

While I'm Waiting
(Week 14)
2 Thessalonians 1:11-12
"Walk Worthy"

Introduction

Will not God grant justice to His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He delay helping them? I tell you that He will swiftly grant them justice. Nevertheless, when The Son of Man comes, will He find that faith on earth? Luke 18:7-8

After Paul reminded the Thessalonians that God would set things right when Jesus is revealed to this fallen world in all His glory, He continued by telling them how he prayed for them as they awaited that glorious day. God will make certain that His children shall one day see His justice brought down upon those who have caused their suffering. When Jesus returns in His splendor, He will glorify those who have believed in Him and pour out His wrath upon those who have caused one of His "little ones" to stumble (**Matthew 18:6**). Justice is coming with the return of Christ. Rest assured. So the only thing that we need to do in the meantime is ready ourselves for that day.

In Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, he prayed that when Christ returns that His church in Thessalonica would be doing all that was required of them in preparation for that glorious day. He did not wish for the LORD Jesus to return to find them idle and unprepared. The same is true for us today as well. We must, in order to bring glory to Christ when He returns, be living in such a way that glorifies Him.

Too often, when we have our times of corporate prayer in the church today, we pray for those who are sick, for personal needs, our employment, financial worries, or things that benefit us. We expect God to be up in heaven sitting on the edge of His seat, always ready and willing to grant our every request. And while I am not discounting the importance of these things, health, financial security, etc., they were never meant to be the top priority of God's holy people. Prayer is the means by which we are to align our will with God's. This is the main reason that we should pray in the first place. Remember what Christ has told us about our personal needs?

So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Matthew 6:31-33

This is the reason, when Jesus gave us the LORD'S prayer (sometimes called "The Model Prayer), He instructed us to ask for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven at the beginning, and to request our "daily bread" near the end. As God's own children, adopted into His family through the redeeming blood of Christ, we should desire God's priorities far above our own. Therefore, it is by the continual fellowship of prayer that we align our will to The Father's and not the other way around.

In Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, he asked God for three things that he absolutely knew beyond any shadow of a doubt was God's will for this church. He reminds them of Christ's return in all His glory, and then he says:

In view of this (Christ glorious unveiling or revelation), we always pray for you that our God will make you worthy of His calling, and by His power fulfill your every desire to do good and your work produced by faith, so that the Name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified by you, and you by Him, according to the grace of our God and the LORD Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

Simply put, he prayed for their **Worth**, their **Will**, and their **Worship**. Please allow me to explain.

Worth (vs. 11a)

In view of this, we always pray for you that our God will make you worthy of His calling... ***2 Thessalonians 1:11a***

The actual Greek in this phrase could read either “that our God will make you worthy”, or that “our God will count you worthy”. Either way is truth, for God will indeed both make and find His children worthy, when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. However, I would suggest that the former is more than likely Paul’s intention considering the context. He prays for the Thessalonians that God would make them worthy of the calling (the salvation) that they have received.

Sandi and I never had much trouble with our children. They were, for the most part, always respectful and well behaved. I often feel so sorry for the parent with the “wayward child”, and I know that it must be a horrible thing to see your kids go off in a direction that you know is in opposition to the will of God. I cannot imagine how that must feel, but I have spoken with many a parent who does, and the hurt is quite deep for them.

Once, I was talking with my youngest son, and we were discussing a young man that was about his age who had gotten himself into drugs and immorality. He had very good Christian parents, and his wayward choices had broken their hearts. I told my son that I was so grateful that none of my boys had strayed into such sinful indiscretion. His answer struck me as deeply moving, as well as, profound. He said, “*I always kept in the back of my mind what you did for a living dad, and I never wanted to bring shame or embarrassment to you or my family.*” Now I’ll be honest with you, I got a little choked up when he said that.

Now for the “object lesson” of the illustration. If you are a child of God, then you have been given the “family name” of Almighty God. He is your Father. We should always keep in mind Who He is and never do anything that would embarrass Him or bring dishonor upon our “family name”. THAT is what it means to walk worthy of the calling that we have received. We are not pagans anymore. We have been adopted into the family of God by the blood of Christ. We should therefore act like it! And Paul was praying that God the Father would empower the Thessalonians with His Holy Spirit, so they would do just that. You cannot live up to the family name in your own strength, but if you are led by The Spirit of God then you most certainly can, my friends.

When you were saved, you were clothed in the righteousness of Christ, you were given a new name and a new nature.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has passed away, and see the new has come! ***2 Corinthians 5:17***

So you see, you do not have to live the same old way that you used to live. In fact, if you have truly been reborn by The Spirit of Christ, then you should not even WANT to live the way you used to. You are not who you used to be. So live as God intended. Surrender your will to His and walk according to The Spirit. Then you will be guaranteed to be made worthy of the calling that you have received. The Spirit of God will see to it that you are made worthy. You can count on that.

I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me. ***John 15:5***

So, abide in Christ and allow Him to lead you in all things, and when He returns, you will be found worthy of the calling that you received. Do nothing that would bring shame upon the family, my friends. You have been called to much more than that. Make sure that you live a life that demonstrates your worth. As we have discussed previously, The LORD often uses suffering to prove the worthiness of His children. How we endure the trials of this life demonstrates the genuineness of our faith. Suffering does not make you worthy, but it certainly proves your worth. Or as Warren Wiersbe has so eloquently said, “*Trials do not make a person; they reveal what a person is made of.*” Be worthy of the calling that you have received. In everything, do all for the glory of God.

