

*To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power. (2 Thess. 1:11)*

**I. Praise Report (vv.3-4)**

- a. We all want others to speak *good* about us, especially those who we know that love us.
- b. We like to brag on obedient and productive children. What is all the praise about?
  1. The Thessalonians faith was growing, abundantly. Faith can grow only as we are tested and stretched. They endured despite persecution.
  2. Their love for everyone increased. Nothing builds deeper love and respect than sharing suffering together. We must learn to love one another during difficult times.
- c. How should we compliment Christians who are doing well in some aspect of their discipleship?
- d. "Well done! I think you're great." "I'm proud of you." Some are uncomfortable with this. Others may feel it promotes pride and robs God of His glory. Egos may get puffed up.
- e. Saying nothing to the person (replacing flattery with silence) may leave the person discouraged.
- f. Paul's example is in verse 3. We can affirm and encourage people. "I thank God for you, my brother or sister. I thank Him for the gifts He has given you."

**II. Don't Allow Your Suffering To Be Purposeless**

- a. We see injustice. The wicked flourish and the righteous suffer. *Why doesn't God do something?* God *is* in fact doing something and will go on doing it.
- b. God allowed the Thessalonians to suffer, so they could know that He was preparing them for glory. God's judgment is right in the very situation in which we might see nothing but injustice.
- c. God must take you *to* something in order to take you *through* something.
  1. Disciples will be called fanatics for believing the Bible. Peer pressure is form of persecution.
  2. People in our workplaces mock or disrespect the Christian faith.
  3. Disciples who seek reconciliation will be called cowards.
  4. A desire to maintain sexual purity will cause you to be called old fashioned and a prude.
  5. Disciples who love their enemies will be called unpatriotic and/or weak.
- d. Because God is just, He will vindicate His people publicly one day. He will reverse the fortunes of both groups, the persecutors and the persecuted, when Christ comes.
- e. God will pay back trouble to the troublemakers and give relief to those who have been afflicted.

**III. The Coming of the Lord (vv.8-10)**

- a. The Lord's coming will be powerful and personal. *He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus* (unbelievers and unconfessed Jews). (v.8)
- b. *Eternal destruction*. The final state of those who reject God and Christ will be awful and eternal.
- c. When Christ comes, He will be glorified in His holy people and be marveled at among all those who believed. We will not only see, but share, His glory. (ill Mirror vs. Filament)
- d. We will be radically and permanently changed, being transformed into His likeness.

**IV. Practical Lessons**

- a. Lesson #1 – Serving God is unthankful at times. We all need encouragement to keep going.
- b. Lesson #2 – Be serious about your faith even when things around you do not make sense.
- c. Lesson #3 – Recall to mind, your ultimate reward.