



KINGDOM POLICIES

PART 2

Forty Daily Devotions
from 2 Corinthians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians
(Based on the NKJV)

Introduction

Our devotional readings for this period will take us through three of the letters of Paul that are called “church epistles.” Second Corinthians was written in response to certain charges that were being brought against Paul and his ministry. From Paul’s Spirit-inspired responses to these allegations, we are once again provided with a “policy” guide to be used in churches even today. First Thessalonians was written to a very young church that was facing some extreme persecution and trials. From Paul’s messages to these early believers, we find some very good “policies” for dealing with trials and tribulations, godly living, and the daily work of the church. We also find some of the strongest teaching on the rapture and second coming of Christ in this short letter. Second Thessalonians is more of a follow-up letter to Paul’s first message. It was apparently written shortly after the first letter and deals with the same basic issues. It almost seems that Paul was inspired to write this letter immediately after Timothy and Silas returned from the delivery of the first letter. Perhaps their visit with the believers in Thessalonica revealed some additional insight or caused a greater sense of urgency to encourage and comfort the believers there.

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	2 Corinthians 1:1-8	11/4/20
2	2 Corinthians 1:9-14	11/5/20
3	2 Corinthians 1:15-24	11/6/20
4	2 Corinthians 2:1-7	11/7/20
5	2 Corinthians 2:8-17	11/8/20
6	2 Corinthians 3:1-6	11/9/20
7	2 Corinthians 3:7-18	11/10/20
8	2 Corinthians 4:1-6	11/11/20
9	2 Corinthians 4:7-18	11/12/20
10	2 Corinthians 5:1-8	11/13/20
11	2 Corinthians 5:9-15	11/14/20
12	2 Corinthians 5:16-21	11/15/20
13	2 Corinthians 6:1-10	11/16/20
14	2 Corinthians 6:11-18	11/17/20
15	2 Corinthians 7:1-8	11/18/20
16	2 Corinthians 7:9-16	11/19/20
17	2 Corinthians 8:1-11	11/20/20
18	2 Corinthians 8:12-24	11/21/20
19	2 Corinthians 9:1-15	11/22/20
20	2 Corinthians 10:1-11	11/23/20

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	2 Corinthians 10:12-18	11/24/20
22	2 Corinthians 11:1-12	11/25/20
23	2 Corinthians 11:13-21	11/26/20
24	2 Corinthians 11:22-33	11/27/20
25	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	11/28/20
26	2 Corinthians 12:11-21	11/29/20
27	2 Corinthians 13:1-14	11/30/20
28	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	12/1/20
29	1 Thessalonians 2:1-9	12/2/20
30	1 Thessalonians 2:10-20	12/3/20
31	1 Thessalonians 3:1-13	12/4/20
32	1 Thessalonians 4:1-8	12/5/20
33	1 Thessalonians 4:9-18	12/6/20
34	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	12/7/20
35	1 Thessalonians 5:12-28	12/8/20
36	2 Thessalonians 1:1-12	12/9/20
37	2 Thessalonians 2:1-8	12/10/20
38	2 Thessalonians 2:9-17	12/11/20
39	2 Thessalonians 3:1-9	12/12/20
40	2 Thessalonians 3:10-18	12/13/20

Day 1: 2 Corinthians 1:1-8

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother...” (2 Corinthians 1:1)

Timothy

This is the first letter of Paul that includes Timothy in the salutation. Timothy was a young man that began to minister with Paul soon after he and Barnabas began to minister separately. Timothy was a well-respected member of the church and came highly recommended by the Christians at Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:1-2). It is no coincidence that Paul begins this letter by discussing the “God of all comfort” (1:3). When Paul and Barnabas parted ways, Paul lost a faithful ministry partner and a very good friend. However, God soon provided someone to serve faithfully with Paul until his ministry on earth was concluded. Paul was quick to report that believers may suffer for their commitment to Christ, but Christ was ever present to comfort us when we do suffer. He went on to say that his (and our) sufferings were offset by the fact that they led to his (and our) being able to witness to, and disciple, more people for Christ. This great preacher was not ashamed to admit that his trials and tribulations sometimes seemed to get the better of him. He spoke of some “trouble” in Asia that caused him to despair, or fear, even death (v. 8). He emphasized the importance of the prayers being offered up by his fellow Christians and assured them their prayers were appreciated.

Prayer Emphasis: Let’s begin our devotionals in 2 Corinthians where we left off in 1 Corinthians. **Please pray** for your pastor and spiritual leaders. **Ask God** to continually encourage them in their work. **Kingdom Policy Number Forty-One:** *Always believe that God is faithful to comfort us and provide our needs.*

Day 2: 2 Corinthians 1:9-14

“For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God...” (2 Corinthians 1:12)

“Sincerity”

One of the reasons Paul wrote this second letter to the church at Corinth was because there were some there who were denying that Paul was an apostle. Some of their concerns may have been based on Paul’s past life and his earlier persecution of the church. Other concerns may have been based on Paul’s first letter that addressed some very personal, moral issues in the church. Preaching the truth was not popular in Paul’s day, and it is not always popular today. Paul will spend some time defending his ministry in this letter. The first issue that might have been questioned was his sincerity. Paul wanted to assure them (and us) that his ministry was marked by “sincerity” and not based on “fleshly wisdom” but “the grace of God.” When Paul and his young assistant, Timothy, wrote, “For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand” (v. 13), they were basically telling the Corinthian believers that there was no reason to read between the lines or to look for some hidden message in their words. They were delivering a message to them from God, and the hearers were to accept it in a spirit of love and understanding. Throughout his writings, Paul tried to explain his ministry to be: 1) Simple; 2) Sincere; and 3) Spiritual. It is hard to imagine a ministry being measured in any other way.

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** for those who stand and boldly declare the truth from God’s Word today. **Support** them in prayer and **encourage** them at every opportunity. **Practice** reading from God’s Word without reading anything into it. **Kingdom Policy Number Forty-Two:** *The Bible is God’s sincere message of love, appreciation, and direction for His followers today.*

Day 3: 2 Corinthians 1:15-24

“And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit – to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you...” (2 Corinthians 1:15-16)

“A Second Benefit”

In this letter, Paul told his beloved Corinthians that he planned to make two visits to them. He was planning to stop by to see them on his way to Macedonia and then to stop again on his way back home. This second visit was the “second benefit” Paul mentioned to them. Paul’s intention was to be a benefit to the church at Corinth and for the church at Corinth to be a benefit to him. He stated that he wanted to “be helped” by them on his “way to Judea” (v. 16). The help of which Paul spoke was probably a love offering to help him and his missionary partners along the way. He reminded the Corinthians that he and his ministry partners had been faithful to preach Jesus Christ in their visits with them (v. 19). In Paul’s teaching he emphasized that it was God who established, anointed, and “sealed” the believer after salvation (vs. 21-22). A seal on a document identified its owner and that owner’s commitment to defend and protect the decrees stated therein. Paul believed God “sealed” believers and God’s seal was an indication that we are His children and, as such, He will protect and defend us.

