

With This In Mind

Pastor James Richards

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Remember, first and second Thessalonians primarily deal with the second coming of Christ, which we should be looking forward. I want to mention our sister Ann that passed away when her son came out. He received her Bible and there was a marker on first Thessalonians chapter four, the Rapture. That's what she was looking forward to seeing Christ. So that is our hope.

So with that in mind, we're going to begin with verse 5. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God which we are also suffering. Since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed. Because our testimony to you was believed to this end.

We always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power. So that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you and him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the hope that we have in Jesus, God, that He is coming again, just as he promised. And God, we look forward to that day.

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And we realize though, that you're preparing us now to be worthy of seeing him, of spending eternity with him. And I pray that you would continue that work in each one of us. God, that there be desire to live for you, to work for you, to prepare ourselves to spend eternity with you. God. We.

We lift up the prayer requests and God, there's a lot of needs and more than were mentioned this morning. We just pray that be working in lives and God taking just showing your love to them, your power and doing what only you can do in their lives. We pray that you do this in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated.

In the summer of 1977, a Saturday morning, I was sitting in my home when there was a knock on the door. I went to the door and it was the pastor of our church. Oh, Pastor. Hi. Come on in.

He came in. We visited A little bit. And then he asked me a question. What do you think God wants you to do for him?

And I thought, I don't know, hadn't thought about it. And he basically said, you should be thinking about it, prayed for me, and then went on his way. I sat there thinking about this, and I finally started praying. And I said, God, if you ever want me to do something for you, I will. And I was thinking, retirement.

Two years later. Of course, I was attending this church. I'd left work on a Friday night to go to Spokane to pick up my wife and our four kids driving through the night. And God spoke to me and said, now. And I immediately knew that he was saying what you said two years ago.

Do something for it now. And guess what my response was? Not now, Lord. Things are going too well. And they were going well.

And then he said, more quietly now. And I knew that I had that instant to respond to his invitation to serve him. And of course, that led to me eventually being the pastor here. And we're going to look at that this morning. Our resolve to do something for Christ.

Paul has an amazing prayer at the end of this chapter, chapter one, in first Thessalonians, and basically three parts to that. And the first thing he says that God may make you worthy of his calling. If you are a believer, if you are a Christian, there is a calling on your life. You didn't just say, oh, I believe, and I guess I'll be a Christian. No, God called you into this relationship.

And when he called you, he has a purpose of that, and he wants to make you worthy of that purpose. And so he's in the process of every believer, of preparing them to spend eternity with Jesus Christ. So I want to ask this question as far as when does God begin the process of making you worthy? When does he begin that? Is it at salvation?

Is it at baptism? Is it when we make a resolve that God, if I can do something for you, I will? When is it? Obviously, the answer to that is all of those. Even before the foundation of the world, God determined that you would follow him and he began that work in our lives.

But I want to suggest that one of the most important times in our life, as far as God fulfilling that purpose in your life, is when you make a resolve, when you make a commitment that God, if I can do something for you, I will. You're making yourself available to him, and that unleashes his power in your life to accomplish his will for your life. So Paul begins this prayer in verse 11 he begins with. To this end, the NIV says with this in mind. And that's telling us that this prayer is based on something he has just said.

And so we have to look back to find out what it refers to. And we see that in verse 10 it says, in verse 10, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you is believed. And so Paul is praying that God would accomplish his work in their life so that when he comes, they will be counted worthy. They will marvel at his power, his grace, his love.

And we're going to see today that for every true believer, he is in the process of making you worthy of spending eternity with Him. So again, he starts out with, with this in mind. And when Christ comes back, there are two things that are going to

happen. First of all, he is going to inflict vengeance on those who do not know God, who do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He says they will suffer eternal destruction and be shut out from the presence for eternity.

They are counted not worthy of spending eternity with God. As a result, they don't experience God's grace in their life to change them and prepare them to spend eternity with God. We look forward to the second coming, to the rapture of Jesus Christ. But it's clear that those who don't know Christ, that will be a day of horror for them when they realize they've not given their life to Christ and they're actually his enemies. And that's the first thing not worthy.

The second thing will happen on the day he's going to be glorified in his saints. And we will marvel when we see him in all of his glory. An amazing thing. And we look forward to heaven, and we should. But we need to realize that the ultimate purpose of us being with the Lord Jesus Christ at Christ's return is given in verse 12, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you in Him.

