

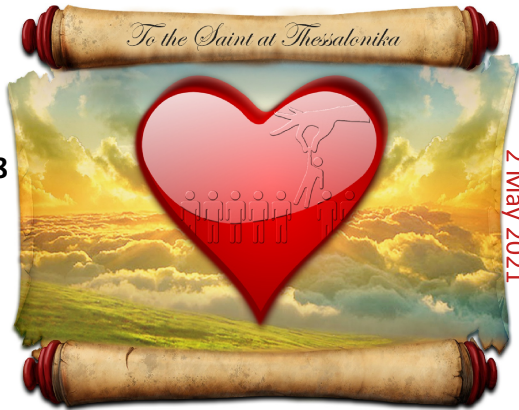
GOD of GRACE and PEACE

2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

Philippians 4:1-9

1 Peter 5:5-11

Do You Believe the Bible is the Word of God?



We Live in Dangerous Times (Ezekiel 3:16-21; Hebrews 13:17)

- **Self-Centeredness** (2 Timothy 3:1-5; James 3:14-15; Rom 2:8; Philippians 2:3)
- **Cold Love** (Matthew 24:12; in contrast to Matthew 22:34-40; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Cor 14:1; 1 Thess 3:12; 4:9-10)
- **No Fear of God**
 - (Deuteronomy 10:12-14) What does the Lord **require**? 1) Fear the LORD your God; 2) walk in **all** His ways; 3) love Him; 4) serve Him with **all** your heart and soul; 5) keep His commandments.
 - (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14) After everything had be tried, what was the final conclusion. What was man to do with his life?
 - 1) Fear God
 - 2) Keep His commandments
 - (Romans 3:18) What is one description of an unbeliever? - "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Psalm 36:1)
 - (Revelation 14:6-7) An angel preaching the **everlasting Gospel**, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of HIS judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth . . ."
- **Ignoring God's Written Word** (2 Tim 3:16-17; Luke 4:4; James 1:22)
- **No Genuine Burden for the Lost or the Persecuted** (Luke 10:2; Hebrews 13:3)
- **"There's a lion outside" Mentality** - (Proverbs 26:13)
- **Lack of Sacrifice** - (1 John 3:16; 1 John 2:6; 1 John 4:11; John 13:34; 15:12-13; Romans 16:3-4)
- **Lack of Desire to Grow** - (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:17-18; Proverbs 4:18; Ephesians 2:21; 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:3)

Have We Learned? (1 Thessalonians 1)

- We have to answer the question, "Since 1 & 2 Thessalonians were put before us for our learning (Romans 15:4) have we learned? Have we put into practice what the Holy Spirit has put before us in the past eight months? Are we **doers** of the **written** Word of God or are we only hearers? Have we said, "Yes, God" or "No, God."
(Meditate on Hebrews 4:13 - we will give an account for what we did with what we heard.)
- How does a church and a church member evaluate themselves to see if they are living the Christian life? (2 Cor 13:5; 2 Peter 1:10)
- When so many are deceived in today's world, how does a church or a "Christian" know for sure that what they believe and what they are **doing** is the real thing or a *very good* counterfeit? (Matthew 7:21-29; 24:4-5, 11, 24; 2 Peter 1:1-3)

A Church to Imitate - Are We? (1 Thessalonians 1)

- The church (people) were CALLED-OUT of their darkness into the light and FELLOWSHIP with Christ. (Rom 8:28-30; 1 Peter 2:9; Col 1:13)
- They (people) **experienced** the GRACE of God changing them in to new creatures. The change was RADICAL and noticeable to those around them - believers and unbelievers. (Ephesians 2:4-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:1-8)
- (1 Thessalonians 1:4) They were **loved** by God with a perfect and unchanging love. (1 John 3:1-3)
- (1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13) They were **chosen** by God - not them choosing God. And their **election** was known to others because of their works. (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4)
- (1 Thessalonians 1:3) Paul saw and remember their . . .
 - **"work of faith"** - Their faith was made perfect by their works. (James 2:14-26; Ephesians 2:10)
 - **"labor of love"** - They did not love in just words but in deeds. (1 John 3:16-18). Their love was a sacrificial love. They laid down their lives for each other. Theirs was an "abounding love".
 - **"endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ"** - This was a hope that kept them going when everything else was against them.
 - ➔ They were living daily in the midst of persecution and great tribulation.
 - **"in the sight of our God and Father"** - They lived to serve God, not man. (Colossians 3:17, 23)