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that you are God’s child and that He has “sealed” you as His own. **Live** like a child of God today by being everything your Father would want you to be. **Believe** there is nothing Satan can do to break the seal God has put upon our lives. **Kingdom Policy Number Forty-Three: Always remember that Satan cannot undo what God has done!**

Day 4: 2 Corinthians 2:1-7

“But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.” (2 Corinthians 2:1)

Changed Plans

The word “again” in our focus verse is a clear indication that Paul’s first visit to Corinth brought some “sorrow” to the hearts of the believers there. With that in mind, Paul decided to write them a letter that appears to have been written sometime between the letters we know as 1 & 2 Corinthians. As far as we know, that is the letter mentioned in verse 3 of today’s reading. What was stated in that letter is not known to us; however, many scholars believe the letter dealt with a disciplinary action the church had taken against one of the members. That action is discussed in verses 5-11 in this chapter. Some have assumed this is in reference to the individual who was having an affair with his stepmother (see 1 Corinthians 5:1). Whoever that person may have been, or whatever he may have done, Paul encouraged the church to forgive him. From the language he used, it is evident that Paul’s concern was that this individual might be “swallowed up” or, as some translations read, “overwhelmed” by excessive sorrow (v. 7). Paul was right to believe that the long-term goal of church discipline was to be the repentance and restoration of the sinning individual.

Prayer Emphasis: Resist speaking or taking any harsh actions before taking some time to think and pray through the situation. **Delay** confrontations until your words can be spoken in love. Always **seek** to see sinners come to a place of repentance and restoration to ministry. **Kingdom Policy Number Forty-Four: Always be willing to forgive and restore fallen Christians who have truly repented of their sins.**

Day 5: 2 Corinthians 2:8-17

“Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.” (2 Corinthians 2:11)

Satan’s “Devices”

Paul was willing to defer to the decision the church would make on this Christian needing forgiveness. If the church was ready to forgive this person, then Paul was ready to forgive also. More than anything, Paul did not want this situation to remain a contention between him and the church and become a hindrance to any further ministry he might have there. Paul clearly considered division to be one of Satan’s “devices.” He then added that, of such “devices,” we are not to be “ignorant” or unaware. The Greek word translated “devices” here (“schemes” in some translations) was used only six times in the New Testament, all by Paul, with five of the six times found in 2 Corinthians. In other places in the New Testament, this same word is sometimes translated “mind.” Paul is saying that we are not to be “ignorant” of the way our enemy thinks. Paul knew exactly what Satan’s opinion would be about any Christian who sinned. Satan would desire that they be put out of the church and never allowed back! Our enemy would have us to completely disqualify people from any future involvement in ministry – whether they have truly repented or not! Sad to say, there are many people in God’s churches today that think the same way. While we should always operate cautiously, we should not be unwilling to forgive those who have been forgiven by Christ. An unforgiving spirit usually leads to division.

Prayer Emphasis: Forgive your fellow Christians if they demonstrate genuine repentance. Seek to **restore** them to the fellowship of the church whenever possible. Always be careful to **protect** the church, especially its children, from those who might represent potential harm to them. **Kingdom Policy Number Forty-Five:** *Forgiving Christians are a part of the solution and not part of the problem.*

Day 6: 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

“Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?” (2 Corinthians 3:1)

“Again”

It seems that Paul was beginning to feel like he was, once again, being forced to defend the sincerity of his ministry. Those who challenged his apostleship earlier must have taken up their arguments and accusations against him once more. Paul asked the Corinthians if they needed “epistles of commendation” from others that testified that his ministry was genuinely of the Lord. Paul had given such a recommendation for Phoebe in Romans 16:2, stating that the church there should “receive her in the Lord.” Later in this same letter, he will include a recommendation for one of his fellow ministers (8:22-24). If a letter of recommendation became necessary, Paul suggested that the Christians at Corinth might well be his letters of recommendation. They could serve as living letters, written not on paper but on hearts. Their lives were to be his letters of recommendation, not written with ink only, but with the Spirit of the living God!

Prayer Emphasis: Recognize that any ministry will have its critics. **Refuse** to be critical of other people or ministries without just cause. **Refrain** from gossip and **excuse yourself** from any circle of Christians that are habitually critical of other believers. **Kingdom Policy Number Forty-Six:** *Let the fruit of your labors for the Lord be the proof of the sincerity of your ministry.*

Day 7: 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

“Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech...” (2 Corinthians 3:12)

“Hope”

The new covenant was one of hope. Hope instilled a confidence within Paul that he could have never mustered from within or on his own. That hopeful confidence also allowed Paul to speak with great “boldness of speech.” Moses had chosen to “veil” his face so the children of Israel would not be blinded by the radiance that came from his visits and conversations with God (v. 13). Paul chose to do just the opposite. He chose to speak boldly and trust the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s power and presence to those who heard him preach and teach, causing his listeners to glorify God and not some preacher. Paul realized that his responsibility was to reflect the Lord’s glory. It was the Lord’s glory that could transform lives and mold men and women to become more and more like the Christians God desired them to be. It was only because of God’s mercy and the transforming power of Christ that Paul even had a ministry! *He* knew that and he wanted everyone else to know it! Because of God’s grace, Paul was determined to continue faithfully in a style of ministry to which he would never have to be ashamed and that would be pleasing in the sight of God. Paul taught us that, as we are “beholding...the glory of the Lord” we “are being transformed” to be like Him “by the Spirit of the Lord” (v. 18).

Prayer Emphasis: **Never** quit serving the Lord – no matter what anyone may say or think. **Allow hope** to keep you moving forward and growing in grace. **Kingdom Policy Number Forty-Seven:** *Keep serving and you will keep growing!*

Day 8: 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

“Whose minds the god of this age has blinded...” (2 Corinthians 4:4)

“The ‘god’ of This Age”

Even though I customarily capitalize the key words in the titles to these devotionals, I could not allow myself to capitalize one of the words in today’s title. I think the reason for that decision will be apparent to you. How sad it is to realize that Satan has so “blinded” the minds of some to the point that they do not see the light of the gospel. This imposed blindness is not from a condition that affects the eyes. It is a blindness of the mind. Satan “has blinded” the minds of unbelievers and, because of that, they cannot see the benefit of the gospel of Christ. It is the glory of Christ that Satan desires to prevent the world from seeing. He does not want people to see that Jesus is the “image of God” (v. 4). Christ is to be the focal point for our preaching and teaching. Shining the light of Jesus is the purpose for every sermon, Bible study, and Sunday School lesson at our church. It is the theme of our singing and our praise and worship. The purpose of our offerings is so that we can continue to shine the light of Christ, not only in our own area, but literally around the world! When the light of God came into Paul’s life, it shined upon his heart, bringing about amazing changes in his life and purpose. He refused to “lose heart” (become discouraged) in his mission to evangelize the world and to enlist others to do the same (v. 1).

