

## WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

December 20, 2015

*Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!*

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Prelude

Worship Theme

Christ is the Messenger

Malachi 3:1-2: "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap."

**God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross** Ps. 67:3-5

+We Adore Him

Hymn #195, "Joy To The World!"

*Based on Psalm 98*

We Confess Our Sin

O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps the covenant of love with all who trust You and obey Your commands: we have sinned and done wrong. We have turned away from Your commands and laws. We have not listened to Your servants- the prophets and apostles, and especially to Your Son, our Lord. We have not lived for Your glory. We are full of shame.

O Lord, You are merciful and forgiving- forgive us now our sins! For Your glory, have mercy on us! O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! Your church and Your people bear Your name. Extend to us the assurance of having been forgiven. Possess us with sweet peace. Cause us to rejoice again in You. Thank You, through Jesus Christ. Amen!

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #196, "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

**God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication** Mt. 6:33-34

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #199, "See, Amid The Winter Snow"

**God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship**

Jn. 6:48-51

We Read His Word

Sermon

\*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #600, "He Leadeth Me"

**God Blesses us in the Benediction**

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

\*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

## When God's People Are Your Treasure, Pt. 3

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

Study Notes for November 22, 2015

### I. Introduction: A Most Incredible Command, Mt. 9:13

### II. When God's People Are Your Treasure, 1 Thes. 3:1-13.

- A. The Sacrifice Willingly Endured, v. 1.
- B. The Qualified Minister, v. 2a.
- C. The Ministry, vv. 2b, 5b, 8b.

#### D. The Concern, vv. 3-4.

##### 1. Recall, **THE** battle ground in the fall of man revolved around two issues concerning our faith...

- a. Will you live in light of God's authority and so His word (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1)?...
- b. Will you hold on to the goodness of God when life, Satan, and flawed human reasoning suggest otherwise (Gen. 3:4-5)?...

##### 2. This quite naturally leads us to **THE** underlying concern, v. 3a.

- a. You know what was behind this statement! Paul came to Thessalonica and shared the most amazing message any human ear could hear...
- b. What ought we therefore to expect from life now that we are children of God? The most natural answer from a mortal mind is: Ease of days!
- c. YET look at the passage before us. Paul said, *"I'm writing to strengthen your faith..."*

-so that no man **may be disturbed**: σαίνω (*sainō*)

-so that no man may be disturbed **by these afflictions**: θλίψις (*thlipsis*)

...in a sinful world, life in Christ will have this in abundance (Acts 14:21-22; 2 Cor. 8:1-2; Jam. 1:27b; Jn. 16:33b; 2 Tim. 3:12)...

Of this Earnest Best wrote, "Paul is not thinking of a period of persecution which will pass and the church return to normality; normality is persecution." (*Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 135.)

#### \*Point

- 1. In light of this, do you understand the issue here? What Paul promised in the gospel and what the Thessalonians received as a result of trusting God were incongruous to the mortal mind! The "promise" didn't match what happened in reality. Accordingly, the Thessalonians at this time were at grave risk of being "violently shaken to the core in their inner man"!
- 2. Illustration: This was the question that haunted John the Baptizer when he was in prison (Mt. 11:2-3)...

### 3. Paul's Response to the Underlying Concern, vv. 3b-4.

**Verse 3b:** "...for you yourselves know that **we have been destined for this.**"

The word for "destined" is κείμαι (*keimai*) which in Paul's day was used of "laying things down in a particular place or order." It therefore is an active word indicating that things are as the mover or placer- in this case, God- intends them to be! For example, the term is used of (1) the placement of a city, Mt. 5:14 or (2) the place and so the permanence of the throne of God in heaven, Rev. 4:2.

Leon Morris wrote, speaking of this word, "There is a sense of immovability about it, of unchangeable divine appointment. Affliction, then, is no accident, but an integral part of the life of the Christian (cf. John 16:33; Acts 14:22)." (*1 and 2 Thessalonians*, TNTC, p. 71)

...accordingly, Paul's response to the questions we just raised is to say, "*Family of God, you are mistaken! God didn't allow the sufferings which at times seem so overwhelming... GOD ORDAINED THEM!*" In fact, Paul further says that this was a major part of the gospel message he brought with him when first he shared the gospel in Thessalonica...

