

Message #5

II Thessalonians 1:11-12

I want to take a moment to thank those of you who regularly pray for us and this ministry. Thank you so much for praying for us while we were away last week. I miss many things about Mr. Miles not being here, and one of the things I miss is the fact that he would regularly pray for us; and since he is now in heaven, it is so important to know that you pray for us.

One of the themes that shows up over and over again in these two Thessalonian epistles is the **Lord is going to return**. However, another theme that shows up often is that **Paul and his team spent a lot of time praying for the people of this church in view of that reality.**

If we carefully analyze these passages, it is obvious that he had reasons why he prayed for these people so much:

- 1) Paul prayed because the Thessalonians were developing in their faith, love, and steadfast hope (I Thess. 1:2-3);
- 2) Paul prayed because the Thessalonians continually received and wanted to be taught the Word of God and did not view it as the word of men (I Thess. 2:13);
- 3) Paul prayed so that the Thessalonians would end up with an unlacking holiness (I Thess. 3:10);
- 4) Paul prayed because the Thessalonians were greatly enlarging in faith and love (II Thess. 1:3)

But now we come to a couple more reasons why Paul and his team prayed, and these next reasons are both challenging and convicting:

IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE LORD IS COMING BACK IN ALL OF HIS GLORY, PAUL PRAYED FOR THE THESSALONIANS SO THAT THEY WOULD PROVE TO BE WORTHY OF THEIR CALLING AND WOULD FULFILL EVERY THING GOD WANTED TO FULFILL.

When God saves us He has a plan. He wants to develop us and He wants to use us. He gives us various gifts and abilities because He wants to accomplish things with us.

We may observe that **verse 11** opens with the words “to this end we also pray for you always.” The Greek grammar is actually stronger than even this English translation. The text literally says, “for this purpose or result we are continually praying always concerning you.”

What this clause means is that when Paul and his team prayed for the people of this Thessalonian church, they always had these specific objectives and purposes in mind. This was a great church and Paul expected great things from this church and he constantly prayed for the people of this church.

There were two specific purposes they had in mind:

PURPOSE #1 – They prayed so that their God would count them worthy of their calling. **1:11a**

Someone said trials do not make the person; trials will show what the person is made of. Trials will show who lives their lives worthy of their calling. It only makes sense that if we are to one day be considered worthy of reigning with Jesus Christ in His kingdom (1:5), that we would live our lives in a way that would be worthy of our calling which guarantees us this kingdom.

Some people take the position, well the important thing is that they are saved. It doesn't matter what they do or what they believe or how they behave; the important thing is they are going to heaven. Paul never thought like that for one second. He believed it was critical that believers govern their lives in a way that was worthy of their calling.

There is a lot in this to consider here. The first thing to see is that Paul identifies God as “our God.” Keep in mind that there were many false religions and many false “gods” that were worshipped; but there is only one true God that is proved by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that one true God was Paul’s God. Paul is very clear by this statement to stress that the one true God who was Paul’s God was the same God of the Thessalonians. God is a very Personal God to those who believe in His Son.

Now the word “worthy” (αξιωση) is one that means to be worthy in the sense of weight (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 43). When one would go to the market to purchase something, one would weigh both the product and the money to see if it was worth it.

In **verse 10**, Paul said that the Lord will return with His saints to be glorified in His saints. So each saint will be analyzed to determine his or her worth or weight for God.

So there will be an individual analysis and weighing of each and every one of us to determine whether or not we weighed enough in the worth category for God. Dr. Warren Wiersbe said we need to pray “that God will build our worth and make us more valuable Christians...” (*Be Ready*, p. 140).

The fact is we do not know our own worth before God right now. Frankly, often our perspective of ourselves is very skewed. People may think we are worth a lot for God when in all reality that may not be true. The thing that we need to know is that God is going to assess our worth. We won't assess it, our friends won't assess it, God will assess it.

The criteria of His assessment will be to determine whether or not we were “worthy of our calling.” The thing that will determine our value or weight will be an analysis based on the Word of God. So God is going to examine each of us to assess our worth level to determine if we measured up to a satisfactory level of our calling.

The “calling” (της κλησεως) is the specific call to salvation. It is the salvation into which He has called us and has given us. **It is extremely important that we realize that the salvation that we have has been given to us by God. According to Paul in Romans 8:30, God is the One who predestined us and called us and justified us and glorified us.**

The calling of God is due to the election of God. It is important that we understand this as being a work of God, not a work of ourselves. **The reason this is important is because we are going to be legally examined by Jesus Christ to determine our worth or value in view of this calling. We will be examined to determine whether or not we measured up to a satisfactory level and approved level of our calling by God.**

I doubt that we really even begin to grasp the magnitude of the calling that those of us who know Jesus Christ have received. God has singled us out and elected us and He called us into His family. He chose us out of the seven billion people who live on this earth, and He has saved us; and God is going to examine each of us to determine whether or not we lived out our calling at a satisfactory level.