Prayer Emphasis: **Share** your salvation testimony with someone today, and, by doing so, **be a light** to a lost and dying world. **Kingdom Policy Number Forty-Eight:** *We must never allow the god of this world to **outwit** or **outwork** us!*

Day 9: 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

*“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”
(2 Corinthians 4:7)*

“Treasure”

The “treasure” of which Paul speaks in our focus verse is the light of Christ that we discussed yesterday. The “treasure” of the witness of Christ has been passed to us so that we, in our “earthen vessels,” can be witnesses to the true source of the Lord’s soul-saving light! The “god of this age” (v. 4) that we read about yesterday will do everything within his power to thwart our efforts to share this light. He would love for the light to die with us so it cannot be passed on to the generation that is to follow. We must be diligent and faithful in our efforts if we want to see the continuation of the spread of the gospel. This endeavor will not be without cost, as is evident by the trials Paul mentioned in verses eight through 11 of today’s reading. However, the Holy Spirit is quick to remind us that it is often through such trials that Jesus is “manifested” in us (v. 11). In verse 13, Paul quotes Psalm 116:10. Later in that same song, the Psalmist pledged to “pay” his “vows to the LORD” and do so “in the presence of all His people” (Psalm 116:14). This vow was made at great risk – even the risk of death. Paul’s vow was much the same as that Psalmist of the past. He was willing to suffer any trial or affliction for the cause of Christ. He could do so because he firmly believed that the One who resurrected Jesus Christ would, someday, raise him up as well (v. 14).

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). **Share** some of your “treasure” with someone you meet today. **Kingdom Policy Number Forty-Nine:** *Live in such a way that Christ is glorified.*

Day 10: 2 Corinthians 5:1-8

“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.” (2 Corinthians 5:2-3)

“We Groan”

The Apostle Paul used the word “groan” to express his longing to be free from this world’s existence and transported to his eternal home in heaven. The word that is translated “groan” in today’s focus verse is translated “sighed” in the story of Jesus healing the deaf mute (Mark 7:34). Later, in Hebrews 13:17, this same word is translated “grief.” But while our physical man may be growing older, weaker, and wearier every day, our spiritual man is being constantly renewed. All of this makes our current afflictions seem but for a short moment when compared to our eternal rewards in heaven. We, like Paul, must focus on that which we see through the power of faith and not just on what we see in this present world. Like Paul, we should be “confident” in the fact that, one day, we will “be absent from the body” and “present with the Lord” (v. 8). I assure you that any hardship, difficulty, trial, or tribulation through which God has called us to walk will seem worth it all when we see Jesus!

Prayer Emphasis: Look forward in faith and believe that this world, and its suffering, is only temporary. **Commit** to living for God on a day-to-day basis – asking him to renew your spiritual strength daily. **Kingdom Policy Number Fifty:** *Believers are to seek God’s strength and renewal daily.*

Day 11: 2 Corinthians 5:9-15

“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ...” (2 Corinthians 5:9-10a)

“Our Aim”

While most translations of the Bible use the words “aim,” “goal,” or even “ambition” in 2 Corinthians 5:9, some choose to use the words “labor” or “strive” to communicate what God is trying to tell us in these very important words. The Greek word found in the manuscripts is a word that means “to strive to bring something to pass.” No matter how it is translated, our focus verse is teaching us that it should be every Christian’s desire “to be well pleasing” to our Lord. The phrase “whether present or absent,” I think, is referring to Paul’s desire to be “well pleasing” to the Lord in this life as well as in the life to come. There is an inescapable event scheduled for every believer, and that is “the judgment seat of Christ.” According to the Bible, “we must all appear” at that judgment seat, not to be judged for our *sins*, but for our *service*. We must never forget that our sins were judged on the cross and we are completely pardoned as a result of the sacrifice Jesus made for us there. Verse 15 says it all: “He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” Live in such a way that you look forward to the judgment seat of Christ with *rejoicing* and not *regret*!

Prayer Emphasis: Serve with a constant confidence that what you do for Christ is not in vain. **Make** it your personal goal to be “well pleasing” to Christ in all that you say or do. **Choose** to live for Him and His interests. **Kingdom Policy Number Fifty-One:** *Live with full assurance that, as believers, we will be rewarded by Christ Himself for the good works we do for Him in this lifetime.*

Day 12: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

“A New Creation”

Paul learned to base his evaluation of others on *eternal* things rather than *external* things. He believed that anyone who was in Christ was “a new creation.” This fact allowed Paul to see potential in every believer. The greatest potential for any believer is found in our calling to be ambassadors of Christ. In verse 20, Paul did not say *he* was an ambassador for Christ, but “*we* are ambassadors for Christ.” Furthermore, he did not say the “word of reconciliation” was committed to *him*, but “to *us*.” We are to be empowered messengers, sent out on Christ’s behalf, to preach man’s opportunity to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Believing that He who “knew no sin” was willing “to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (v. 21) was enough to motivate Paul to go anywhere that God wanted to send him and to reach out to everyone that he met along the way.

Prayer Emphasis: Allow God to help you change the way you see others. Be willing to **be an ambassador** for Christ and **represent Him** to everyone you encounter along life’s way. **Kingdom Policy Number Fifty-Two:** *Fulfilling our obligation to serve Christ will help others to see their opportunity to be saved.*

Day 13: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

“We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain...But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God....” (2 Corinthians 6:1 & 4)

“Ministers of God”

There are few people interested in being servants today – even in God’s churches! Although he was called to serve God in the face of trials and opposition, it is obvious that those negative circumstances helped to develop many positive traits in Paul’s life. The sufferings listed in verses 4 and 5 resulted in the great blessings listed in verses 6 and 7. These blessings allowed Paul and his partners to continue despite their circumstances. We should remind ourselves that part of the reason for this second letter to the church at Corinth was to refute the charges of some that Paul was not to be considered an authentic apostle, and, therefore, not to be regarded as an anointed minister of God. Such accusations brought sorrow to Paul, but God did not allow that sorrow to diminish the rejoicing in Paul’s life. Even though there were some in this church who were not expressing Christian love and respect to him, Paul committed himself to loving and respecting them. Such is the life of one who desires to serve God. It is not a life filled with worldly pleasures. It is not a life that promises popularity with people. However, it is a life that is richly blessed by the presence and the power of Almighty God! Amen!

Prayer Emphasis: Accept God’s call to serve. **Endure** any trials or afflictions that might distract you. **Remind yourself**, daily, that Christ endured great pain and suffering for you. **Kingdom Policy Number Fifty-Three:** *Base your service to Christ on what you know rather than on what others might say or think.*

Day 14: 2 Corinthians 6:11-18

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14)

Unequally Yoked?

