

Sunday, August 30, 2009—Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul—Perseverance, Patience and Peace: Paul’s Prayers in II Thessalonians

### **Introduction**

- Two weeks ago we looked at Paul’s prayers for the Thessalonians recorded in his first letter to this assembly. We saw that the recurring theme of these prayers was for the sanctification of the saints.
- This week we are going to be looking a series of short prayers contained in II Thessalonians.

### **II Thessalonians 1:11-12**

- In verse 11 Paul prays that the Thessalonians would be “worthy of this calling and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.”
- In order to understand this “calling” that Paul prays they would be worthy of we need to look at the context.
- Verse 4-6—the Thessalonians were continuing to endure persecutions and tribulations for the sake of the gospel.
  - Acts 17:1-14—Paul was run out of town by the Jews. It is evident from what Paul writes in II Thessalonians 1 that the situations had not improved very much since he left.
  - Their persecution was no doubt on two fronts: those who despised their faith for Christ’s sake and false teachers who had infiltrated the congregation.
  - II Thessalonians 3:1-3
  - Philippians 1:29, II Timothy 2:3
- Verses 7-10—what is Paul’s message to the Thessalonians to see them through their persecutions and tribulations? Jesus is coming again not only to be gloried in his saints but also to take vengeance on them that know not the gospel.
  - Vengeance occurs 45 times in 39 verses in your King James Bible

- Luke 21:22—days of vengeance
- Romans 12:19—vengeance belongs to God
- More than any other of his writings, the letters to the Thessalonians—and especially II Thessalonians—talks of the second coming of Jesus Christ and His imminent heavenly appearing for his Body.
- Yet Paul’s point is not to opt out—looking beyond the difficulties and challenges of living, expecting Jesus to launch a “rescue”—but that Jesus imminent return should be a motivator to carry forth our ambassadorship in Christ’s stead here on earth. Paul’s mindset is not to look for deliverance in the midst of a losing battle but to win the battle before time runs out.
- Verse 11—the calling Paul prayers that they might be worthy of is explained in verse 10 that Christ will be gloried in the saints.
- There is a work of faith that is to be accomplished as we wait for Christ’s return to rapture the Church.
- Verse 12—“that” gives you the purpose and the intent. That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ might be gloried in them now as they continue the work of faith with power.

### **II Thessalonians 3:5**

- When one understands the glorious future that members of the Body of Christ possess by virtue of the grace of God it is easy to be impatient as we wait for these events.
- Therefore Paul prays that we would patiently wait for Christ.
- Colossians 1:11—we already saw in a previous study in this series how Paul prays that the same might and power which raised Christ from the dead would strengthen the Colossian saints unto all “patience and longsuffering and joyfulness.”
- Patience is not an easy concept to be joyful about whether you are talking about the normal affairs of life or the spiritual realities that Paul is talking about.

- Romans 8:23-25—we have been given the Holy Spirit as the down payment the earnest of our inheritance until the day of the redemption in the mean time we are asked to patience wait for the redemption of our bodies.
- I Corinthians 15:51—when will this redemption occur? When Christ appears in heaven to catch away His church. That is why we need to patiently wait for his appearing.

## **II Thessalonians 3:16**

- Paul concludes the book by asking the Lord of peace to give the Thessalonians peace by all means.
- Throughout Paul's writing he refers to God the Father with six different titles:
  - Romans 15:5—God of patience and consolation
  - Romans 15:13—God of hope
  - II Corinthians 1:3-4—God of all comfort
  - II Corinthians 11:31—God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
  - II Corinthians 13:11—God of love
  - Romans 15:33, Romans 16:20, Philippians 4:9, I Thessalonians 5:23—God of Peace
- Paul knows the Thessalonians had been bombarded and assailed with persecution, trials, and false teachings. Their work on behalf of the Gospel of Grace had made them targets. They needed peace—the peace that goes beyond understanding and adverse circumstances. After all Jesus Christ had purchased the peace of God for them on the Cross.
- Peace is the saint's birthright. The Thessalonians learned that God's peace dwells in the presence of the risen Christ.
- Romans 5:1
- Romans 8:3-6
- Ephesians 2:13-17
- Colossians 1:19-20

- Colossians 3:15
- Philippians 4:6-9—“keep” means to guard or the set a military watch over you heart and mind. The practical working of this verse is determined by your thought life. Your emotions will respond to what you think about.
- If you think on the things in verse 8 your will not be full of care in verse 6. Knowing that the peace of God which comes from the God of peace which passes understanding will keep your heart and mind.
- II Timothy 2:22—we need to run after God’s peace. Believers ought to be the most peaceful people you know.
- Ephesians 6:15—we need to suit up and put on the peace of God. There is nothing that the adversary would like more than to steal the peace from your home, family, and the assembly. If there is no peace in your life it is difficult to be an ambassador for the gospel of peace.
- Romans 10:13-15—how beautiful have your feet been lately? If a lack of peace been preventing you from sharing the gospel of peace with others?

### **Conclusion**

- It thought it would be fitting to close this message with a fourth prayer for II Thessalonians.
- II Thessalonians 2:16-17
- It is my prayers that we as individuals, families, and a congregation can make Paul’s Prayers our Prayers.