- (1 Thessalonians 1:9) They turned from their traditions to serve the living God.
- (1 Thessalonians 1:10) They eagerly waited for, longed for, groaned for the return of Christ from heaven. (Philip 3:20-21; Heb 9:28)
- (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12) They were not just believers in the Gospel but became **stewards** of God. The word of God had been handed down to them and now they would earnestly contend for it! (Jude 3)
- (1 Thessalonians 4:1-12) They lived to please God, not man or themselves.
- (1 Thessalonians 5:14-22) They prayed without ceasing TOGETHER. They prayed for each other. They were doers of the commands given to them by Paul. Are we doers of the commands in vv. 14-22?
- (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9) They knew that Christ would come again to render vengeance on those who did not know God and those who do not obey the Gospel. (1 Peter 4:17; Romans 10:16; Heb 5:9)
- (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12) They received and loved the truth. (In contrast to Jeremiah 6:13; 7:28; 9:23; Isaiah 59:13-15; Hosea 4:1)

Paul Prayed for Peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

- This is the “peace of God, which surpasses all understandings” which “will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”. (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - This peace comes only to those who DO what they have learned, received, and heard. (Philippians 4:9)
- This is the peace of Christ that He gives to His disciples. (John 14:27; 16:33) It is not a peace that the world can give but a supernatural peace in the midst of trouble, tribulation, and turmoil.
 - (Acts 23:11) This is the peace that Paul experienced and now wishes (prays) for the saints at Thessalonika in the midst of their tribulations. Do we pray for our brethren in this way?

The Lord Be with You (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

- (Matthew 28:20) “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
 - This promise kept John G. Paton persevering on the Island of Tanna, the New Hebrides for four years ALONE.
- (Ruth 2:4) Boaz, “The LORD be with you!” His servants (workers) replied, “The LORD bless you!”
- (Joshua 1:6-8) God’s promise to Joshua before crossing the Jordan River after the death of Moses.

Paul Prayed for Grace (2 Thessalonians 3:18; 1 Peter 5:10)

- Paul prays to the “God of all grace” for “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” be with the saints at the church of Thessalonika.
- ALL GRACE: Seeking grace, quickening grace, pardoning grace, cleansing grace, providing grace, preserving grace, perseverance grace, glorifying grace, growing grace, maturing grace, equipping grace.
- (1 Corinthians 15:9-10) “By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain.” THAT GRACE WORKS LABORS HARD! **GRACE ALWAYS WORKS!!!!**
 - ★ JUST LIKE FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD (James 2:14-26), SO TOO, GRACE WITHOUT WORKS IS *NOT GRACE*.
 - ★ God’s grace comes to us with responsibilities.
- (2 Corinthians 12:9-10) God’s promise to Paul and to us, “My grace is sufficient, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” **Therefore . . . MEDITATE!**
- We, the humble, pray for **MORE GRACE** because He gives more grace to the humble. (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5)
- **MEDITATE on Isaiah 57:17!**
- (1 Peter 4:10) God’s grace is not to be taken for granted. We are called upon to be **good stewards** of the **manifold** grace of God. We all will give an account of our **stewardship** of all the grace that God has given us! (2 Corinthians 5:8-10; Hebrews 4:13; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Matthew 25:31-32; Romans 2:5-11)

Amen (2 Thessalonians 3:18)

★ **THIS IS THE TRUTH.**