We have often heard these verses used to teach us that, as Christians, we are commanded to avoid becoming unequally yoked with unbelievers in marriage or business relationships. It is always good practice for believers to marry believers – and not just believers but committed believers! No preacher will ever do this Scripture harm to preach it as not being unequally yoked with unbelievers. However, when kept in context, this statement was made regarding those who desired to create division in the church by diminishing Paul and his call to ministry. Just as light could not mix with darkness, and Christ could not partner with the devil, committed Christians did not belong in the circle of those who chose to be critical and judgmental. We would never bring an idol into God’s house, so we should never allow the idols pride, criticism, and false judgment to be allowed among us. The challenge to “come out from among them and be separate” in verse 17 comes from Isaiah 52:11 and was used by Paul as a warning to not be unequally yoked with those who so freely passed judgment on Paul and his ministry companions.

Prayer Emphasis: Avoid being caught up in conversations that are not positive and productive. **Resolve** to use criticism sparingly and in a constructive way. **Remind** yourself that something that is important enough to be said *about* a person is important enough to be said *to* that person. **Kingdom Policy Number Fifty-Four:** *Never say things **about** someone that you are not willing to say **to** that someone.*

Day 15: 2 Corinthians 7:1-8

“Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you...” (2 Corinthians 7:6-7a)

Titus

Even though Paul’s problems did not defeat him, it is obvious that they weighed heavily on his heart and mind. He spoke of having “no rest” and of being “troubled on every side” (v. 5). In other words, Paul sensed that he and his companions were being attacked from every angle. Compare this to the way that every aspect of Job’s life was attacked at one and the same time, and you will understand that Satan never changes his tactics. Paul was neither afraid, nor ashamed, to admit his fears. In the same sense, he was not bashful about giving God praise for comforting him in his times of fear. One of the ways that God comforted Paul was a visit from a young preacher named Titus. Look again at the last part of verse seven and note the kind of report that Titus shared with his elder friend. He spoke of positive things, such as the love and concern that the church at Corinth had for Paul. From every indication, Titus brought a positive report to Paul and that, obviously, brought comfort to him. From what Titus reported, Paul was convinced that the opinions held by a minority were not necessarily the opinions held by the majority of the people in the church at Corinth. After his visit from Titus, it is obvious that Paul was mentally, emotionally, and spiritually refreshed.

Prayer Emphasis: Commit to being a source of encouragement to others. Use words to **build people up** and not to tear them down. **Reach out** to someone you know and **speak** a word of encouragement to them. **Kingdom Policy Number Fifty-Five:** *Christians are to encourage one another.*

Day 16: 2 Corinthians 7:9-16

“Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.” (2 Corinthians 7:9)

“Godly Sorrow”

Yesterday we read where Paul realized he had made the Corinthians “sorry” with his “letter,” but he did not “regret it” (v. 8). Not only did he not regret it, he said, “I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance.” Such “godly sorrow,” Paul said, produced the kind of “repentance” that led “to salvation,” and, therefore, was “not to be regretted” (v. 10). Not only had the Corinthians experienced “godly sorrow” (v. 10) when they received Paul’s letter, they had done so “in a godly manner” (v. 11). Verse 11 goes on to describe the “godly manner” in which these believers responded to Paul’s letter and how their positive reaction to it “proved” the Corinthian believers to be “clear” (innocent) in the “matter” that he had been forced to address with them. In not dealing with the sinning couple that was mentioned in Paul’s first letter (see 1 Corinthians 5:1), the church had not sinned by doing something wrong but by not doing what was right. James 4:17 clearly teaches us that, “to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” Verse 12 serves as Paul’s explanation that he had written his letter to *benefit* them and not to *beat*, or chastise, them.

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to reject godly correction. **Choose** to respond to such correction with “godly sorrow” and in “a godly manner.” **Avoid** doing *wrong* things, but also **avoid** not doing the *right* things that you know God would want you to do. **Kingdom Policy Fifty-Six:** *Realize that rejoicing always follows true repentance!*

Day 17: 2 Corinthians 8:1-11

“...we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction...their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.” (2 Corinthians 8:1-2)

Two Great Examples

The word “moreover” (v. 1) marks another change in subject matter. At least for now, Paul has said what he wants to say in defense of his ministry, and he is ready to move ahead and talk about giving. It is important to note that it was *after* the encouraging visit from Titus, and *after* hearing a good report from the church at Corinth, that Paul felt as though he could stop defending himself and start teaching believers about more important issues. While teaching on giving, Paul referred to two great examples. First, he mentioned the church at Macedonia and how they, despite their severe “trial of affliction” and their “deep poverty,” had been willing to give generously. When it came to giving, the suffering Macedonian Christians did more than required – and more than expected! In verse eight, Paul clearly associates our willingness to give generously to the sincerity of our love for Christ. If we love Christ, then we love our fellow Christians and see our gifts and service to them as a gift or service to Christ Himself. The greatest example of giving was to be found in Christ. Though He was rich, He became poor so that we, through Him, might be rich. In verse nine we see the greatest exchange of wealth that has ever transpired. God put our sins on His Son and put his Son’s righteousness in us!

Prayer Emphasis: Examine your personal giving and your willingness to be generous. **Realize** that your generosity is one of the ways in which the sincerity of your faith may be measured. **Kingdom Policy Number Fifty-Seven:** *Be a good example by giving generously.*

Day 18: 2 Corinthians 8:12-24

“Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.” (2 Corinthians 8:24)

“The Proof of Your Love”

There are many good reasons to give, and Paul included some of them in the verses that we read today. Giving employs that which we have in the service of the One that we love. It is one of the ways we can put our faith into action and do what Christ has called us to do. Giving confirms that we have a willingness to obey God, even when it costs us something. Giving brings relief to those who are suffering and allows us to play a part in God’s provision for His people. Giving also allows God to be as gracious to us as we are to others. There is much truth to that old expression: “You cannot out give God!” Again, there are many good reasons for Christians to give, but the greatest reason is found in verse 19. There, Paul indicated that the willingness of the Christians to give generously to others brought “glory” to “the Lord Himself!” When we give, and especially when we give sacrificially, it honors the Lord and expresses our faith in Him. Being generous is the right thing to do – in the eyes of the Lord and in the eyes of men. When our giving is done right “in the sight of the Lord,” it will be done right in the “sight of men” (v. 21). When we give for the right reasons, and in the right way, God is honored and glorified by our efforts.

Prayer Emphasis: Keep the right reason in mind when you give. **Remember** that you cannot truly honor the Lord in your giving if you give in such a way that draws attention to yourself. **Kingdom Policy Number Fifty-Eight:** *Honor the Lord by being generous to others.*

Day 19: 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

“Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you, for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians...” (2 Corinthians 9:1-2a)

“Willingness”

Paul expressed his confidence that the church at Corinth would do the right thing about giving. He knew they were both willing and eager to help. Paul anticipated that their gift would be generous and that they would reap generously if they were willing to sow generously. He stated that it would be “superfluous” for him to even write to them about “ministering,” or giving, to help meet the needs of their fellow “saints.” Several translations use the word “superfluous” to describe what Paul was saying. It is just a fancy way of saying that Paul felt it unnecessary to even speak to them about being generous in their offerings. He felt that way because he knew their “willingness” to share with others. Some translations use the words “readiness” or “eagerness” to help us understand how these Corinthian believers felt about giving to meet the needs of others. Apparently, the Corinthian believers “previously promised” to give generously and to do so “as a matter of generosity,” refusing to see it as simply an “obligation” (v. 5). In verse 7 Paul reemphasized that we are not to give “grudgingly” or out of “necessity,” but as “cheerful” givers.

