

Faithful Endurance

2 Thess 1:1-12



Background: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” So said the early church Father Tertullian to the Roman Emperor in the year 200. In many countries around the world Christians are still being killed for their faith, solely for being Christians. Why does God allow his faithful people to suffer such persecution? And how should Christians live in the face of such persecution and trouble? Last year we looked at Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonian church. Over the next four weeks we will look at his second letter to the same church, a church that is suffering under persecutions and trials.

Sermon Text: Phil 4:10-23 (ESV)

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. 4

Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

5 All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your

every deed prompted by faith. 12 We pray this so 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.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
- b. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- c. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

2. Sermon questions (pick 3)

- a. What good news did you hear from the service Sunday?
- b. Hope is one of the primary reasons for Paul's letters to the Thessalonians. Are you an agent of hope these days? Why or why not?
- c. For the last 8 months, within our deeply divided society, our church has preached a lot about learning how to love the "other." Bernard talked again about it on Sunday saying, "Our Christian values must promote behavior that is full of love." Would you say you are learning well or not learning well how to love the "other"? Why or why not?
- d. Do you see the US church as being persecuted right now? Why or why not? Do you know anyone living in a country that persecutes Christians? Can you make it a priority to pray for them moving forward? If you don't know anyone, I would suggest slowly praying through the Open Doors list here:
https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/?initcid=20SRP&initpkg=20SRP-0&cid=7010b000001YkjbAAC&pkg=a150b000004P00wAAC&gclid=Cj0KCQjwhb36BRCfARIsAKcXh6FakfzWwSILCoM6QjGTjkUikTtJqTUfVypQXftQmQlvPLDyIPq25gAaAkT6EALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds
- e. While we wait on Jesus' second coming, Bernard said that we do seek justice for others. Where in your world are you seeking justice for others? It may be supporting organizations that bring justice through love, like IJM, or our VisionTrust ministry in Liberia or our King City outreach or the prison ministry, etc. It might be in organizations that help the homeless (Cityteam, food banks or WV Community Services). Share ideas for how you and your group can promote more justice for others.