

2nd Thessalonians

Thanksgiving, Encouragement and Prayer [1:3-12]

- Thanksgiving [1:3-4]
 - We ought to give thanks to God for you always, brethren, as is *only proper*,
Εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, καθὼς ἄξιόν ἐστιν,
 - The phrase “We ought” is from ὀφείλω (opheilō) which means “owe”, “be obligated” or “ought”.
 - Paul owed a debt of thanks to God because He had heard his prayers for the Thessalonians’ spiritual growth [1 Thess 3:9-10].
 - The word “always” is πάντοτε (pantote) which means “always” or “at all times”.
 - Paul felt this obligation to give thanks to God constantly.
 - We will move this work to make this sentence easier to read.
 - The phrase “give thanks” is from εὐχαριστεῖν (eucharisteō) which means “be thankful” or “give thanks”.
 - This word is based upon the word χάρις (charis = grace) which tells us that thankfulness is based upon grace orientation.
 - Paul refers to the Thessalonians as “brethren” – a term of affection acknowledging them as his brothers & sisters in Christ.
 - Paul does this 7 times in this letter after doing so 16 times in his first letter to the Thessalonians.
 - As we saw in our study of 1st Thessalonians, Paul uses this term to emphasize his kinship with the believers in Thessalonica even though he has authority over their local church as an Apostle of the Church.
 - The word “fitting” is from ἄξιος (axios) which means “worthy”, “deserving” or “fitting”.
 - This tells us that their thanksgiving was not superficial, but was fitting (proper) in light of God’s answer to their prayers.
 - because your faith is *increasing* greatly, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater;
ὅτι ὑπεραυξάνει ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καὶ πλεονάζει ἡ ἀγάπη ἐνὸς ἐκάστου πάντων ὑμῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους,
 - The word “because” is ὅτι (hoti) which is used here as a marker of causality.
 - This word introduces Paul’s explanation of the basis for their continual thanksgiving to God.
 - The word “faith” is πίστις (pistis) which means “faith” or “trust”.
 - This word can describe the faith at the moment of salvation or the dynamic faith of the believer after salvation.
 - Here it describes the dynamic faith of the believer.

- The phrase “greatly enlarged” is from **ὑπεραυξάνω** (huperauxanō) which means “increase abundantly”.
- This word is the combination of **ὑπερ** (hyper = hyper) and **αυξάνω** (auxanō = grow/increase).
- This is in present tense which means the growth of their faith is ongoing.
- We will translate this as “increasing greatly”.
- The word “love” is **ἀγάπη** (agapē) which describes a selfless, sacrificial, integrity-based love.
- This type of love is manifested by God in believers as they mature in the faith.
- This **ἀγάπη** love was shared among each of the believers at the church in Thessalonica.
- This **ἀγάπη** love was directed toward the other believers at the church in Thessalonica.
- The phrase “grows ever greater” is from **πλεονάζω** (pleonazō) which means “grow” or “increase”.
- This word means to grow/increase to the point of abundance.
- as a result, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God
ὥστε αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ
 - The word “therefore” is **ὥστε** (hōste) which means “therefore” or “for this reason”.
 - What follows is an explanation of what took place as a result of the increasing faith and love of the Thessalonians.
 - We will translate this word “as a result”.
 - The phrase “speak proudly” is from **ἐγκαυχάομαι** (egkauchaomai) which means “boast” or “speak proudly”.
 - This does not speak of sinful boasting here, but an appreciation for the progress of others being expressed.
 - Paul expressed his appreciation for the progress of the Thessalonians to believers in other local churches.
 - He did so not to spark jealousy, but to encourage other believers to follow their example.
- for your steadfastness and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.
ὕπὲρ τῆς ὑπομονῆς ὑμῶν καὶ πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς διωγμοῖς ὑμῶν καὶ ταῖς θλίψεσιν αἷς ἀνέχεσθε,
 - The word “perseverance” is from **ὑπομονή** (hupomonē) which means “endurance”, “steadfastness” or “perseverance”.
 - In this context, the translation “steadfastness” fits better.
 - The word “persecutions” is from **διωγμός** (diōgmos) which means “harassment” or “persecution”.
 - This is the word Paul used for persecution(s) in Romans 8:35 and in 2 Cor 12:10.

