

II Thessalonians 1 – 10 December 2023

“The Tension In The Archer’s Bow”

Introduction

- *Paul wrote I Thes to encourage them in their sorrow
 - *Some died & they thought the dead were going to miss out on the resurrection & return of the Lord
 - *Paul taught them of the Rapture of the Church and the following ‘Day of the Lord’ for judgement
- *Now, just a few weeks after receiving his first letter..
 - *There’s a spurious letter saying they’re already in the Tribulation and they missed the Rapture
- *Paul needs them to continue occupying until the end
- *This letter is example of clearing up false teaching
- *Before addressing how they DIDN’T miss Rapture, in Chap 2, Paul addresses the persecution they’re in
- *There’s confusion, persecution & tension in the city

With the image of an archer in mind, we’ll address 4 elements of tension & persecution in our lives

#1 – Pulling the tension: Enduring pressure grows our faith & love (Vs 1-5)

Read Vs 1-2

1. Identical opening to what Paul gave just weeks or months ago when he wrote the 1st letter to them
2. Note, there are other ‘churches’ in Thessalonica
 - a. Church is a common Greek word that is now newly being applied to these Christians
 - b. Church means *the ones that are called out of their home to a gathering*
 - c. Many are motivated for *gatherings*...for a sporting event, or a convention
 - d. Paul is writing to ones that are called out of their homes to gather b/c of who they are
 - i. They’re the ones that gather b/c they are “in God our Father & in the Lord Jesus Christ”
3. There’s inseparable link between Father & Son
4. “Grace & Peace...” – Paul’s typical greeting
 - a. Typical to us, but probably just 2nd NT letter written and this is fresh to them
 - b. Wonderful combination of the Gk & Hb

- c. Can't know peace of God w/o grace of God
- d. The joyous gift that brings peace
- 5. Paul would personally know of God's grace
 - a. Read I Tim 1:12-15

Read Vs 3

- 1. It's clear & obvious they're trusting God's way
 - a. Becomes obvious as you see joyful obedience
- 2. It's clear & obvious they're loving each other
 - a. Becomes obvious as you see joyful helping
- 3. When faith & love come out of us in hard situations, it is evidence that God's working in us!
- 4. *'We're compelled to give thanks...it's deserved'*
 - a. This comes on the heels of Paul already giving them high praises in his first letter

Read Vs 4

- 1. You have given us something to rejoice in
- 2. You've become role-models for us to encourage others to be like you
- 3. Compliment is their endurance & trust thru trial

- a. Why does an athlete snap if they have a season-ending injury?
 - i. B/c they were enduring, believing there was a prize at the end...that is now gone
 - b. We endure training & hardness of the 'game' KNOWING of the sure reward coming
4. Anyone can serve for a moment, but when the pressure is on, do they endure

Read Vs 5

1. Their patience & faith is clear evidence that they're born again & in the Kingdom of God
 - a. Where suffering is coupled with righteous endurance, God's work is being done
 - b. They need not be worried that God's Kingdom isn't real
 - c. God's sustainment thru persecutions is the very evidence of another Kingdom
2. "Counted worthy" isn't earning worthiness, but considered worthy

#2 – Releasing the tension: Seeing His righteousness enables us to rest (6-7)

Read Vs 6

1. It's not just that God will repay evil w/ justice, but that it's actually a righteous thing to do it

Read Vs 7

1. The call is to rest or 'be at ease', in contrast to tribulation or 'pressure' they're seeing from vs 4
2. The day of physical rest is coming, today is the day of joyous productivity (Read Rev 14:12-13)
3. We not only labor for the joy of it, but there's also great reward in it (Read II Cor 5:8-10a)
4. The day of no more pressure is coming, let that help us deal with the temporary pressures of today

#3 – Arrow hits the mark: All rebellion will be eternally destroyed (8-9)

Read Vs 8

1. Herein is the reason of their judgement

2. To know God is to seek Him & to obey Him
(Read Heb 11:6)
 - a. We come to know God thru the Bible (Read Mark 12:24)
 - b. Read John 17:3 – To know God is to love him, to love Him is to obey Him
 - c. Matt 25 sees this divide at the end of Trib
3. Who are these disobedient unbelievers?
 - a. Not just the godless but also those that serve other gods
 - b. Some persecute Christians thinking they're doing God a favor like Saul did
 - c. Matt 7:21-23: not workers but believers saved

Read Vs 9

1. This is eternal life...to be in the presence of God [John 17:3, (Read) II Cor 5:6-8] & to experience the glory of His power
2. This literally says everlasting destruction, just as when Bible speaks of everlasting life

3. It's good that judgement is eternal
 - a. Not joyful, but a good thing, a motivator
 - b. Eternal b/c sin is against an infinite God
 - c. I don't want my 3 enemies to come back
 - d. We'll all see in the end that judgement is right (Read Rev 16:5-7)

#4 – Setting down the bow: We live 'in Christ' now & will eternally (10-12)

Read Vs 10

1. The 2nd Coming will see judgement on unbelievers and God glorified in the believers
 - a. We'll see how amazing it is that God was able to justify sinners & turn around wretched people like me!
2. In that day, the believers, the holy ones, will worship the Lord in admiration as the Worthy One
 - a. "Admired" – is a breath-taking amazement!
 - b. Rev 4:11, 5:9, 5:13 – Thou art worthy...

Read Vs 11

1. Again 'worthy' isn't that I've earned it, but that I'm considered by God to be worthy
 - a. He considers it so, b/c He sees me covered in Jesus' righteousness
 - b. Remember it's God who enables us counting us faithful (I Tim 1:12-15)
2. Is Jesus alive in you?
 - a. If so, then the same power that raised Jesus from the grave has a calling for YOU
 - b. God will work in you to will and to do our His good pleasure

Read Vs 12

1. Always remember that the cause we promote is Jesus' name – forget the church or the pastor
2. If we offer anything good, it's b/c the light of Christ is shining thru us

Conclusion

So...

- 1. In this life the tension is pulled on the bow**
 - a. As we endure the pressure, it grows our faith and love
 - b. Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world – rely on God
- 2. Day's coming that the tension will be released**
 - a. We labor now for joy of serving our King
 - b. Knowing the day of rest will be everlasting
- 3. We also labor b/c the arrow will hit the mark**
 - a. All rebellious will enter eternal destruction
 - b. We want to warn & rescue many as we can
- 4. Finally, the judgement bow will be set aside**
 - a. We dwell 'in Christ' & shall be in His presence forever
 - b. Trophies of His grace, ever to admire Him!