Prayer Emphasis: Be faithful to give to God and trust Him to keep His promise to be faithful to you. **Learn** the law of sowing and reaping and make it a foundational part of your relationship with Christ. **Kingdom Policy Number Fifty-Nine:** *Those who give generously will reap generously.*

Day 20: 2 Corinthians 10:1-11

“Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.” (2 Corinthians 10:11)

A Final Defense

I mentioned earlier that Paul left off speaking about the challenges to his apostleship to change the subject to the important matter of giving. With those instructions now completed, Paul was ready to deal, once again, with those in Corinth who questioned his ministry. Paul wanted to deal with this subject in the gentleness and meekness of Christ. Gentleness can often be misconstrued as weakness, and Paul did not want his opponents to think him weak. He fully expected that he was going to have some tough conversations with his critics when he arrived back in Corinth, and he was more than willing to do that if the issues could not be resolved prior to his arrival. Paul did not consider himself to be an eloquent or polished preacher. However, he did consider the word that he preached to have divine power over strongholds or anything else that set itself against God. More than anything, he wanted to help people be obedient to the cause of Christ. Paul desired that his teaching and preaching could be done in a spirit that would build the people up and not tear them down. However, he was ready to speak harshly, if necessary.

Prayer Emphasis: **Never** avoid confrontation when right or wrong is at risk. **Stand firm** for the truth – no matter how unpopular that decision may be. **Trust God’s Word** to do your fighting for you, and you will never have to fear anyone. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty:** *Seek to resolve any and all conflicts in accordance with God’s Word. Let God and his Word always be the final answer.*

Day 21: 2 Corinthians 10:12-18

“But ‘he who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’ For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.” (2 Corinthians 10:17-18)

The Only True Standard

Paul accused his challengers of being high-minded because they compared themselves to others rather than to God. In doing so, Paul considered his accusers to be “not wise” (v. 12). It is never wise for any human being to become the standard for our Christian experience. Paul wanted the Christians at Corinth to remember that he was the one who first reached out to them “with the gospel of Christ” (v. 14). While Paul’s boastful accusers were busy talking to the Corinthians about themselves, Paul had been busy talking to them about Christ. Paul urged the believers at Corinth to remember that what we have to say about ourselves carries very little weight against what God has to say about us. Paul loved the church at Corinth and was lovingly protective of the people there. He was a tool used by God to lead them into a saving relationship with Him, and he did not plan to stand by and watch them being led astray. In verse 17, Paul borrows a line from Jeremiah 9:24 as he urged his beloved brothers and sisters in Corinth to only “glory in the Lord.”

Prayer Emphasis: Learn to compare yourself only to Christ and you will always be growing. **Avoid** comparing yourself to others or you will limit your ability to grow spiritually. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty-One:** *Christ is to be the only standard by which we measure our faith and service.*

Day 22: 2 Corinthians 11:1-12

“I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one...” (2 Corinthians 11:8-9)

“Eminent Apostles”

Paul stated that he was “not at all inferior” to even the “most eminent apostles” (v. 5). In saying this, he was not boasting about his teaching or preaching ability but was simply stating that he was as qualified for the ministry as any of them. He admitted that he was “untrained in speech” but “not in knowledge” (v. 6). Perhaps verses seven through nine reveal the real issue about Paul that troubled the other preachers in Corinth. While they were allowing the church to support them financially, Paul had not asked for anything from them. The apostles were not wrong to accept support. Jesus clearly allowed His apostles to do so. The fact that Paul was “taking wages” from “other churches” is clear from our focus verse and teaches us that it is not wrong to do so today. Verse nine clearly states that he had received financial support from the believers at Macedonia. However, he had not solicited such wages or offerings for himself from the Corinthians. Later, in 2 Corinthians 12:13, we will see where Paul asked the church at Corinth to “forgive” him for not allowing them to support him financially. Paul’s policy among them had been to trust God to provide for his needs. This personal policy may have been the one thing that the other preachers liked least about Paul.

Prayer Emphasis: Remind yourself, daily, that the opinions of people can be very different than God’s opinion. **Live and act** according to what God *says* and not what people *think*. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty-Two:** *Humility is to be a trademark for all of God’s servants.*

Day 23: 2 Corinthians 11:13-21

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.” (2 Corinthians 11:13-14)

“False Apostles”

While Paul did not specifically identify those to whom he referred as “eminent apostles” (11:5), he seemed to have more to say about those that he considered to be “false apostles.” Some translations refer to these “deceitful workers” as “pseudo-apostles.” While the compound Greek word that is translated “false apostles” is found in only this one place in the New Testament, the first part of the word is found in three places. One of those places is Acts 6:13 where “false witnesses” were “set up” to bring forth damaging testimony that helped lead to the stoning of Stephen. The other two times that the “false” part of this word for “false apostles” is found in the Bible is in the Book of Revelation. There, in Revelation 2:2 and 21:8, this word is translated “liars” in the New King James Version as well as in many other translations of the Bible. Referring to Satan, these “false apostles” are said to be “his ministers” (v. 15). The word translated “ministers” there comes from a word that is often translated “servant” and even “deacon” in other places in the New Testament. It is obvious that these “false apostles” are committed to their evil master and willing to do anything they can to serve him by hindering the church!

Prayer Emphasis: Commit yourself to being a true minister of the true Lord! **Serve** Him as diligently as you possibly can – and then ask Him to help make it possible for you to serve Him even more! **Rely** on His power to overcome the work of the evil one. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty-Three:** *Those who are serious about serving Christ often meet with some serious competition!*

Day 24: 2 Corinthians 11:22-33

“From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.” (2 Corinthians 11:24)

The Marks of an Apostle

In this section of Scripture, Paul begins to offer some identifying characteristics of a true servant of Christ. Since others had boasted of their qualifications, Paul was willing to mention a few of his own. First, Paul referenced his Jewish heritage. He was a Jew and a descendant of Abraham. Second, he spoke of his personal ministry as a servant of Christ, stating that he worked harder and suffered more hardships than others. He then provided a detailed listing of some of the trials that he endured during his quest to preach the gospel of Christ to the world. A very successful pastor once reminded me that, “It’s probably not a ministry if it doesn’t cost you something!” It is apparent that Paul’s ministry had cost him dearly. He spoke of hard work, beatings, and imprisonments. You really have to stop and think about what “the other things” that are mentioned in verse 28 might have been. Five times Paul had received 39 lashes from the whip. Thirty-nine was the maximum number of strokes from a whip that was customarily given at any one time. Paul could clearly remember that he had been beaten with the whip five times! I am sure that every lash made a lasting impression on Paul, and that every one of them was noticed by our Lord!

