God,

-- It is true that good men are afflicted and persecuted in this life, they have now their evil things, and bad men prosper and flourish, and have their good things, so that justice does not seem to take place. This seeming inequality in God's Providence has sometimes brought the hardening of wicked men, and the staggering of the righteous, which should not be. This is now a manifest token and a clear case that there will be a righteous judgment in which God will set all things right and mete out justice. Brethren, our God is neither unrighteous, careless, nor negligent. The feet of the wicked shall slide in due time and the righteous have a sure reward. These trues can and should bolster the faith of God's elect to bear up under persecution and trials.

That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: -- Their sufferings were a manifest token

that they were counted worthy of the kingdom of God. And the truth is that the Christian life if it is worth anything, is worth every thing. You and I may be called on to "*fill up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ.*" Not that Christ did not suffer all that was assigned him of the Father to complete our salvation, because He did complete it and it was finished. But when a member of his body

suffers, he suffers with it. When you and I are persecuted, then it means that Jesus is persecuted.

CF: Acts 9:4-5 (KJV) *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

2 Thessalonians 1:6 (KJV) *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;*

There will be a future judgment of the wicked because it is proper that God should punish those who now persecute you. It is not right that they should go unpunished and triumph for ever. It is a *just* and *proper* thing that the wicked should be punished and that, being just and proper, it shall be inflicted. God will righteously trouble them who have troubled his saints.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 (KJV) *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

We do have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, but we shall have and do have trouble in this present world. We are appointed to trials and tribulations and if we live godly, we shall suffer persecution. Thanks be to God that a time of rest is coming when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels to gather together his elect from the four corners of the earth and heaven. Then shall be rest – sweet rest. We shall be forever free from those who would trouble us.

Matthew 24:29-31 (KJV) *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and*

*the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: **30** And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. **31** And he shall send his angels **with a great sound of a trumpet**, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (KJV) *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump**: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

2 Thessalonians 1:8 (KJV) *In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

This continues the sentence: "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,"

Psalm 21:8-9 (KJV) *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. **9** Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.*

Psalm 50:2-6 (KJV) *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. **3** Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. **4** He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. **5** Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. **6** And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.*

Daniel 7:10 (KJV) *A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

Hebrews 10:27 (KJV) *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

2 Peter 3:7 (KJV) *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: -- Men, women, and children who are unbelievers are those who know not God. These do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not obey? What does that mean? It means to comply with – to submit to. Both repentance and belief are preached by the gospel of Christ. Those who do not comply with this or submit to it are the same ones who know not God – and they shall be suffer the vengeance of Almighty God.

2 Thessalonians 1:9 (KJV) ***Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; --***

These same ones who do not know God and that do not obey the gospel shall be punished with everlasting destruction. Think of that: Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. When these ones who know not God die, they, like the rich man of Luke 16, shall lift up their eyes in hell being in torments in the flames of hell. They shall stay there until the end of this age and the end of the thousand years reign of Christ. Then, they shall be brought out of hell, body and soul, to

stand judgment before the Great White Throne of Almighty God – and because their names are not found written in the book of life, they shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, which is the second death. How terrible a final judgment!

Think of it! If they are living when Christ returns with his Saints, when Jesus Christ is king over all the earth and sits on the throne of His glory – unbelievers will be among those living gathered to stand before Jesus Christ. He will judge them based on their treatment of Christ’s brethren – both the Christians and his Jewish Brethren. Their ill attitudes toward the LORD’s people will testify against them in that day and they shall hear these words: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” They shall be cast into that everlasting fire alive, but forever damned.

But, beloved notice the blessedness and joy of the saints of God in that day as described in this next verse.

2 Thessalonians 1:10 (KJV) *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. – Ah, brothers and sisters, when Jesus comes with his saints, he shall be glorified both in them as they reign with him and admired in all them that believed in that day. There shall be many in that day of the sheep nations who shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world and go into the 1000-years-reign in their natural bodies to enjoy a blessed thousand years with Christ, his saints, and the converted Nation of Israel. At that time, there shall

be no more war nor rumors of war. People shall no longer prepare for war, the there shall be peace all over the earth. The whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. There shall be no more false religions and cults. No more lying false teachers and prophets. Satan shall be bound for that 1000 years. Righteousness shall be the girdle of Christ's reign – and both Christ and his saints shall rule over the nations with a rod of iron.

2 Thessalonians 1:11 (KJV) *Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:*

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, -- What a blessing to know that the apostle prayed for the saints in this church that God would count them worthy of this calling. Consider the words of our Lord in this connection:

Luke 21:25-36 (KJV) *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. 29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I say unto*

you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

33 *Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

And fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness,-- Our Lord will keep his word to the saints. He had told the little flock this: "Fear not little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (**Luke 12:32**) **KJV** He has made certain promises to his churches concerning the kingdom. Consider this one:

Revelation 2:26-27 (KJV) ***And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.***

It is blessedly true that the believer shall never perish, but have everlasting life, but this promise is made to the churches of Christ and to one who is

(1) an overcomer in that he believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

1 John 5:4-5 (KJV) *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

And

(2) that he is a faithful member of one of the Lord's New Testament churches having been baptized and received on the profession of his faith in Jesus the Son of God

and the work of faith with power: -- This speaks of faith which works by love and is empowered by the Holy Ghost in us. No matter how great the faithfulness of any of us be, it is all because of the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God in us. If we grieve not the Holy Spirit or quench not the Holy Spirit, then God's grace works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, and we are not hindered in our work of love.

2 Thessalonians 1:12 (KJV) *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

God's work of faithfulness in us is so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us – and us in Him. This is what we desire, is it not? We want our life to glorify the LORD and we want him to glorify us by his grace. And it is all according to the wonderful grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ. Let us labor to glorify him in our good works. And even if we "labor more than they all" it is nothing for our boasting, but the grace of God that works in us.

1 Corinthians 15:10 (KJV) *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*