Now it is clear from this word “worthy” that God wants us to be weighty people, not shallow people. We ought to have some spiritual meat on our bones. God does not want His people to be a bunch of light weights when it comes to their faith or knowledge of His Word. He wants us heavy weights. Paul actually prayed this for the Thessalonian church.

Now the specific matter here that will be analyzed by God will be an analysis to determine whether or not God, who called us and saved us, will consider us to have been worth it. By our knowledge, by our faith, by our lives, by our lips, God will judge us to determine whether or not we were worth His calling.

Paul and his team prayed for that.

PURPOSE #2 – They prayed so that their God would fulfill everything through them. **1:11b**

As a church and as an individual, God has things He wants us to do and things He wants us to fulfill.

The word “fulfill” means to make full or to fill up to the fullest level (*Ibid.*, p. 365). Paul prayed for the purpose that God would develop them and use them and bless them at the fullest possible level.

There are specifically two areas of fullness that Paul prayed they would reach and experience:

Area #1 - Paul prayed they would fulfill all desires of goodness.

Now the word “desire” (εὐδοκία) is a word that refers to that which is approved or satisfactory (*Ibid.*, p. 185). We can have desires that are good and approved, or we can have desires that are bad and not approved by God. Paul prayed that the good, approved desires would be fulfilled. Only God is in a position to fulfill all the things He would classify as good.

The word “goodness” (ἀγαθωσύνη) is one that refers to things that are good, satisfying, upright, and pleasurable. Paul wanted God to fill to the fullest level good things for the Thessalonians and with the Thessalonians and Paul and his team prayed for that.

The greatest potential that we will ever have to live a good, fulfilled life that experiences great joy and pleasure is a life that has God at its helm.

Area #2 - Paul prayed they would fulfill all work of faith.

God has a powerful work that He wants each of us to do and each church to do, and Paul prayed that everyone in this church would end up fulfilling their work. Notice it is a faith work. God expects us to step out by faith and get a work done for Him. Now it is one thing to do work, but it is another to do it with the power of God and actually get things done for God.

Paul prayed that God would accomplish everything He intended for this church to accomplish. He prayed that God would powerfully prosper and bless this church.

Now in **verse 12** the words “in order that” are purpose clause words. So there are two purposes that Paul prayed that the Thessalonians might be considered worthy of their calling and might fulfill all that God wanted them to fulfill:

(Purpose #1) - That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you. **1:12a**

This is something to seriously consider. The name of our Lord Jesus Christ is on the line in each and every one of us.

One of the greatest fears that every believer should have is the fear of ending up having been a reproach to the name of Jesus Christ. The potential is there for every believer. No believer may lose his salvation, but he can lose out on a life that glorified the name of Jesus Christ.

The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is on the line in every believer. By virtue of the fact that all three proper nouns are used in **verse 12** for the Lord - Lord, Jesus, Christ, the meaning is profound.

The proper noun Lord means Jesus is God. The proper noun Jesus means Jesus is Savior. The proper noun Christ means that Jesus is the Messiah.

What this means is that the fact that Jesus is God, Jesus is the Savior, and Jesus is the Messiah is actually on the line in our lives. It is our responsibility to govern ourselves in such a way that people see that and get that point.

Our job is to defend the fact that Jesus is God. Our job is to defend the fact that Jesus is the Only Savior and He is the Jewish Messiah. We must tell the truth about His name and live a life that reflects His name.

We must be careful as to how we govern ourselves in life, because His name is at stake in us; and apparently what we did and said to reflect that name will be used as a basis to help determine whether or not we will be calculated as worthy of our calling.

(Purpose #2) - That they would be glorified in Him.

In **verse 10**, Paul's statement about Jesus being glorified in His people referred to the future when Christ returns. In **verse 12** it refers to the present before He returns.

In other words, our lives are to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ right here and right now. Our church is to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ right here and right now.

Now the statement in **verse 12** that He may be glorified in you means that our lives glorified Him. The statement that "you may be glorified in Him" means that God considers us to have been worthy of our calling.

But notice how **verse 12** ends - this is all according to the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ. This business about glorifying God and being worthy of a calling is all due to the grace of God.

The same grace that saved us is the same grace that is able to develop us to the point where we end up worthy of our calling.

If we are going to be glorified and honored by God in the future, we must glorify and honor God in the present. We must live our lives in such a way that we are a credit and not a detriment to the name of Christ and the work of the church.

Anyone can quit. Anyone can run. Anyone can surrender. But Paul had a different view of the Thessalonians. He wanted them to fulfill everything God wanted them to fulfill. He wanted this church to prove to be worthy of their calling.