

“A Church Worthy of the Kingdom”

2 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Theme: We must evidence God’s grace to be worthy of the Kingdom.

I. IT REJOICES IN GOD - v. 1

A. Deference for God’s Servants - “*Paul and Silvanus and Timothy ...*”

1. As God’s representatives and spiritual leaders for the church, “*Paul and Silvanus and Timothy*” write to these believers to inform and instruct them regarding God’s Word.
2. Interestingly, Paul did not add “an apostle of Jesus Christ” which was common in other books - perhaps because this church were not questioning his apostolic authority.
3. They recognized that Paul and his companions were God’s men, given to them for the ability to love Christ and gain the blessings of God.
4. As a result, they were willing to obey what they said - cp. **1 Thessalonians 2:13**.

B. Delight in God’s Salvation - “*... to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*”

1. Additionally, these believers understood that their standing with God was a result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The idea of being “*in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*” indicates a unique relational intimacy enjoyed by Christianity - cp **Romans 6:23; 8:1, 39; 1 Corinthians 1:30**.
3. Given that we are “in Christ,” we are “in God our Father” as well - cp. **John 17:22-23**.
4. Hence, these believers were rejoicing “*in God*” as they celebrated the accomplishment of Christ for their redemption.

II. IT RELIES ON THE GOSPEL - v. 2

A. The Focus of the Gospel - “*... grace to you ... from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ ...*”

1. As believers, their reliance was not on their own merit or accomplishments spiritually, but on the “*grace*” which comes “*from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

2. Simply stated, as we constantly understand the unworthiness we possess as sinners, the greater our reliance of God's *"grace"* to sustain us.
3. By saying *"grace to you ..."* Paul is advocating that they remain reliant on God's grace and not become self-sufficient - cp. **Romans 5:2; 1 Peter 5:12.**

B. The Fruit of the Gospel - *"... peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

1. The result of the work of grace in the life of a sinner is that *"peace from God"* keeps our hearts and minds - **Romans 5:1.**
2. This peace is much more than the absence of conflict - it extends to indicate the presence of harmony and agreement.
3. This is the entire purpose for Christ's incarnation - cp. **Luke 2:14; John 14:27.**

III. IT REALIZES GROWTH - v. 3

A. The Growth in Assurance - *"We ought to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith in greatly enlarged ..."*

1. Genuine faith is not static - it is ever growing and deepening through the knowledge of Christ Jesus - cp. **2 Peter 3:18.**
2. Paul gives credit to God even as he recognizes his obligation as God is at work in them - *"We ought to give thanks to God for you ..."* - *"ought"* [ὀφείλω] - refers to something owed or to an obligation.
3. What was happening in them was not from human achievement but explained only through the exertion of the grace of God.
4. Hence their *"faith is greatly enlarged"* [ὑπεραυξάνω] - an intensified word meaning "beyond what can be expected."
5. Such evidence of God's clear power is a means by which their faith is fed and by which their assurances are solidified even as they were enduring significant persecution.

B. The Growth in Affection - *"... and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater."*

1. Not only is their faith in God increasing, but so is their *"love of each one of you toward one another ..."*
2. This is actually an answer to the prayers the Paul had offered in the previous epistle - cp. **1 Thessalonians 3:12.**

3. Their growth in their love was clear evidence once again of the work of God in their lives - cp. **1 Thessalonians 4:9**.
4. This demonstrates that they truly know God - cp. **1 John 4:10-12**.

IV. IT REMAINS THROUGH GRIEF - v. 4

A. The Testimony of Their Faith - “*therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God ...*”

1. The suffering that the Thessalonians were knowing - the persecutions and afflictions caused by the enemies of the Gospel - had enabled Paul to “*speak proudly of you among the churches of God.*”
2. That is, Paul was able to hold them up as examples of the believer as their faith sustained them throughout their grief.
3. Paul was likely writing to the Thessalonians from the city of Corinth - where the immaturity prevailed, and problems were widespread.
4. Paul was able to hold this church up as a testimony of what God’s grace was able to accomplish - despite circumstances which merely provide the opportunity for the proof of faith.

B. The Tenacity of Their Faith - “*... for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.*”

1. Paul particularly commends them “*for your perseverance*” [ὑπομονή] - a term that refers to the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, or opposition.
2. They were steadfast in the face to “*persecutions and afflictions*” -
 - a) “*persecutions*” [διωγμός] - purposeful harassment, oppression or mistreatment
 - b) “*afflictions*” [θλίψις] - trouble that inflicts distress or tribulation
3. They were able to “*endure*” [ἀνέχω] - “to undergo something onerous or troublesome without giving in.”¹
4. These believers remained faithful - refusing to renounce their faith, compromise the truth, or abandon their hope.

V. IT READIES FOR GLORY - v. 5

¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 78.

A. The Process of Sanctification - *“This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment ...”*

1. All of these things, but particularly their endurance is described as evidence or proof of God refining them - *“this is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment.”*
2. *“judgment”* [κρίσις] - here does not refer to condemnation, but rather to chastening - the work of consecrating or sanctifying the believer - cp. **Hebrews 12:7-8**.
3. God utilizes our suffering to purify and sanctify us for His glory - and in the Thessalonians’ experience, their experiences were truly being used to draw them closer to the Lord - *“a plain indication of God’s righteous judgement.”*

B. The Plan for Sanctification - *“... so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.”*

1. Such suffering and chastening produces righteousness in the believer who remains faithful to the Lord - cp. **Hebrews 12:10-11**.
2. The plan for this process of sanctification is that we “will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God” - cp. **Acts 14:22b; 1 Peter 5:9-10**.