

GLORY TO CHRIST

God's Word:

II Thessalonians 1:3-12

Key Verse:

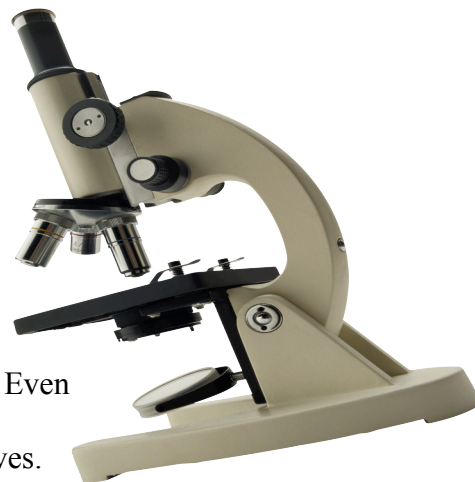
“TO THIS END ALSO WE PRAY FOR YOU ALWAYS, THAT OUR
GOD WILL COUNT YOU WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING, AND
FULFILL EVERY DESIRE FOR GOODNESS AND THE WORK OF
FAITH WITH POWER.”
II THESSALONIANS 1:11



Breaking It Down:

It is believed that the book of II Thessalonians was written soon after I Thessalonians from Corinth in about A.D. 51-52. Paul was writing to the new believers in Thessalonica, a major military and commercial port located along the Egnatian Way. The Egnatian Way was a major road that crossed through all of Thessalonica, bringing commerce and travelers.

In our reading for this lesson, Paul is recognizing and giving thanks to God for the believers' perseverance despite being persecuted. Even though Paul is recognizing the believers of Thessalonica, he gives God all the glory He deserves. For only through God's power can we make everlasting changes in our life and only by His power can we accomplish His work.



Paul singles out the great things that the Thessalonians are doing by complimenting them. It is not easy growing in faith and love in times of persecution, but with God all things are possible. He states that God will recognize all of the things that these new believers are going through when Christ returns. God is just and His judgment is righteous. “He will be revealed from Heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels.” (Verse 7 NIV) When Christ returns, it will also be a time of judgment, punishing those who do not know God or obey the gospel of the Lord. At that moment, Paul assures the Thessalonians, they will be safe in God. In verse 10, the Bible says: “when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed - for our testimony to you was believed.”

Paul also gives a vivid description of what will happen to those who don't believe in Jesus. Their penalty for not trusting in Christ will be eternal death, outside the presence of the Lord. But those who do believe will live eternally with God the Father.



Living It:

Do you ever find yourself being caught doing the right thing, but not intentionally? In my son's elementary school they have an award called “Caught in the Act.” If a teacher or staff member catches a student in the act of doing a kind thing to or for another student, they present the child with an award at the end of the semester. How



good does it feel for someone to notice and appreciate the good things that you have done? Sometimes it seems like all everybody is interested in is the bad in people. When you turn on the T.V., the news only talks about all of the bad things that are happening around the world. Very rarely do you see something positive happening on the news. As humans, it is much easier to recognize the faults in other people, especially family, than it is to say something good. You can find 10 things wrong with your sibling in 5 minutes, but you can't say one compliment to them.

Paul noticed that the believers in Thessalonica were growing in faith and love for one another. He gave praise to God for their positive actions, and was in constant prayer for them. Not only did Paul recognize their improvements, but he also felt it necessary to send them a letter to encourage them. His words of encouragement included that God recognizes all of the things that they have been doing. Since God is just, He will bring trouble to those who caused them trouble.

These new believers were caught in the act of doing right in the eyes of the Lord. We should strive to do the same, even though no one may be around to see it. God is always watching us - 24/7. One day we will receive our reward for being caught in the act for all of our good deeds. When Jesus returns, He will count those who are worthy of the kingdom of God. Don't you want to be worthy of the kingdom of God? I know I do.



Understanding It:

1. Who are the people who will be punished when Jesus Christ returns?
2. What are the two forms of punishment listed in II Thessalonians 1:9?
3. How can we make sure that we are worthy of the kingdom of God?
4. Name a time that you have been caught in the act of doing something good for somebody else.



Doing It!

It always feels nice when somebody gives us a compliment or acknowledges when we have done something good. This week, recognize the goodness in people. Give one compliment to everyone you converse with daily, and every time you see somebody doing something nice for someone, tell the person you noticed. Be in constant prayer for your fellow brothers so they may grow in faith and love, just as Paul did for his brothers.

