

WEEK 6

2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians discussion and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians background (chap. 1-7)

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians discussion**

Think about what you would say to encourage a brother or sister in Christ who was being persecuted for His sake. What might bring them comfort and help them persevere under such difficult circumstances?

#### Theme

encouragement in hard times

#### Bible discussion questions

What did you think was the theme of 2 Thessalonians ?

What picture do you have of the church/believers after reading 2 Thessalonians ?

How is that the same/ different from our experience today?

Which passages encouraged you?

Which passages challenged you?

Think about what you would say to encourage a brother or sister in Christ who was being persecuted for His sake. What might bring them comfort and help them persevere under such difficult circumstances?

What does Paul say to encourage them in the difficult times they are experiencing?

Why do you think the Day of the Lord was such a comfort to the Thessalonians? 1:7-10

What are the aims of the Christian life here in 1:3-4, 11-12

The first thing I would pray for them is that their trial would end. What does Paul pray for instead? 1:11-12

But note that it's not wrong to pray for deliverance, as we see in 3:2.

How is Jesus described? 1:7-10, 2:8, 2:14, 3:5, 3:16

in Gal 4:4 born of a woman, born under law, clearly portrayed as crucified 3:1

How would that have been comforting to the Thessalonians?

What is stated in 1:6-10 as the purposes for His coming?

pay back trouble to those who trouble the believers

relieve their trouble

punish those who don't know God and obey the gospel

to be glorified in His holy people

to be marveled at by those who believe

2:2 a letter?! Who is writing letters with false teaching and signing Paul's name?

This is real cloak and dagger stuff! Wait and see how Paul ends the letter!

Have you ever known someone who went far out of their way to fight against

God's message or His children?

The end times can be very confusing, since a lot of what we know is based on prophecy,

which can be difficult to interpret. When I was in college, someone was in the news

claiming to be Jesus come back to earth. Many of us were such new Christians, we were

a little disturbed by the news. What if it really was him? Would we know Him if He

came back that way? Could we miss it?

But the more we learned about the Bible's teaching about Jesus' next coming,

the more we realized that that couldn't be the case.

There's a lot we don't know, especially about dates and times and specifics.

But there's also a lot we DO know. What does Paul tell us here?

What should we be on the lookout for or what new info does it give about the Second Coming?

revealed from heaven in blazing fire with powerful angels, punishing unbelievers,

won't happen until rebellion and man of lawlessness come, right now he's being held back

Note how Jesus will overcome him: with his breath and his splendor!

comes with counterfeit miracles and signs and lies

I am amazed at how Jesus will overthrow the Man of lawlessness. Not by greater numbers in His army, or by the might of His powerful right hand, or by an earthquake, or by striking his army blind, or by parting the sea or the earth and swallowing him up. All it takes is His breath.

That's how much more powerful He is than the man of lawlessness !

And His SPLENDOR will utterly destroy that man.

What kinds of evils deceive those who are perishing today? What additional deceptions will there be in That Day? 2:9-10

If God's judgment seems harsh, look at why the people are perishing in 2:10-11. they REFUSED to love the truth and so be saved they delighted in wickedness.

The tone of the letter seems to me to be so loving and caring. There is no harshness in his rebuke. Perhaps 3:1 gives us a clue as to why the Thessalonians were so dear to Paul.

2:13-- 3:17 what are Paul's prayers for the believers?

2:16-17 God would encourage their hearts and strengthen them in good deeds and words

3:5 God would direct their hearts into love and perseverance

His prayers for the Galatians were: that Christ would be formed in them,

stand firm and not be burdened by a yoke of slavery,

free but not to indulge the sinful nature, live by the Spirit,

not become weary in doing good, grace of Jesus be with their spirit

Why do you think the prayers would be so different?

What is the place of daily work in the life of the Christian? Do we have that

attitude today?

What is Paul's attitude toward idleness, as expressed in his strong command in 3:6?

How should we treat a brother or sister who is living a life of idleness?

Note how he gives them clear instructions about how to recognize his letters from any forgeries

in 3:17. Why would he do this? 2:2

What are his final prayers for the believers?

3:16 Lord of peace give them peace

3:18 grace of Jesus be with them

### **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians background**

1<sup>st</sup> CORINTHIANS WEEK 1 Chapters 1 - 7

Who wrote it? Paul

#### Timeline

(Paul had spent 18 months in Corinth)

52 Paul, Priscilla, & Aquila sail for Syria

Arrive at Ephesus, where Priscilla and Aquila stay, Paul to synagogue

Paul sails for Caesarea, goes to church (? in Jerusalem?)