Will (to Work vs. 11b)

...and by His power fulfill your every desire to do good and your work produced by faith... **2 Thessalonians 1:11b**

If you want to see some genuine proof of salvation, it will be evident by the redeemed person's desire to live in a way that pleases God. If sin doesn't bother you, then you do not belong to God. It is the heart's desire of every believer to be close to The LORD and to serve Him wholeheartedly. Or as Paul would say:

In fact, we are confident, and we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with The LORD. Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him. **2 Corinthians 5:8-9**

Paul prayed that God would enable the Thessalonians to fulfill their desire to serve Him. For you see, he knew that they were saved. He knew that as such they would have a natural "reborn desire" to live for Christ, and he also knew that they could not do this in their own human strength. So he prayed that God would supernaturally enable them to do what they already wanted, to work for the LORD with all their might. As Jesus reminded His disciples when they could not even stay awake to pray with Him for one hour on the night before He would go to the cross;

...the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. **Matthew 26:41b**

Our desires, as Believers, will lead us to serve Christ, but without the empowerment of The Holy Spirit, we will always come up short. Therefore, Paul prayed earnestly that the church would rely upon God in order to obey His commands. I believe that the key to obeying the will of God is faithful prayer and the study of God's Word. I believe this because it is a fact. Prayer is about aligning our will with the will of our Heavenly Father, and when that is done, our desires will be in line with His. This guarantees that our prayers will always be answered in the affirmative. It is exactly what the Psalmist (King David) meant when he wrote:

Take delight in The LORD, and He will give you your heart's desires. **Psalms 37:4**

So let me summarize these truths for us. If you have been born again, then you will have a newfound desire to please God and to serve Him. You cannot do this in your own strength. Therefore, you must stay connected to Christ through prayer and the study of His Word (**John 15**). Then you are "delighting yourself" in God, and thereby, aligning your will with His. When you want what God wants, then you know exactly what to ask for and what to do. So then, God is giving you your hearts desires, because your desires are exactly like His! This is what Jesus meant when He said:

If you remain in Me and My Words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. **John 15:7**

So, what exactly was Paul praying for the Thessalonians? That their will to serve Christ would be aligned with Christ's will, and thereby, empower them to do all that Christ commanded them to do. He prayed for their will to be aligned with God's will. THAT my friends is what it means to pray in "The Name of Jesus." It is not some magic formula to get God to do what you want Him to. It is actually the very opposite. It means that you will be so close to God that you will do what HE WANTS! So let God empower you, so that He can fulfill your every desire to serve Him, and you will be one joyous Child of God. He will give you the desires of your heart!

Worship (vs. 12)

...so that the name of our LORD Jesus will be glorified by you, and you by Him, according to the grace of our God and The LORD Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:12

When you look up the word “worship” in the dictionary, it means to give something or someone praise and glory. So, what does Paul mean when he speaks of living in such a way that Jesus will be “glorified by you”? It means to live a lifestyle of worship. You see, when we think of worship, we think of what goes on behind the closed doors of a church service. But worship goes FAR beyond this. True worship is about how we live in order to glorify God in all that we do. Let me give you a few verses here to consider.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.

Romans 12:1

And:

Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

James 1:27

And finally:

Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for The LORD and not for people....

Colossians 3:23

These are but a few of the many scriptures that teach us that our worship goes beyond just singing a praise song now and again. Worship is not an on again/off again thing, it is a lifestyle to be lived in such a way that all we say and do brings glory to The LORD. Consequently, the word for “LORD” in the *New Testament* is “Kyrios” in the Greek, and it literally means “owner”. Do you live a lifestyle that demonstrates to the world that you belong to Jesus, that He is your owner? This is what it means to glorify God with our lives.

Paul goes on to say that when Jesus is glorified, He will then, in turn, glorify us. This is the culmination of our faith; to be completely remade in the image of Christ Himself. We long for the day when trials, temptations, sorrow, and pain are all but a distant memory. Jesus is coming soon. When He does, will He find faith the earth? Will He find His people walking **worthy** of the calling they have received? Will He find a people **willing** and able to serve Him, because they have been empowered by The Spirit to live **worshipful** lives, bringing honor to God?

I have known so many believers who say that they are not very good at praying. The reason that they believe this is because they have heard so many “showy” prayers, with big words and elaborate phrasings. When they hear these ponderous oratories being offered up as prayers, they often feel inadequate. But I challenge you to read the prayers offered up in scripture. They are plain and simple. They get right to the point. God doesn’t want you to try and impress Him when you pray. He wants you to come to Him like a child calling out to his father. Go to God and tell Him what you desire and do not worry that your prayers aren’t “beautiful” enough. But when you pray, make sure that you are seeking to align your will with God’s will, and not the other way around.

As believers, our wants and wishes should be different from the world. We should long to please God with all that we are. Our prayer life should lead us to become living sacrifices, living a lifestyle of worship that brings honor and glory to God. When we do that, we know that God will also honor us. For He says so in His Word. When Eli, a man that God had called as a priest, refused to obey God by honoring Him above all things, God gave Him a strong warning.

Therefore, this is the declaration of The LORD, the God of Israel: I did say that your family and your forefather's family would walk before Me forever. But now, this is The LORD'S declaration, no longer! For those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise Me will be disgraced. **1 Samuel 2:30**

We too, like Eli, have been given a calling. We are called to be a royal priesthood of God (**1 Peter 2:9**), and as such, we are to become living sacrifices, doing all things to bring Him glory (**Romans 12:1**). In short, we are to live a lifestyle of worship. Does that describe your life this morning? Can people watch how you live and see that your ultimate goal is to please your Heavenly Father? This is Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, because he knew that it was God's will for them. It is God's will for us today. *Let it be said of us that in all things we pray to align our will with the will of our LORD.*

And all of God's people said... TRUTH!!!