Prayer Emphasis: Ask yourself if serving Christ has ever cost you anything. **Review** your personal sacrifices and **praise God** for every opportunity to be a witness of Christ’s sufferings. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty-Four:** *Suffering is still one of the most distinguishing characteristics of a Christian.*

Day 25: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

“...a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me...” (2 Corinthians 12:7)

Paul’s “Thorn in the Flesh”

Most scholars associate the near-death experience that Paul describes in 12:1-6 with Paul’s stoning in Lystra. In that story, we are told that Paul’s attackers “stoned Paul” and “dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead” (Acts 14:19). Scholars are also in general agreement that the “man” of whom Paul is speaking in verse two was himself. Whether it was at that time or at some other time in Paul’s life, the apostle clearly recalled seeing and hearing things that were “inexpressible” in human language or terms (v. 4). Although verse four only states that Paul “heard” things at that time, it is clear from the term “visions and revelations” that Paul also saw some things that day (v. 1)! Paul spoke of a “thorn” that was “given” to him (v. 7). Since this “thorn” was said to be “in the flesh” we are led to believe that it was some physical condition or problem. There has been much speculation as to what this thorn was. Some say it was a vision problem that was probably a result of the blinding light that temporarily blinded Paul when he met Christ on the road to Damascus. Others have different explanations. However, it is not as important for us to know *what* the thorn was as it is for us to know *why* it was sent. It was “given” to Paul to serve as a constant reminder that we are not to serve God in the strength of our flesh, or only according to our physical abilities.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for some difficult experience that led you to a stronger faith in Him. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty-Five:** *God’s strength begins where our strength ends.*

Day 26: 2 Corinthians 12:11-21

“I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.” (2 Corinthians 12:11)

More “Signs” of an Apostle

It was obvious that Paul felt foolish for “boasting” about his qualifications as an apostle. But since the Corinthians did not seem to be defending him against his accusers, he felt “compelled” to defend himself. However, his concluding comment about himself said it all: “I am nothing.” He wanted his readers, both then and now, to understand that he only mentioned his qualifications in an effort to defend his calling to the ministry. He then mentioned the “signs of an apostle” that “were accomplished among” them while Paul was ministering to them as well as “wonders” and “mighty deeds” that were performed by God’s power (v. 12). To Paul, these accompanying signs were all marks of one who was truly empowered as an ambassador for Christ! Paul was different from other apostles in only one way – he tried to be self-supporting and not a financial burden to the Corinthians. It is important to note that, for some reason, he felt he should apologize to the church for doing so. He restated his reason very clearly when he said he wanted them to know that his interest in them far exceeded any interest he had in their possessions.

Prayer Emphasis: Review your motivations for service today. **Remind** yourself that we should focus more on what we can give to the church than what we can receive from it. **Be faithful** in every way and God will always provide what you need. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty-Six:** *Let the presence and power of God be your defense against any who attack your ministry.*

Day 27: 2 Corinthians 13:1-14

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith...” (2 Corinthians 13:5)

In Closing

Paul reminded the believers at Corinth that he was about to make his third visit there, and they could then resolve the issues he just discussed with them in his letter. No doubt, he was speaking of the issues of those who were attacking his ministry qualifications as well as the issues of sin and division in the church. He encouraged his fellow Christians to “examine” themselves to see if they were truly “in the faith” (v. 5). He allowed them to examine his life closely and now they were to be willing to examine their own lives. They needed to be ready to defend themselves against the preaching and teaching that Paul was going to bring with him on his next visit. He wanted them to clearly understand that he had only one reason for coming to them, that being, to build them up and to strengthen their faith as believers. His closing comments encouraged them to “become complete” and “of good comfort.” He also desired that they “be of one mind” and that they “live in peace” (v. 11). Paul’s opening and closing remarks to this church provide insight as to how much he loved them and desired for them to enjoy God’s best. More than anything, he desired that “the grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the communion of **the Holy Spirit**” be with all of them (v. 14).

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** that the full power of the great and mighty Triune God would be upon us and evident in our church body. **Trust** God to be the only factor for success against our enemy. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty-Seven:** *Our triune God is with those who follow and serve Him.*

Day 28: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

“...you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.” (2 Corinthians 1:7)

A Letter of Encouragement

Satan desires to discourage Christians and churches, and to *keep* them discouraged. In this letter, Paul will speak of the need and nature of encouragement. As believers, we are commanded to encourage our fellow Christians no less than three times in this short letter (4:18; 5:11; 5:14). Paul wrote this letter to a new, small church that was in a very large and politically powerful city. Thessalonica was the capital city for its province and a center for business and trade. The word translated “church” (v. 1) is a word that means “called out assembly.” That is exactly what a church is. It is an assembly of people who have been called to come out of the world and to assemble in service for the Lord Jesus Christ. As such, we congregate on a regular basis and find encouragement as we meet. Since Paul used a letter to encourage this group of believers, we know that written communication is a good way for believers to encourage one another. In verse three, Paul complimented the believers at Thessalonica for the way they served Christ. This became yet another way that Paul chose to encourage this church. He complimented them on the way they had become “examples” to others.

Prayer Emphasis: **Look** for a way to **encourage** a fellow believer today. **Pray** that our church, by being fully committed to the Lord, would be an example for others to follow. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty-Eight:** *As a church, we encourage one another when we **congregate, communicate, and appreciate** one another for God’s glory!*

Day 29: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-9

“But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.” (1 Thessalonians 2:2)

Enough Courage to Share

If we are to encourage anyone else, then we must have courage within us. In verse two, Paul reminded the Christians at Thessalonica of the physical suffering and personal insults he experienced at Philippi. Despite their suffering, he and his ministry partners “were bold” enough to continue preaching “the gospel of God” to others. Paul could *encourage* others because he had *courage* in him. His source of encouragement was the boldness that came from having the Holy Spirit living in him. Another reason that Paul was able to be an encouragement to others was because he knew that his motives were sincere and unselfish. He clearly stated that his exhortations to encouragement were not based on “deceit” or impure motives (v. 3). He could be bold in encouraging the believers at Thessalonica because he knew that it was about *them* and not about *him*. A third reason for Paul’s boldness was the genuine concern that he had for his fellow believers. Paul spoke of being “gentle” among them, like “a nursing mother” would be to “her own children” (v. 7). When we become truly concerned about the spiritual welfare of others, we will become courageous in speaking to them about Christ.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that one of the results of the filling of the Holy Spirit was that the believers began to speak the Word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31). **Realize** that, as believers, we sometimes serve in a hostile environment. **Ask** God to give you the courage to **be a witness** for Him in good and bad times. **Kingdom Policy Number Sixty-Nine:** *It takes courage to be an encourager.*