- The word “afflictions” is from **θλίψις** (thlipsis) which means “oppression”, “affliction” or “tribulation”.
- Paul also used this word (tribulation) in Romans 8:35.
- The word “endure” is from **ἀνέχω** (anéchō) which means “put up with” or “endure”.
- This word describes undergoing something troublesome without fretting or complaining.
- Principles of 2nd Thessalonians 1:3-4
 - We can never earn nor deserve God’s grace, but when we see Him pour out His grace upon us or others, we should recognize that we owe Him a debt of thanks [2 Thess 2:13; 1 Cor 1:4].
 - This attitude of thankfulness should be a constant part of our spiritual mental dynamics [1 Thess 5:16-18].
 - Paul’s thankfulness was proper because it was not based upon potential, but upon actual results of God’s answer to prayer.
 - Paul’s thankfulness was based upon these answers to prayer regarding the believers in Thessalonica...
 - Their dynamic faith in God and His promises was increasing greatly [Mark 9:24; Luke 17:5; Jude 20].
 - Their **ἀγάπη** love for one another was growing to the point of abundance [Phil 1:9; 1 Thess 4:9-10].
 - The capacity for believers to express Christ-like **ἀγάπη** love for one another (and for unbelievers) is a great measure of their spiritual growth [John 13:34-35; 15:12-13; Eph 5:1-2].
 - When a pastor sees the flock growing in faith and love, he will be filled with joy and will speak proudly about them [2 Cor 7:4].
 - This is especially true when the flock is enduring persecution and affliction [1 Thess 2:14; James 5:10-11].
 - It is very important for all believers to recognize that, if we desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, we are promised that we will suffer persecution [2 Tim 3:10-12].
 - The issue will be how we handle that persecution...
 - If we handle it in the strength of God, we will endure.
 - If we try to handle it in our own strength, we will fall away [Matt 13:20-21].

- Encouragement [1:5-10]

- *This is clear proof* of God's righteous judgment seeing that you are considered worthy of the kingdom of God,
 ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὸ καταξιωθῆναι ὑμᾶς τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ,
 - The NASB translators added the phrase "This is" to begin this verse which refers back to the steadfastness and faith in v. 4.
 - Verses 3-10 are a long sentence in the Greek, so the translators broke it up into sentences to make it more readable.
 - The phrase "a plain indication" is **ἐνδειγμα** (endeigma) which means "evidence" or "plain indication".
 - This word is a hapax legomenon which describes clear proof of something.
 - Paul states that the steadfastness and faith of Christians in the midst of suffering is proof of God's righteous judgment.
 - God deals with His children in a perfectly just way, knowing exactly what each believer is able to handle.
 - The phrase "so that you will be considered worthy" is an articular infinitive of **καταξιόω** (kataxiōō) which means "consider worthy".
 - The phrase "so that" makes this seem like a purpose clause, but it is not.
 - The preposition **εἰς** (eis) gives this articular infinitive the meaning "with a view to".
 - To convey this meaning, we will translate this "seeing that you are considered worthy".
 - The phrase "the kingdom of God" is used here of God's sovereign rule over all creation.
 - Church Age believers will also play a role in the Millennial Kingdom [Rev 3:21].
- for which indeed you are suffering. After all, it is just in the sight of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,
 ὑπὲρ ἧς καὶ πάσχετε, εἵπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεοῦ ἀνταποδοῦναι τοῖς θλίβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλίψιν
 - The word "for" is **ὑπὲρ** (huper) which means "on behalf of" or "for the sake of".
 - This word is used in this same way of Jesus Christ dying for our sins [1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:3-4].
 - The word "which" is the feminine singular pronoun **ἧς** (hēs) which refers back to the word "kingdom".
 - The Thessalonian believers were suffering for the Lord, not because of sins or transgressions.
 - The word "suffering" is from **πάσχω** (paschō) which means "suffer" or "be mistreated".
 - This word is used of the persecutions and afflictions mentioned in v. 4 and includes the concept of enduring.
 - The phrase "For after all" is **εἵπερ** (eiper) which is one of the Greek words for "if".
 - This is a first-class conditional here, so it should simply be translated "After all,".