And I submit that if you are a true believer, if you love the Lord, that your concern, ultimately, and not that we don't have other concerns, but the ultimate concern is how can I glorify God in my life? How can I glorify God, my life? And when Christ comes back, amazing, we will see his full glory, the God who created the universe, who sustains everything by his great power, and we will marvel at him. And more importantly, I think we'll marvel that he loved us and called us into this relationship with Him. All of this because God made us worthy of his salvation.

We weren't worthy before. He makes us worthy. And he prepares us to come into his presence. And for me, I say, what a day of rejoicing that will be. That's what we look forward to.

Going back to our sister Ann and going over to visit her. She was going through this process of dying, and it's hard, it's no fun. And yet she kept her eyes on the Lord and she had the joy of the Lord. She knew where she was going and she was looking forward to that day. So with this in mind that we're going to see Jesus someday, Paul

prays for three things for the Thessalonians.

And I believe it's a prayer for you. And I. And I believe it's a prayer that we should be praying for each other. So let's look at them and verse 11 and 12. First of all, he asks that our God may make you worthy of his calling.

And just so we don't get confused, none of us are worthy of that call. We were sinners and enemies of God. He has to make us worthy. And so he asked that God would do that. And just so we're clear, worthy isn't based on who you are, what you've done.

One writer says, our worthiness consists of reflecting the glory of God as He works in our lives.

Our worthiness consists of the glory of God as He works in his life. And that means he is changing you from glory to glory. And the more he changes you to be like his son, Jesus Christ, the more glory we reflect to Him. And that's entirely a work of God in our lives. And so God uses everything in your life, the good, the bad, the ugly.

Why is this happening? God? He is using it to prepare you to spend eternity with God to become more and more like Jesus Christ. Just an example of this. Let's say you saw an ad for a wonderful job.

I mean, pay is great, great, great way to work. But you know, I'm not qualified for that job. But then you see at the end of the ad, no experience needed. Wow, that's a great opportunity. And you wonder, how can they do that?

They can do that because they say, we're going to train you. You can come in with no experience, but we will train you to do the job. We call that on the job training, don't we? That's what every one of us as believers are going through on the job training. And that God is preparing us.

And I'M amazed at least in my life that in that training I often find that, oh, I didn't do a very good job here and I hope I don't get fired, but God doesn't do that way, says, let's work on this, this is what you need to do. And God is revealing things in each one of

our hearts that he still needs to change. And he often does that through difficult times, difficult circumstances, difficult people. And that is part of our training. And basically they tell you, if you are willing to learn, if you're willing to put in the effort, we'll make sure you know how to do this job.

That's their responsibility, what's ours to be willing, be available to do whatever work is needed to do. They make you worthy. In the same way, when we become before God empty handed God, I have nothing to offer you, nothing that I can give to be worthy in your life. But I believe that you want to do that process in me and I am willing. I think Romans 8:28 perfectly describes what God does to make us worthy.

One of the most popular verses in the Bible. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those called according to his purpose. And that's often taken out of context. So everything will work out. That's not what it's saying.

For those who love God and are called according to his purpose, everything will work for good. And so if you love God and are called according to his purpose, and he's using everything in your life to accomplish that purpose, you may ask, well, what is that purpose? Well, he tells us in verse 29, and he says that to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, that's God's purpose for calling you to become like Jesus Christ. If you love God or are called according to his purpose, he is using everything in your life, the good things, the bad things, the success, the failures, the opposition, the persecution, even martyrdom. He's using that to fulfill his purpose to be like his son, Jesus Christ.

And, and so in other words, he's committed to making you more and more like his son. And because Jesus Christ is coming back and we'll see him face to face, Paul prays that we will be found worthy. Going back to the work illustration, let's say they decide to hire you, but you get on the job and boy, this is a great job and great benefits and, but I'm not really interested in working that hard. I'll just kind of skate by and none of us have ever done that right or had somebody work for us that was like that. And then you come to that evaluation.

How did you do? Ooh, not so good. And we don't want to be that person. We don't want to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, not be found worthy. So that's the first thing Paul prays for, that we be found worthy.

And it's a great prayer for each one of us. God, make me worthy. Help me to respond to the work that you're doing in my life. The second thing Paul prays for is that God will fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith in our lives. The NIV says that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

And the truth is, it is God's power and God's power alone working in our life that can prepare us to spend eternity with Him.

That's his job. What's our job?