Day 30: 1 Thessalonians 2:10-20

“You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you...” (1 Thessalonians 2:10)

Courage and Christian Character

Courage is to be a part of our Christian character. In verse 10, Paul reminded his readers of how he “behaved” while he was among them. He stated that he and his ministry partners acted “justly and blamelessly” in their ministry there. Paul’s Christian character would not allow him to do otherwise. How do *we* develop such Christian character? God has provided the answer in the verses we read today. First, Christian character comes from reading and believing God’s Word. The Thessalonians accepted the Bible as “the word of God” and not just “the word of men” (v. 13). Second, the Thessalonians were taught to anticipate opposition. Verse 14 reveals that these believers were already beginning to suffer some of the same kind of persecution that the church in Jerusalem had suffered. Verses 15 and 16 clearly spell out the severity of the opposition that these believers could expect. Last, the church was told they could anticipate great rewards for their suffering and service to Christ.

Prayer Emphasis: Display Christian character in your daily life. **Check** your motives for service and **seek** to be unselfish in what you do for the Lord. **Live** in a way that will result in spiritual rewards in heaven. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy:** *God’s Word is the basis for our Christian character and courage.*

Day 31: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

“...that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.”
(1 Thessalonians 3:3)

Problems and Prayers

Contrary to popular opinion, the Bible teaches that problems are good for us! Paul spoke of “afflictions” as if they were something “appointed” for all believers who decided to exercise their Christian character and become witnesses and encouragers to others. What does God want us to understand about problems? First, he wants us to realize that problems should draw us closer to Him (vs. 6-7). He also wants us to realize that problems help believers learn how to “stand fast in the Lord” (v. 8). It is wise for believers to see problems as divine appointments and not just as disastrous accidents. God can use problems to help us in many ways. One of the ways that problems can help us is to teach us about the importance of prayer. In verses 10-13, Paul spoke of praying *frequently* (“night and day”), *earnestly*, and *specifically*. Take a moment and review some of the specific things that Paul asked of God in his prayers for the believers at Thessalonica. He asked God to allow him to see them again (v. 10); that they might increase in their love for one another (v. 12); and that they might serve the Lord until His return (v. 13).

Prayer Emphasis: Pray about your problems and thank God for them! **Pray** specifically for someone else today and **let them know** that you have prayed for them. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy-One:** *Problems should draw us closer to God and help make our faith stronger.*

Day 32: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

“...we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God...” (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

Purity

The Thessalonian believers “received” instructions from Paul on how to be pleasing to God in their daily activities. The desire to please God should be the priority of every believer. Paul specifically encouraged them to “abstain from sexual immorality” (v. 3). This was not a commandment for some but for “each” of the believers at Thessalonica. This same commandment still stands for every believer today. We, like the Thessalonians, are to learn how to “possess” our “own vessel” (body) “in sanctification and honor” (v. 4). Our society does not make this easy for us. In fact, our society is constantly promoting sexual immorality and promiscuity. To “possess” our bodies would require that we first learn to control our thoughts. That is why, as believers, our actions are to be based on “honor” and not “passion” or “lust” (vs. 4-5). God created sex for marriage and there is no justification for sex outside of marriage. There were some severe consequences for those who chose to violate this command to abstain from sexual impurity. Paul reminded these Christians that God had not called them to “uncleanness” but to “holiness” (v. 7). Those who rejected these instructions were not rejecting Paul, or any other teacher, “but God” and “His Holy Spirit (v. 8).

Prayer Emphasis: Forsake any thought, deed, or relationship that has led, or is leading, you to be impure in your thoughts, words, or actions. **Pray** for strength to live a pure and holy life before God. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy-Two:** *Sexual immorality is destructive and always leads to spiritual chastening.*

Day 33: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-18

“...And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them...to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

What to Do While You Wait for the Rapture

There are some common-sense things that we should be doing while we wait for the rapture. One of them is to allow God to teach us how to live together in brotherly love. In fact, as we draw closer to the Lord’s return and the rapture of the church, we should love our fellow Christians more than ever before. Our love should be growing as we anticipate the Lord’s return. Another thing that we should be doing as we wait for the rapture is to be growing in our knowledge of God’s Word and its promises. In verses 13-17, Paul specifically discusses the promise of the resurrection of our bodies and the reunion with those who have gone to heaven before us. What a blessed day it will be when we hear that trumpet sound and see the Lord descending from heaven with a shout. Whether resurrected or raptured, all of God’s children will be physically taken from this world to a place where we will be reunited. Most importantly, we will be “with the Lord” (v. 17). Paul clearly says that we are to “comfort one another with these words” (v. 18).

Prayer Emphasis: Share your faith in the rapture and resurrection with someone. **Seek** a way to bring this blessed promise up in a conversation. **Encourage** someone who has lost a loved one. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy-Three:** *The promise of the Lord’s return and the rapture of the church should be a source of comfort and encouragement to God’s people.*

Day 34: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

“But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2)

Preparing for Christ’s Return

No matter what you may hear from others, God clearly teaches that the “day of the Lord” will come “as a thief in the night.” This means that our Lord’s return for His church will come at a time when we might least expect it. Paul realized that it was senseless to write to this church about “the times and the seasons” because the Thessalonians had already been taught that the Lord’s return would only be announced by the trumpet and shout that will be heard only at the moment of His coming. Outside of the Word of God’s promises, there will be no other warning concerning this event. Many people were saying many things about the Lord’s return, so Paul wanted all believers, then and now, to know the truth about it so that they would not let that “Day” “overtake” them “as a thief” (v. 4). Some translations use the word “surprised” in that verse. As Christians, we should be expecting the Lord’s return because “we are not” living in “darkness” (v. 5). It is no secret to us that the Lord has promised to return to this earth to take His own to be with Him. Because of our knowledge of the Lord’s return, we should “watch” or be alert and prepared for this event (v. 6). This language implies that we should be like guards on sentry duty who refuse to fall asleep while at their post. We are to “comfort...and edify (build up) one another” in our day just like the believers at Thessalonica were obviously doing then (v. 11).

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that the Day of the Lord could come at any time and live expectantly. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy-Four:** *The Lord’s imminent coming should encourage us to encourage others.*

Day 35: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

“I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” (1 Thessalonians 5:27-28)

Some Final Requests

As his letter draws to a close, Paul begins to list some final requests for these believers. Sometimes what is most important to us is found in the last words that we share with others. In his closing remarks, Paul urged his fellow believers to show appreciation to those who labored among them and taught them the Word of God. He desired that they be at peace with one another and that they not allow any division in the church. He urged them to warn the unruly, to comfort those in need of comfort, to support one another, and to exhibit patience in the way they ministered to one another. These acts were not to be done for their fellow believers only, but for everyone. Their lives were to be filled with rejoicing. They were to be praying constantly and showing appreciation to God for everything in life, whether it was perceived to be good or bad. They were never to quench the Spirit of God or to “despise” preaching (v. 20). To “despise” preaching was a sign of spiritual immaturity and disobedience. They were to do these things with the full awareness that God is faithful to bless His children. This letter was to be read by all Christians – and that is why we read it now. Paul’s final admonition was, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen” (v. 28).