- The word “just” is from **δίκαιος** (dikaios) which means “upright”, “just” or “fair”.
- This is the same word used in v. 5 of God’s righteous judgment.
- God is just in everything He does.
- The word “for” is **παρὰ** (para) which means “from (beside)”, “with” or “before”.
- This word is used as a marker of viewpoint here [Jas 1:27].
- We will translate this as “in the sight of”.
- The phrase “to repay with” is from **ἀνταποδίδωμι** (antapodidōmi) which means “pay back” or “repay”.
- This is the word we saw in Rom 12:9 which also describes God’s righteous judgment in exacting retribution.
- The words “affliction” and “afflict” are both cognates of the word for “afflictions” we saw back in v. 4.
- God will bring affliction (tribulation) upon those who cause His children to be afflicted (troubled).
- and *to give rest* to you who are afflicted and to us as well
καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς θλιβομένοις ἄνεσιν μεθ’ ἡμῶν,
 - The word “relief” is from **ἄνεσις** (anesis) which means “rest”, “relaxation” or “relief”.
 - This word is translated “rest” in 2 Cor 7:5 where Paul talks about being afflicted on every side.
 - We will translate this as “rest” here as well.
 - The word “afflicted” is a cognate of the words “afflictions”, “affliction” and “afflict” which we saw in verses 4 and 6.
 - This is similar to the passage in 1 Thess 3:3-7 where Paul focusses on afflictions.
 - Another similar passage is in 2 Cor 1:3-8 where Paul speaks about God’s comfort in the midst of affliction.
 - The phrase “and to us as well” is literally “along with us”.
 - In saying this, Paul indicated that he, Silvanus and Timothy were also still experiencing affliction.
 - Knowing that God will deal out justice to those who have persecuted Christians (and the Jews) brings rest to all believers.
- when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ μετ’ ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ ἐν πυρὶ φλογός,
 - The phrase “when the Lord Jesus will be revealed” is literally “at the revelation of the Lord Jesus”.
 - Either phrase is a reference to the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, but this translation reads better in the context.
 - At the Second Advent, Jesus will be revealed from heaven where He is currently seated at the right hand of God the Father.

- This is the 3rd heaven which existed before creation and is outside of space and time.
 - At the Second Advent, Jesus will be revealed with His mighty angels.
 - This tells us that this is not the Rapture event because His angels do not accompany Him when He comes to get His Church.
 - There is a question about the phrase “in flaming fire”.
 - It could be a description of the coming of Jesus with His angels.
 - It could also be a description of Jesus dealing out retribution.
 - Isa 66:15 seems to support either conclusion.
 - The NASB and ESV follow the critical Greek text and place this phrase in verse 7 describing the coming of Jesus with His angels.
 - Most other translations place this phrase in verse 8 describing Jesus dealing out retribution.
- dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
- διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσιν θεὸν καὶ τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ,
- The phrase “dealing out” is a participle of **δίδωμι** (didōmi) which means “give”, “grant”, “offer” or “yield”.
 - Here this word describes the dispensing of justice through giving retribution to wrongdoers.
 - The word “retribution” is from **ἐκδίκησις** (ekdikēsis) which means “vengeance” or “punishment”.
 - This word describes just punishment [Luke 18:6-8]; 1 Pet 2:14].
 - This retribution is dispensed to two groups...
 - Those who do not know God.
 - Those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
 - The first group chose to ignore the abundant evidence of God’s existence in the creation itself.
 - The second group was privy to the gospel message, but rejected the saving grace of Jesus Christ.
- All of these will pay the penalty of eternal ruin,
- οἵτινες δίκην τίσουσιν ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον
- The word “These” is from **ὅστις** (hostis) which means “who” or “whoever”.
 - This word is inclusive and brings into view both groups described in verse 8.
 - We will translate this as “All of these”.
 - The phrase “pay the penalty” specifically refers to suffering punishment as a form of retribution.
 - The word “destruction” is from **ὄλεθρος** (olethros) which means “destruction”, “ruin” or “death”.
 - This is not describing complete annihilation, so we will translate this as “ruin”.