**Verse 4:** "For indeed when we were with you, we *kept telling you in advance* that we were going to suffer affliction; **and so it came to pass**, as you know."

Far from our trials and difficulties being something out of the control of God, the Lord is on the throne "bringing to pass" His sovereign, immutable, and unthwartable will for us in Christ!

At first blush I hope you see the security in this statement! Your God is not a hand-wringing deity who sits in the heavens and is easily thwarted by evil man and/or surprised by Satan! That's Paul's message here: "*Family of God! You are right where a good and sovereign God has placed you! And so where you are is NOT a mistake! Accordingly, don't shrink back in your faith! But continue to believe/trust/rely upon God!*"

**a. How do we square the gospel/"good news" with ordained suffering in this life?**

**b. From Scripture we glean Two Important Truths...**

1. **First, you must see that everything that is occurring in this life is NOT the end of God's plan, BUT simply part of a bigger purpose!**

a. Illustration: Hair Cut

b. Christian! What is God's plan? And more importantly, when will it be consummated (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10, 13; Rev. 21:1-5a)?

G. K. Beale wrote, "Too often Christians who suffer do not view their suffering within a redemptive-historical context. They may rightly see their suffering as a test of their individual faith and as something through which they need to endure in order to grow in their faith. When, however, we are able to view our afflictions through a wide-angle lens as part of the great trial that was prophesied to come upon God's people at the end, our endurance takes on more significance, since it identifies us with Jesus'... own victorious forbearance in suffering, climaxed by his death and resurrection. We become identified with the redemptive-historical story line of Scripture and, in particular, with the great messianic victory over evil, which will be concluded at the second coming." (*1-2 Thessalonians*, p. 100)

2. **Secondly, you must see that every bitter providence ordained by God is for the perfecting of our faith. In the words of Job, anyone will follow a God who sends blessing and ease... but will they worship a God who in preparing them for glory slaps them on the cheek (cf. 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12; Jam. 1:2-3; Rom. 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 4:16-18)?**

Samuel Rutherford wrote, "You will find in Christianity, that God aims, in all His dealing with His children, to bring them to a high contempt of, and deadly feud with the world, and that we set a high price upon Christ. God wants us to think that Christ is one who cannot be bought with gold, and he wants us to believe that He is well worth fighting for. And for no other cause does the Lord withdraw from you the childish toys and the earthly delights that He gives to others, but that He may have you wholly for Himself. Therefore, when you are in the furnace, think of the Lord, as of one who comes to woo you in marriage. He seeks His answer of you in affliction, to see if you will say, 'Even so I take Him.'" (Samuel Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 70)

The Scottish minister, John Watson, wrote, "This world is the school wherein we are trained for the world to come. It is our experience of the earthly home which fits us for the heavenly family... The occupations of this life are the servants of the soul, the suffering of this life is its discipline. The men who have made the most splendid progress in spiritual things are those who have devoted the resources of this world to the service of the soul... It remains with us to choose whether we shall lay the emphasis on the temporal or the eternal, and in the last issue this is a question of sight versus faith. He who walks by sight will choose what is seen, and he who walks by faith, what is unseen, and the reward will be according to the choice." (*The Eternity of the Unseen*, pp. 356, 357)

#### **\*Where We Live**

1. With all of this in mind, what ought to be **Our Concern** as we endeavor to minister to The Treasures of God?
2. What is the tool that Paul gives us here to address this ministry?

Rutherford wrote, "If ye knew the mind of the glorified in heaven, they think heaven came to their hand at an easy market, when they have got it for threescore or fourscore years wrestling with God. When ye are come thither, ye shall think, 'All I did, in respect of my rich reward, now enjoyed of free grace, was too little.'" (*Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, Letter X, p. 51)