

That the Word of the Lord May Progress

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Christian Living / Discipleship; Live / 2 Thessalonians 3:1–18

That the Word of the Lord May Progress

God is doing a work, not just in our generation, but in all of creation and time. That work is to show himself as the God of love, of life, of goodness and mercy.

People in the world are lost and without hope. Left only to the joy or sorrow of the moment.

Ephesians 2:12 LEB

¹² that you were at that time apart from Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, not having hope, and without God in the world.

There was a time when we also were lost. But we have come to know Jesus Christ and the power of his blood, his life given for us that we could be reconciled to God.

We are accepted by God

Now, we are accepted by God. The moment we accept Jesus Christ, we are made right with God. This is because God prepared the way for us. He wanted us to come to Him. He wanted us to step into His plan for our lives.

You can see this by looking at what God said about Jesus. Of course there were prophecies of his coming and angels spoke of his birth and he grew in wisdom and knowledge.

But I am talking about when Jesus came of age and was baptized.

Jesus came to John and John said no, you baptise me and in

Matthew 3:15 LEB

¹⁵ But Jesus answered *and* said to him, "Permit *it* now, for in this way it is right for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted him.

Then, the Spirit of God descended and before Jesus moved to do any work of ministry in

Matthew 3:17 LEB

¹⁷ And behold, *there was* a voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Jesus did go on to preach the gospel of the kingdom and was even obedient to death.

But right here, Jesus was accepted by God. God, the Father, wasn't anymore pleased with Jesus on the cross that he was on that first day, the day when Jesus, as a man, believed God and acted on His word and was baptised.

The point here is, that we are accepted by God the moment we accept Jesus Christ.

That You May be Considered Worthy of the Calling

2 Thessalonians 1:1–12

As we come into 2 Thessalonians Chapter 1, Paul prays for them, but his prayer for them was not that they be saved

They are saved

Paul's prayer for them has two parts. That in Christ, in

2 Thessalonians 1:11 LEB

¹¹ for which *purpose* we also pray always for you, that you may be considered worthy of the calling of our God, and he might fulfill every desire for goodness and work of faith with power,

Worthy of the Calling

Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible Chapter 1

The calling here is not merely the first actual call, but the whole of God's electing act, originating in His "purpose of grace given us in Christ before the world began," and having its consummation in glory.

It is God doing the work in us, but there is an expected response from us to allow him to do the work.

Fulfill every desire and work of faith

This second part is based on us cooperating with God to accomplish his plans and purpose.

The good, well pleasing, and perfect will of God in

Romans 12:2 LEB

² And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may approve what *is* the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of God.

Equip you in

Hebrews 13:20–21 LEB

²⁰ Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with every good *thing* to do his will, carrying out in us *what is* pleasing before him through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever. Amen.

The one who began a good work in

Philippians 1:4–6 LEB

⁴ always in my every prayer for all of you, making the prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ convinced of this same *thing*, that the one who began a good work in you will finish *it* until the day of Christ Jesus,

Now, as we read in

² Thessalonians 1:11 "he (the Lord) might fulfill every desire for goodness and work of faith with power".

That the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified

2 Thessalonians 1:12 LEB

¹² in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We don't have any problem with reading this first part of verse 12, "that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you", and let me go back to verse 11 and say this happens as he "fulfill every desire for goodness and work of faith with power".

When we are successful in the work God has called us to, Jesus Christ is glorified in us.

Now, lets read the second part of verse 11.

"and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ"
and you what in him?

"and you (glorified) in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ"

God wants us to shine like light.

Paul is recognizing that there is in them the fruit of faith and endurance that others can see, even in the midst of suffering in

2 Thessalonians 1:4–5 LEB

⁴ so that we ourselves boast in you in the churches of God about your patient endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring, ⁵ a proof of the righteous judgment of God, so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, on behalf of which also you are suffering,

They Did Not Accept the Love of the Truth

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

The Thessalonian church understood that there was opposition, affliction. Paul explains the spiritual force behind it in

2 Thessalonians 2:7 LEB

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is at work already; only the one who now restrains *will do so* until he is out of the way,

There is one, Satan, that brings "lying wonders", "unrighteous deception" in

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10

But every person still has the ability to choose. There are those that in

2 Thessalonians 2:10 “did not accept the love of the truth, so that they would be saved” and in

2 Thessalonians 2:12 “who did not believe the truth, but delighted in unrighteousness”.

For these who refused the truth, in

2 Thessalonians 2:11–12 LEB

¹¹ And because of this, God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie, ¹² in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth, but delighted in unrighteousness.