- away from the presence of the Lord and from the splendor of His power,
ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ,
 - The word “presence” is from **πρόσωπον** (prosōpon) which means “face”.
 - This word can also be used of presence [Rev 6:16], appearance [Luke 12:56], surface [Acts 17:26], or even a person [2 Cor 1:11].
 - In this context, Paul is describing the first of two aspects of eternal ruin as being separated from the very presence of the Lord [Matt 7:23].
 - The word “glory” is from **δόξα** (doxa) which means “splendor”, “radiance” or “glory”.
 - This word is used here to describe the splendor of God’s infinite power, a key component of His holy essence.
 - The word “power” is from **ἰσχύς** (ischus) which means “strength”, “power” or “might”.
 - This word describes having the capacity to accomplish something, not necessarily power on display.
 - This is significant because our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did not demonstrate His divine power during His 1st Advent.
 - When He returns at the 2nd Advent, He will return in full glory with His divine power on display.
 - The second aspect of eternal ruin is described as being separated from the splendor of the Lord’s power.
- when He comes on that Day to be glorified in His saints,
ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ ... ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.
 - The phrase “on that day” is located at the end of this verse in the Greek.
 - Because the order of the sentence in the Greek does not dictate the order in the English translation, we will move this phrase earlier in the sentence to make it clearer.
 - The phrase “when He comes on that day” refers to the day that Christ will return at the 2nd Advent.
 - This is one of the events that will occur in the Day of the Lord, so we will capitalize the word “day”.
 - The phrase “to be glorified” is from **ἐνδοξάζομαι** (endoxazomai) which means “glorified” or “honored”.
 - This word describes being held in very high esteem and appears on twice in the N.T. – here and in verse 12.
 - The phrase “in His saints” is a reference to believers who are saints by calling [Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2].
 - Some translations render this phrase “by His saints”, but that is not what Paul is saying here.
 - Christ’s glory will be mirrored *in* His saints who return with Him.

- and to be admired among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed.
καὶ θαυμάσθῃναι ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, ὅτι ἐπιστεύθη τὸ μαρτύριον ἡμῶν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς,
 - The phrase “to be marveled at” is from **θαυμάζω** (thaumazō) which means “be astonished”, “admire” or “wonder at”.
 - We will translate this as “to be admired”.
 - The phrase “among all who have believed” includes all believers from every dispensation.
 - The Church returns with Christ at the 2nd Advent while O.T. believers and Trib martyrs are resurrected at the 1st Resurrection.
 - The phrase “for our testimony to you was believed” is Paul’s encouragement to the Thessalonians.
 - They had believed in Jesus Christ at gospel hearing, so they would be among the saints admiring Christ’s glory.
- Principles of 2nd Thessalonians 1:5-10
 - Eternal salvation comes by grace through faith alone in Christ alone [Eph 2:8-9].
 - While obedience after being saved can never earn salvation, the works which believers do as unto the Lord can demonstrate their faith to others [Eph 2:10; Jas 2:18].
 - Likewise, when believers endure under suffering by God’s strength, they demonstrate that they are children of God.
 - Believers who desire to live godly in this fallen world will suffer persecution [2 Tim 3:12].
 - When God’s matchless grace is bestowed upon His children who are suffering, it is clear proof of His righteous judgment.
 - If believers suffer because they are treated wrongly by others, they can rest knowing that God will deal with their persecutors [Col 3:25].
 - We may not personally witness God’s perfect justice being carried out on those who afflict us, but we can rest knowing that God ultimately deals with them [Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30-31].
 - When Jesus Christ returns at the 2nd Advent to establish His kingdom on this earth, He will execute righteous judgments in the land [Isa 9:7; Jer 23:5-6].
 - He will come with His mighty angels in a spectacular event that will be seen by the entire world [Matt 25:31; Rev 1:7].
 - After conquering His enemies at Armageddon, Jesus will carry out the Sheep and Goats Judgment [Matt 25:32-46] and Wilderness Judgment [Ezek 20:33-38] leaving only believers on the earth in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom.
 - All believers from Adam forward will be present as Christ establishes His Kingdom and He will be glorified in His saints [John 17:9-10] who stand before Him in pure admiration.

