

Paul's letters to the Thessalonians (Rewind)

1 Thessalonians

1:1-2, deep thanksgiving / faith, love, hope (endurance)

2:13, word of God working effectively in you

2:29, deep love (longing to be with)

3:10, earnestly interceding for maturity (working toward completion)

3:11-13

5:23, May the God of peace sanctify you. May you be whole (spirit, soul, body). God is faithful.

2 Thessalonians

1:3-12

2:16, Encouragement - that they be strengthened in every good work and word.

3:1-2, Pray for us / the word will spread rapidly, delivered from wicked and evil people

3:16, Peace (shalom) / confident presence

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 (A Passion for People)

Do you long to spend time with your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Are you committed to the well-being of followers of Jesus?

Does this commitment drive the usage of your time?

In what ways are you tangibly serving the family?

The goal of Christianity is not self-fulfillment.

We must be asking the right questions.

NOT -> How can I **feel** most useful?

Rather -> How can I **be** most useful?

NOT -> How can I feel most comfortable and appreciated with engaging in some acceptable form of ministry?

Rather -> How can I best glorify God by serving his people?

These adjustments can only be made if we truly delight in people, especially God's people.

It is out of delight that we find the motivation to pray.

"Too improve our praying we must strengthen our loving."

~ D.A. Carson

vs. 9, Overflow with *Thanksgiving*

vs. 10-11, Contribute to the *strengthening* of believers.

vs. 12, Overflowing with *Love*

vs. 13,

- *blameless* (strong) hearts
- *wholeness* and *holiness*
- With *clarity* as the value of *eternity* is in view.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

vs. 3,

Faith is growing / Spiritual maturity

Love is increasing / This is evidence of a follower (disciple) of Jesus.

John 13:34-35 "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another.

35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Love = holding the diversity of God's kingdom together.
Our bond is our shared allegiance to Jesus.

Rich / Poor intellectual / practical disciplined / distracted
Practical / impractical intense / carefree

In all of this, love allows the family of God to persevere under trial.

- This is a testimony of God's grace!
- This is an example of God's grace!
- This is an encouragement concerning God's grace!

Matthew 6:19-21 "Don't store up for yourselves treasures[a] on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. **20** But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Question: What is our treasure? Is it the grace of God?

- Forgiveness is not simply the product of love on its own.
- Forgiveness must involve the cross.
- Forgiveness is only possible because there has been a real offense, and a sacrifice to offset that offense.

What does Paul pray specifically?

1. That they would be worthy of their calling (**vs. 11**).

Functioning in the wholeness of being an adopted child of God.

From eternity's perspective, what should be primary?

How does this inform our prayers?

2. That they would fulfill every desire to do good and that their work would be produced by faith (load bearing wall)

We are so transformed, we now have new desires for goodness, justice, reconciliation, and peace.

What is our goal and purpose?

vs. 12, We engage in these good purposes not to build our own reputation.

We engage in good work for the glory of Jesus.

And you by him -> complete transformation, operating according to your original design.

You experience Jesus centered shalom.

According to the grace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Fruitful by grace | Persevere by grace |
| Mature by grace | Depth of knowledge by grace |
| Love by grace | Church unity by grace |

Praying that we will personally and collectively embrace a biblical vision.

- God show me, reveal to me who you are.
- Allow me to take in as much as I can of all that you have done.
- Let me know and understand where we are going (narrow path).
- May I cling to what has kingdom value and may I learn to cherish them.
- May my life be lived in the light of eternity, conforming to the image of Jesus.