Prayer Emphasis: Commit to reading God’s Word and **ask** God to make His presence real and powerful in your life. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy-Five:** *It takes God’s grace for believers to live for God’s glory.*

Day 36: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians...” (2 Thessalonians 1:1)

Paul & Silas

Just like the first letter to the church at Thessalonica, this second letter identifies the senders to be “Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.” Silvanus was the name of a man who is better known to us as Silas. Silas is first introduced to us in Acts 15:22 where he was referred to as one of the “leading men” in the early church at Jerusalem. He was also considered a prophet (Acts 15:32). These things made this man a wise choice as a replacement for Barnabas as Paul’s ministry partner. He, along with Timothy, had just returned from delivering the first letter to this church and reported to Paul that there were some questions about some of the issues addressed in the first letter. This second letter was written as a follow-up to the first. First, Paul expressed his thanksgiving for these Christians, for their growing faith, and for the love they had for one another. He stated that he had praised them to other churches because of their patience, faith, and for the way they endured trials and persecution. In verses five through ten, Paul encourages these believers to continue to persevere. He closes his opening remarks with a reminder that he is praying for them, asking God to empower them to do His work, and that they would glorify God in all that they did.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray and **ask** God to bless the ministers and the ministries of your church and churches everywhere. **Encourage** someone who has partnered with you in ministry and **express** your appreciation to them for their service to the Lord. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy-Six:** *Always express appreciation to, and for, your fellow workers in the Lord.*

Day 37: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled...” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2a)

Correcting Some Misconceptions

This is a very important chapter in this letter and a very important chapter in the New Testament. While in Thessalonica, Paul instructed the church from the Old Testament concerning the day of the Lord. The Old Testament presents this as a time when God will bring judgment upon unbelievers and blessings on believers. Most believe this period will begin immediately after the rapture and will include the Tribulation period and the Millennium. In his first letter, Paul mentioned the day of the Lord coming suddenly, and without forewarning. Because of the persecutions they were facing, some of these young believers thought they had possibly missed the rapture and were now in the time of judgment. Paul wrote to ease their minds and to reassure them that, although the day of the Lord was near, it had not already come. He encouraged them to not be deceived by anyone who was teaching such things, and further explained some of the things that had to happen prior to the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the rapture of the church. He assured them that they had not missed the rapture and that the trials and persecutions they were experiencing were not part of the final judgment of God.

Prayer Emphasis: Prepare yourself to give valid, biblical answers to the questions that people have about end times. **Provide** biblical answers from God’s Word and **encourage** your friends and family to accept Christ now. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy-Seven:** *What the Bible teaches about the last days can be easily misunderstood, even by God’s people.*

Day 38: 2 Thessalonians 2:9-17

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” (2 Thessalonians 2:15)

“Stand Fast”

After informing the Thessalonian believers about “the coming of the lawless one” and “the working of Satan” that will take place in the end times, Paul explained why those who were left behind after the rapture will believe the “lying wonders” of the Antichrist (v. 9). Even though Paul states they will “believe the lie,” he reminds his readers that those who miss the rapture will do so, not because they believed a lie, but because they “did not believe the truth” (vs. 11-12). Paul’s comments on the day of the Lord were then followed by some teaching on how to live for Christ in our current times. The Thessalonians were a source of great joy to Paul and his ministry partners, and he did not hesitate to tell them so. He stated that he felt it was he who was “bound to give thanks to God” for them and encouraged them to “stand fast” and to “hold the traditions which” they “were taught” (vs. 13-15). He prayed that the Lord would “comfort” their “hearts” and “establish” them “in every good word and work” (vs. 16-17).

Prayer Emphasis: Allow God to direct your heart to the point that His wonderful love will be expressed in your own life. **Pray** for some fellow church member today and “comfort” their heart by speaking a good word to them or doing a good work for them. Be careful to **be obedient** to all that God commands you. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy-Eight:** *Committed Christians stand fast in doctrine and in their deeds.*

Day 39: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-9

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,” (2 Thessalonians 3:1)

A Command to Pray

The word “finally” in this closing chapter indicates that Paul is ready to talk to his readers about another matter that was very important to him. We often hear from people who have a prayer *request*, but it certainly appears to me that Paul, in his closing of his letter to the Thessalonians, was really giving them a prayer *command* when he said, “Finally, brethren, pray for us.” He was very specific about his desire for them to pray for him and his ministry partners, and he was also specific about what he wanted them to pray. His desire was that they pray “that the word of the Lord may run swiftly” and that the word “be glorified.” Some translations use words like “spread rapidly” or “spread quickly” to explain how Paul was telling these people to pray. One great translation has Paul asking the Thessalonians to pray “that the word of the Lord may have free course.” The word that is translated “glorified” in the NKJV and other translations is translated “honored” in several translations.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for those who preach the gospel to others, especially for those who carry the gospel to foreign countries. **Pray** specifically that the word of God would “run swiftly” or “spread rapidly” to those who desperately need to hear it. **Kingdom Policy Number Seventy-Nine:** *Christians should be faithful to pray for one another and for the gospel of Christ to be spread to lost souls everywhere.*

Day 40: 2 Thessalonians 3:10-18

“But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.” (2 Thessalonians 3:13)

“Do Not Grow Weary”

Paul, once again, is closing a letter and packing the final page with vital requests and information. He commands the believers at Thessalonica to “withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly” (v. 6). The term “brother” causes us to understand that there are some believers who, at least at times, are not living for the Lord or in accordance with biblical teaching. The word “every” clearly indicates that we are not to make exceptions for those that we like more than others. Paul also told them that the church was not responsible to give financial assistance to those who could work but would not work. Those who could work, but would not, should be encouraged to return to the work force so that they could provide for themselves. Then Paul encouraged these believers to “not grow weary in doing good.” We do, sometimes, grow weary *from* doing what is right and good for God and our fellow man, but we should not grow weary *of* it. Paul’s statement, “If *anyone* does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him” clearly commands us not to make exceptions as to accepting disorderly behavior from anyone (v. 14). Those who would not heed these warnings and teachings were to be avoided. However, they were not to be treated “as an enemy” but admonished “as a brother” (v. 15).

Prayer Emphasis: Encourage your fellow believers on a regular basis and never grow weary of doing so. **Kingdom Policy Number Eighty:** *Never grow weary of helping others to never grow weary of helping others!* Thank you for reading through these books of the Bible with us and for praying with us daily. If we can minister to you in any way, please contact us at office@seminolebc.com or at 850-562-8069