- Prayer [1:11-12]
 - To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will consider you worthy of your calling,
 Εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν
 - The word “pray” is from **προσεύχομαι** (proseuchomai) which means “pray” or “petition”.
 - This word describes prayer in general which includes praise, thanksgiving, supplication, etc.
 - In this case Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were continually making requests of God in their prayers.
 - What follows in these two verses details the specifics of those prayers and the purpose behind them.
 - The phrase “count ... worthy” is from **ἀξιόω** (axioō) which means “consider worthy/deserving”.
 - We will translate this as “consider ... worthy” as we did in 1 Tim 5:17 (see also Luke 7:6-7).
 - The word “calling” is from **κλήσις** (klēsis) which means “calling” or “invitation”.
 - Here this word refers to the invitation they had received to come to God through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - and will fulfill, by His power, every desire for goodness and the work of faith,
 καὶ πληρώσῃ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει,
 - The word “fulfill” is from **πληρόω** (plēroō) which means “fill”, “complete” or “fulfill”.
 - This word is used here of bringing something to a desired end result and we will translate as “will fulfill”.
 - The word “desire” is from **εὐδοκία** (eudokia) which means “wish” or “desire”.
 - When this word is used of desire, it is always for something that is good or pleasing [Rom 10:1].
 - The word “goodness” is from **ἀγαθωσύνη** (agathōsunē) which means “goodness” or “generosity”.
 - This word describes a fruit of the Spirit that is characterized by an interest in the welfare of others [Rom 15:14; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9].
 - The phrase “the work of faith” describes works done unto the Lord as a function of faith.
 - We saw a similar prayer for the Thessalonians in 1 Thess 1:2-3.
 - The phrase “with power” is literally “by power”.
 - This is a reference to the power of God here, so we will translate this as “by His power” and reposition it in this sentence so that it will read better.

- so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him,
ὅπως ἐνδοξασθῇ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ,
 - The phrase “so that” is **ὅπως** (hopōs) which means “in order that” or “so that”.
 - This word is used as a marker of purpose here and introduces the purpose Paul had in mind in his prayer.
 - The phrase “the name of our Lord Jesus” refers to much more than just His name.
 - This phrase stands for Jesus the person – His character, conduct, reputation and everything else about Him.
 - The phrase “will be glorified” is from **ἐνδοξάζομαι** (endoxazomai) which means “glorified” or “honored”.
 - This word describes being held in very high esteem and appears on twice in the N.T. – here and in verse 10.
 - The phrase “in you, and you in Him” describes a reciprocal glorification of Christ in believers.
 - When we walk in The Light as He is in the Light, we draw focus to His glory and we are then glorified in our association with Him.
- in accordance with the grace of our God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.
κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
 - The phrase “according to” is **κατά** (kata) which means “according to” or “in accordance with”.
 - We will translate this word as “in accordance with” here.
 - The phrase “the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” refers to God’s matchless grace.
 - This phrase confirms the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ by placing Him on equal level with God the Father.
 - This phrase also makes it clear that all which God performs in us is done in accordance with His grace.
 - Even though believers possess the very righteousness of God through faith in Christ [Rom 3:21-22], all that God does in our lives it is still a function of His grace.

- Principles of 2nd Thessalonians 1:11-12
 - Members of the Body of Christ should pray for the spiritual growth of other believers [Eph 3:14-19; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12].
 - This intercessory prayer should be part of our continual prayer ministry [Eph 6:18-20; 1 Thess 5:16-18].
 - Intercessory prayer offered by a believer walking in the Light is righteous [1 Sam 12:23-24] and accomplishes much [Jas 5:16].
 - Jesus taught His disciples to pray...
 - To God the Father [Matt 6:9a]
 - In a spirit of reverence [Matt 6:9b]
 - In view of His A to Ω plan [Matt 6:10a]
 - Humbly acknowledging His sovereign will [Matt 6:10b]
 - Asking for necessary spiritual nourishment [Matt 6:11]
 - Asking for forgiveness [Matt 6:12]
 - Asking for protection from evil [Matt 6:13a]
 - Humbly acknowledging God's sovereignty, omnipotence and glory [Matt 6:13b]
 - No one is worthy of salvation, but as believers we can live our lives in a way that is consistent with our position in Christ [Eph 4:1-3; Phil 3:14; 1 Thess 2:12].
 - We accomplish this by relying upon the power of God working in us, not the energy of the flesh [Eph 1:18-19; 6:10; Phil 2:12-13; Col 1:29; Heb 13:20-21].
 - As we mature, our desires should line up with that which is good and pleasing in God's sight [2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:7-10; 1 Thess 4:1].
 - Our faith increases as we do the work assignments which God has prepared for us [Eph 2:10] as a function of faith [Jas 2:22].
 - Doing these good works in the strength which God supplies will exalt the name of our Lord Jesus and glorify God [Matt 5:16; 1 Cor 10:31; Phil 2:9-11; Col 3:17; 1 Pet 2:12; 4:11].