53 Went to Antioch, spent some time

54 Nero becomes emperor

?Peter imprisoned in Rome

54 Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey: traveled place to place throughout Galatia & Phrygia

Apollos saved in Ephesus, sent to Achaia (Corinth) to help the church there

Paul took road thru interior to Ephesus (Acts 19), possible that Epaphras takes

gospel to Colossae (100 miles southeast of Ephesus)

Apollos joins him there in Ephesus.

About the epistle

Written from Ephesus

Paul spent 18 months in Corinth during his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey

Many Corinthians believed; Jews took Paul to court, but Proconsul Gallio

has the case thrown out for lack of legal basis

He wrote the Thessalonian letters from there

Several years later, a delegation was sent to Paul in Ephesus to discuss some very serious

problems and disorders in the church—thus the letter

About the church

Corinth was a wealthy commercial port city, with a huge outdoor theatre holding 20,000 people

One of the largest, richest, and most important cities in Roman empire

On a major trade route, on the isthmus between the two large areas of Greece,

so had two major harbors, one leading to Italy and one to Asia

isthmus less than 4 miles wide

Famous for athletic games (Isthmian games) second only to Olympics,

held in honor of Poseidon, god of the sea

public marketplace (agora) was one of the largest in Roman world

Greek, Roman, and Asian population; population ~ 400,000

Only Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria were larger

some Roman military veterans

Aphrodite/Venus was the principal deity of Corinth, “goddess of love”

Huge Temple to Aphrodite that employed 1000 prostitutes in its prime

Had begun to deteriorate in Paul’s time

To “act the Corinthian” means to practice fornication and drunkenness

a “Corinthian girl” is another word for a prostitute

Any wonder that some believers were having trouble adapting to moral living?

Lots of taverns, and resulting drunkenness

Corinth was the Las Vegas of the Roman empire

Aquila and Priscilla were here

Believers had no central meeting place; they met in homes, halls, where ever they could;

met in Gaius’s house

So you had many small congregations, each with their own leadership.

These were developing into rival, competing units instead of cooperating units.

Remember Greek way of thinking was to stand on your own and be self-sufficient and

have knowledge of the truth. Christian way was to build communities.

Some Greeks who were fond of intellectual speculation & proud of their knowledge were

becoming very boastful of their philosophical interpretations of Christianity.

They were grouping themselves around one doctrine or another, and the church

was being split into factions.

Recall the Greek way of looking at religion—there was no relationship between your

religion and how you lived your life. It was just a way to appease the gods

so you could be successful and not have their anger fall on you. The gods didn’t

usually care how you lived as long as you gave them their due.

### Other info

Much of meat sold in market had first been offered to an idol

Some questions about eating this meat and participating in social functions with

friends who weren’t believers

Apollos : Acts 18:24 a Jew , a native of Alexandria (one of top three largest cities in the world)

Learned man, thorough knowledge of the Scriptures (maybe he had been to Jewish  
“high school”?), had been instructed in the way of the Lord  
knew the baptism of John (the Baptist)  
Came to Ephesus, spoke with great fervor and boldness and taught about Jesus accurately  
in the synagogue, even though had known only the baptism of John  
Priscilla and Aquila heard him and invited him home and explained the way of God to  
him more adequately.  
He later wanted to go to Achaia, and the brethren encouraged him, and sent letters  
for the church there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to  
the believers there.  
He vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that  
Jesus was the Christ.  
Tradition says he became bishop of Caesarea.

3:16 don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple...

The “you” means you-all (as a group) not as individuals

#### Difficult passages

5:5 ...hand this man over to Satan...

The church was to discipline this brother by handing him over to Satan's domain,  
the world, and to Satan's punishment, the destruction or ruin of his body  
(“sinful nature” here literally means body) thru disease or death.

Destroyed doesn't mean annihilation, but ruin.

Persistent sin often leads to physical punishment.

This excommunication was for two reasons: as an example, to discourage other  
believers from falling into such a practice, and to bring the guilty person  
to repentance.

7 : 14 unbelieving husband sanctified thru wife, children are holy

“sanctified” means set apart for a special purpose. The Christian influence of the believer in that home sets it apart from others, makes it different.

The children are holy in the sense that they are set apart by the presence of one believing parent.

Rather than one unbeliever in a marriage making the home “unclean” , the opposite is true: one believing person in a marriage makes it holy or clean by their influence for Christ in the household.