We will always have these with us, until Christ returns.

They are not only not interested in the things of God, they are completely blind, completely deceived. These refused the truth.

Pray for Us

2 Thessalonians 3:1–5

Paul asks them to pray two things for him in

2 Thessalonians 3:1–2 LEB

¹ Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may progress and be honored, just as also *it was* with you, ² and that we may be delivered from evil and wicked people, for not all have the faith.

That the Word of the Lord May Progress

But why would he ask this?

Isn't the Lord able to do whatever he wants?

We sometimes forget that Satan has dominion in the earth (see Jesus temptation in

Matthew 4:8–10 LEB

⁸ Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the

kingdoms of the world and their glory,⁹ and he said to him, "I will give to you all these things, if you will fall down *and* worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Go away, Satan, for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" "

see the response of the demons in

Matthew 8:29 LEB

²⁹ And behold, they cried out, saying, "What do you have to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

So there is an authority that the devil and his demons have in the earth. Jesus respected their territory, but refused to allow them to usurp people, he cast them out.

Jesus taught his disciples how to pray in

Matthew 6:9–10 LEB

⁹ Therefore you pray in this way:

"Our Father who is in heaven,

may your name be treated as holy.

¹⁰ May your kingdom come,

may your will be done

on earth as *it is* in heaven.

In Christ, we have dominion on the earth and can invoke God's will "on earth as it is in heaven" and we can invoke that will now. This is why Jesus said in

Luke 10:2 LEB

² And he said to them, "The harvest *is* plentiful, but the workers *are* few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest that he send out workers into his harvest.

and this is why Paul asks them to pray "that the word of the Lord may progress and be honored".

Paul also asked them to pray

That we may be delivered from evil and wicked people

2 Thessalonians 2:7 LEB

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is at work already; only the one who now restrains *will do so* until he is out of the way,

1 Timothy 4:1 LEB

¹ Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the last times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,

2 Timothy 3:13 LEB

¹³ But evil people and imposters will progress to the worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But God tells us in

Hebrews 4:16 LEB

¹⁶ Therefore let us approach with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

There are those that resist the Holy Spirit: "You always resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51); do not quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19); why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? (Acts 5:3); you have not lied to men but to God (Acts 5:4); why have you agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? (Acts 5:9); they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:10); do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed (Eph. 4:30); a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14); blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven (Matt. 12:32; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10)".

Day, A. C. (2009). Collins Thesaurus of the Bible. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

It is necessary for you to live and to please God

This began with his prayer for them in

1 Thessalonians 3:12–13 LEB

¹² and *may* the Lord *cause* you to increase and to abound in love for one another and for all, just as also we *do* for you, ¹³ so that your hearts may be established

blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

and included his admonition to them in

1 Thessalonians 4:1 LEB

¹ Finally therefore, brothers, we ask you and appeal to *you* in the Lord Jesus that, just as you have received from us how it is necessary for you to live and to please God, just as indeed you are living, that you progress even more.

and again in

1 Thessalonians 4:10 LEB

¹⁰ for indeed you are practicing it toward all the brothers in all of Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to progress even more,

Paul admonishes them first to care for their Christian leaders in

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13 LEB

¹² Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and rule over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them beyond all measure in love, because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

Then he says care for one another in

1 Thessalonians 5:13–15 LEB

¹³ and to esteem them beyond all measure in love, because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the disorderly, console the discouraged, help the sick, be patient toward all *people*. ¹⁵ See to it that no one pays back evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue good toward one another and toward all *people*.

And finally he tells them each individually in

1 Thessalonians 5:16–22 LEB

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray constantly, ¹⁸ give thanks in everything; for this *is* the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but examine all *things*; hold fast to *what is* good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

Paul puts three thoughts together here that are important for us to recognize.

He says:

- "Do not quench the Holy Spirit"
- "Do not despise prophecies"
- "examine all things; hold fast to what is good"

Prophecy is valuable for us, as are the other gifts. We should cherish them and encourage them, even if they sometimes cause a delay or disruption in what we have planned. Lets first honor the Holy Spirit and encourage the gifts.