

**A Letter to a Good Church in Tough Circumstances**

Good Church

1 Thess. 1:7-8 “...you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup>For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.”

Tough Circumstances

*Persecution* 2 Thess. 1:4 “... in all the persecutions and afflictions you are suffering.”

*False Teaching* 2 Thess. 2:2 “[Don’t] be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.”

*The Connection* The hope for enduring the persecution can be found in correcting the false teaching.

**God’s Judgment**

Logic of hell (vs. 6)

**OT Background** – An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life (Leviticus 24:17-21)

**Jesus:** “For with whatever judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you.” (Matthew 7:2)

*Implied:* You are not afflicting them back!

Reason for hell (vs. 7)

*Why does hell have to last forever?*

“Because sinners keep sinning forever... no one is repenting in hell.”

“Think about what one drop of sin in the bloodstream of mankind could do to the world.” – Colin Smith

Lessons from Jesus’ parable about the Rich man and Lazarus:

1. The rich man continues to see himself as superior to Lazarus.
2. The rich man continues to be infatuated with his tongue.
3. The rich man continues in unrepentance.

“What could an unholy man do in heaven, if by any chance he got there?” – J.C. Ryle

“He would not be happy in heaven, and he cannot be happy in hell.” – Colin Smith

Reality of hell (vs. 9)

*Punishment*

*Destruction*

*Exclusion*

### **God’s Glory and Your Assurance**

Hard evidence (vs. 5)

Glorifying the God of your salvation

1. Live a life of assurance, not fear! (vs. 5)
2. Live a life of glory to God (vss. 11-12)
3. Bring glory to Christ’s name; live a life of mission (vs. 12).

### **Questions for Personal Study**

1. Have you ever been persecuted or afflicted for your faith? Have you endured difficulty?
2. Biblically, why is there a hell?
3. How do you process the idea that hell is a place of unrepentant and hard-hearted people? That they do not feel bad for what they have done and eternally do not desire to worship God?
4. What will you do this week to live a life of glory to Jesus?