

## DYNAMIC FAITH

### 2 Thessalonians 1

- The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written soon after the first.
- The apostle was told that, from some expressions in his first letter, many expected the second coming of Christ was at hand, and that the day of judgment would arrive in their time. Some of these neglected their worldly duties.
- St. Paul wrote again to correct their error, which hindered the spread of the gospel.
- He tells them there were many counsels of the Most High yet to be fulfilled, before that day of the Lord should come, though, because it is sure, he had spoken of it as near.
- The subject led to a remarkable foretelling, of some of the future events which were to take place in the after-ages of the Christian church, and which show the prophetic spirit the apostle possessed.

#### **THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S GRACE, MANIFESTED IN FAITH AND LOVE**

2Th. 1:1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2Th. 1:2 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2Th. 1:3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.**

2Th. 1:4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

“We tend to speak of faith in static terms as something we either have or do not have. ... Or we complain “I’ve lost my faith as if it were commodity. But faith is a relationship of trust in God, and like all relationships is a living, dynamic, growing thing.” John Stott

- Is faith static or dynamic ?
- Is love static or dynamic?
- Where in scripture do we see evidence of degrees of faith?
  - Mark 9:24 ¶ Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”
  - Luke 12:28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!
  - Luke 17:5 ¶ The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”
- Where in scripture do we see evidence of degrees of love?
  - 1Th. 4:10 And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.

- Matt. 24:12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,
- Eph. 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.
- Where in scripture do we see evidence of degrees of thanksgiving?
  - Col. 2:7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.
- Why does Paul say “we ought to” thank God?
- How can we boast (v5) if we are to be thankful?
- What parallels exist with 1 Thess 1?
  - Th. 1:3 We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Read the quotes on faith and love. Are these statements consistent with scriptural teaching on faith, love, and thanksgiving?**

#### DEFENSE OF GOD’S JUDGEMENT

2Th. 1:5 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.

2Th. 1:6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you

2Th. 1:7 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.

2Th. 1:8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

2Th. 1:9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

2Th. 1:10 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.

- What is evidence of God’s just judgement? (2 Thess 1:5)
- What evidence is there to convict me?
- Rom. 12:19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.
- *Malachi 3:2 (NIV) But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.*
- **What do we learn about God’s judgment?**

#### PRAYER FOR GOD’S POWER

2Th. 1:11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

2Th. 1:12 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.

- **How should we pray for other believers?**

## Breakout questions

Read the quotes on faith and love. Are these statements consistent with scriptural teaching on faith, love, and thanksgiving?

**2Th. 1:3** We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

### QUOTATIONS ON FAITH

(1) Faith in oneself... is the best and safest course.

*Michelangelo*

(2) Let God's promises shine on your problems.

*Corrie Ten Boom*

(3) Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

(4) Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.

*Martin Luther*

(5) Faith is a reasoning trust, a trust which reckons thoughtfully and confidently upon the trustworthiness of God.

*John R. Stott*

(6) The smallest seed of faith is better than the largest fruit of happiness.

*Henry David Thoreau*

(7) The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith.

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*

(8) If you desire faith, then you have faith enough.

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

(9) Faith is different from proof; the latter is human, the former is a gift from God.

*Blaise Pascal*

(10) The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason.

*Benjamin Franklin*

(11) Always continue the climb. It is possible for you to do whatever you choose, if you first get to know who you are and are willing to work with a power that is greater than ourselves to do it.

*Oprah Winfrey*

(12) There are many things that are essential to arriving at true peace of mind, and one of the most important is faith, which cannot be acquired without prayer.

*John Wooden*

(13) Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

*Hebrews 11:1*

(14) Faith has to do with things that are not seen, and hope with things that are not in hand.

*Saint Thomas Aquinas*

(15) He who loses money, loses much; He who loses a friend, loses much more; He who loses faith, loses all.

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

(16) Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope or confidence.

*Helen Keller*

(17) Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

(18) Doubt is a pain too lonely to know that faith is his twin brother.

*Kahlil Gibran*

(19) To me faith means not worrying.

*John Dewey*

## **Quotes about love**

(1) I believe love hurtful to society. I believe, in short, that love does more harm than good.

*Napoleon Bonaparte*

(2) Love is the state in which a man sees things most widely differently than what they are.

*Nietzsche*

(3) Dogs love their friends and bite their enemies, quite unlike people, who are incapable of pure love and always have to mix love and hate

*Sigmund Freud*

(4) Love is never having to say you are sorry.

*Anonymours*

(5) "He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals."

*-Benjamin Franklin*

(6) "I never knew how to worship until I knew how to love."

*-Henry Ward Beecher*

(7) "To love another person is to see the face of God."

*-Les Miserables*

(8) "Love is but the discovery of ourselves in others, and the delight in the recognition."

*-Alexander Smith*

(9) "Love cures people - both the ones who give it and the ones who receive it."

*-Dr. Karl Menninger*

(10) "He who loves 50 people has 50 woes; he who loves no one has no woes."

*-Buddha*

(11) "Love is not love that alters when it alteration finds."

*-Shakespeare*

(12) Love makes the time pass. Time makes love pass.

*French Proverb*

(13) The course of true love never did run smooth.

*William Shakespeare*

(14) "Love is the irresistible desire to be irresistibly desired."

*--Mark Twain*

(15) This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

*1 John 3:16*

## Quotes about thanksgiving

(1) "At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

-- *Albert Schweitzer*

(2) "A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves."

-- *Henry Ward Beecher*

(3) What we're really talking about is a wonderful day set aside on the fourth Thursday of November when no one diets. I mean, why else would they call it Thanksgiving?

--*Erma Bombeck*

(4) Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus

--*1 Thess 5:16-18*

## THANKSGIVING DAY PROCLAMATION BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN

October 3, 1863

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle, or the ship; the axe had enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years, with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

Abraham Lincoln