To resolve, to be available, to say, here am I Lord. Philippians 2, 12, 13 tells us, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and work for his good pleasure. It's God's work in you, but you have to work it out. And when we do that, God's power is released in our life. God is looking for people who are available who will say yes when he asks them to do something.

And he'll be glorified out of that. One of the greatest examples in the Bible of this was Isaiah back in chapter six, where he says, who will go for us? Who can I send? And what's Isaiah's response? Here I am.

Send me. It wasn't an easy task. He was told, you're going to go out and speak to people and they're not going to listen. In fact, they're going to persecute you for telling the truth. But he was available to do what God wanted him to do.

And God worked in his life. When God asked me, what are you willing to do? I had no idea what he would ask me to do. All I knew is that I had to say yes to whatever that was and leave the rest up to God. And that's where we are as Christians.

God does the work, but we have to say, yes, I am available to do whatever you want. And when we do that, it opens the door to God's power working in your life. And again, it's his power, not our own. Not long after I prayed that prayer, God moved me to this church and God started doing a work in my life changing me and preparing me so that when he did call me, I was able to say yes, and was able to go, and I give him all the glory and all the credit. And all I did was say, if you want me to do something, I will, I will.

And all of us can do that. He takes it from there. That leads to the third thing Paul prays for in verse 12. And it's the purpose of all of this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and in him. The motivation for serving God has to be for the glory of God.

If it's not for the glory of God, it's a waste of time. We can work hard, sacrifice, even give up our lives for Jesus, but if it's not to glorify him, it is meaningless. And I've seen over the years maybe dozens, maybe hundreds of people, oh, I want to do something for God. And it did not work out well at all. And often they quit in anger or bitterness.

And you wonder why. I believe it was because their motives were wrong, that it was more for their glory than it was for God. And God will not share his glory with anyone. He alone is glorious. And what they did is they made it about themselves.

When they didn't get the acclamation or the approval or the acclaim, they were disappointed and became bitter and quit. And the truth is, somehow they did not get a vision of God's glory.

We have to see God's glory. It has to be revealed in our life. We have to realize that this alone is the purpose for life. Anything less than this just ends up eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die. But if you put him first in your life, he will be glorified in you.

And it'll be his power and not your power at work. And I don't know about you, but I'm sure if you've been walking with the Lord for a while, you can look back on your life and you can see God did this, God did that. God withheld this. God changed my on and

on and on. We see him working our life and where we're at, not because we did anything, even though we worked it out, because he did everything in us.

And to do that, we need a vision of the glory of God, how great he is. He is worthy of our lives. He's worthy of our effort, he's worthy of our sacrifice. And there will be great reward for that when we stand before Jesus, Jesus Christ. And so he ends this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

None of us can accomplish anything apart from the grace of God. We need God's grace at work in our life, and we have that grace, then everything is possible. He will accomplish his will for our lives. And to me, that's one of the reasons that we need to spend time in God's Word, because it is revealing how great our God is through the Old Testament, through the New Testament. It's taking our eyes off of ourselves and putting them on God, who alone is all powerful and worthy of worship.

And so one of the reasons that people struggle in giving themselves fully to the Lord is they don't understand how great he is. They've never trained themselves to seek after him and let him reveal his glory to you. And so God is asking us this prayer according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank God for His grace. I know that I would not be standing here apart from his grace.

And we want to be in a place where we're receptacles for that grace, that he can pour out his grace into your life to accomplish those things. We can't make that happen. We can't work for it. All we can do is say, lord, here am I.

Send me. That's going to be different for every one of us. We all have different gifts and talents, backgrounds, experiences. But God knows how to accomplish his purpose for you. And it means that you will have been made worthy.

Worthy not because of anything you do, but because of what he's done. And so I would encourage you to look over this prayer and pray for yourself. Make me worthy, Lord. Help me to resolve, to commit to doing Your will. Help me to act on by faith on the things you're asking me to do.

And do it all for your glory. Pray that for yourself. Pray that for your friends. Pray that for our church. And I believe God will do great things and he will be glorified.

Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for this prayer. Thessalonians were going through persecution, even dying for Christ, but they were looking forward to that day that Jesus Christ would come back and. And it would be worth it all that they'd be considered worthy based on the work that Jesus Christ did in their life. And I pray that in the same way you'd be working in each one of our lives and that God, that you would give us the desire, the resolve. God, whatever you want to do with my life, I'm open to that.

I'm wanting that. And that you would fulfill that by your great power. And that your grace would be at work in our lives. In Christ's name, amen.