

# Worthy of God

October 2, 2016 ~ 1 Thessalonians 2.1-12

## Issues in Thessalonica Church

- ❖ Shunning sermon of July was from **2 Th 3**
  - ✧ Problems were 1) laziness, 2) busybodies, 3) sexual immorality, 4) rebellion
- ❖ I hadn't covered anything from **1 Th 2**
  - ✧ But I see 2 potential issues Paul hints at in this chapter
    1. He calls them brethren in **ch1** & (**v1**) but questions faith of some: **v10** and **v13**
      - a. 3 times he repeats phrase "gospel of God" (**v2, 8, and 9**)
    2. But stronger are these in **v1, 2, 5, 9, 10, and 11** ("you know", and "witnesses")
  - ✧ He's strongly urging them to remember his time with them
    - ✧ It seems some – maybe many – were questioning everything
    - ✧ This isn't entirely surprising / Paul wasn't with them very long

## A Few Tumultuous Weeks in Thessalonica

- ❖ Paul, Silas, and Timothy's time in Thessalonica was brief and violent (**Acts 17.1-13**)
  - ✧ Paul and Silas were only there a few weeks (**v2**)
    - ✧ Perhaps Timothy stayed longer but not by much
  - ✧ Some Jews were envious and gathered a mob (**v5**)
  - ✧ They attacked the home of Jason where they were staying (**v5**)
  - ✧ Paul and Silas were sent to Berea by night (**v10**)
  - ✧ Jews from Thessalonica came and stirred up crowds (**v13**)

## Character of the Evangelists

- ❖ **v10** ~ "devoutly", "justly", "blamelessly"
  - ✧ As with teaching anything, much content is "caught", not "taught"
- ❖ Paul stresses his own character as an example for them to follow
  - ✧ He insists they "are witnesses, and God also" that such is true

## Work of the Evangelists

- ❖ **v11** ~ "exhorted", "comforted", "charged"
  - ✧ Paul reminds them that he treated them as a father would
- ❖ Months have passed / And that was just a few tumultuous weeks
  - ✧ Paul must call the events to their minds

**Xition: Message today not just about Paul or the Thessalonians**

## Our Topic Today Broader than Paul and the Thessalonians

- ❖ Today's message is all about **v12** and others like it
  - ✧ **Read v11b-12** ~ "we charged every one of you .. walk worthy of God .. and glory"
- ❖ "What were the Thessalonians supposed to do to fulfill this command?"
- ❖ "What are we supposed to do to fulfill this command?"
- ❖ "We'll get our answer from Scripture of course – not our own imaginations"

## Use of the Word **Worthy**

- ❖ The word "**worthy**" occurs in the NKJV 50 times
  - ✧ Versions differ in how certain words are translated / But concept applies
  - ✧ We may miss some verses because a synonym of "**worthy**" was used
  - ✧ But our analysis is still sound / Broad enough / Not comprehensive
- ❖ The phrase "**worthy of God**" occurs only twice, here and in **3 John**
  - ✧ But variants exist ~ Jesus said: "bear fruits **w of repentance**", "not **w of Me**", "**w to attain that age**", "**w to escape**"
  - ✧ We also read in epistles: "counted **w to suffer**", "**w of the saints**", "**w of the calling**", "**w of the gospel**", "**w of the Lord**"

## Meaning of the Word **Worthy**

- ❖ Dictionary: "**deserving effort, attention, or respect**"
  - ✧ "**having or showing qualities or abilities that merit recognition in specified way**"
  - ✧ "**good enough; suitable**"
  - ✧ Synonyms are: righteous, good, moral, upright, deserve, merit, entitled to
- ❖ **III: Saving Private Ryan** ~ Movie premise / "**Earn it.**" / "**Tell me I'm a good man.**"
  - ✧ Sole Survivor Policy / Sullivan brothers incident (5 died on Juneau Nov 1942)
  - ✧ **Read Rom 5.7** ~ "**.. scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.**"

## Concerns About the Word **Worthy**

- ❖ Use of the word worthy in the Bible has sometimes concerned me
  - ✧ E.g., Jesus warning of coming persecution in **Luke 21.36**, "**Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.**" (*earning salvation?*)
  - ✧ E.g., Or as in **2 Th 1.11**, "**that our God would count you worthy of this calling**"
  - ✧ I was seeking a single definition of the word and there isn't one

## Xition: Let's Consider Various Uses of "**Worthy**"

## Biblical Uses of **Worthy** Differ

- ❖ Read Psalm 14.2-3 ~ “The Lord looks .. No, Not one.”
- ❖ Read Rev 5.1-4 ~ “And I saw in the .. or to look at it.”
  - ✧ These verses explain that no one is truly worthy (e.g., righteous)
  - ✧ Thus my concerns about what Jesus said in Luke
- ❖ “**Worthy**” is just a word / It’s used in a variety of ways
  - ✧ Note context: subject, object, action or scope, time (past, present, future)
- ❖ “**Worthy**” in Rev 5 is obviously highest definition / absolute righteousness
  - ✧ But other uses aren’t reflective of perfect righteousness / but comparative
    - ◇ DCC phrase ~ “**It’s not about perfection, it’s about direction.**”
  - ✧ Christ justifies us / The Holy Spirit guides us (*but how well do we follow?*)

## “So How Do We Measure Worthiness?”

- ❖ What does it mean that we’re to “walk worthy of God”?
- ❖ Treatment of, or service towards, fellow believers
  - ✧ Read Rom 16.1-2 ~ “I commend to you Phoebe .. and of myself also.”
- ❖ Character we’re to embrace / evince
  - ✧ Read Eph 4.1-3 ~ “I, therefore, the prisoner .. bond of peace.”
    - ◇ Humility / gentleness / patience / unity / (tolerance)
  - ✧ Read Phi 1.27-30 ~ “Only let your conduct .. hear is in me.”
    - ◇ Unity / tenacious / courageous / endure suffering
  - ✧ Read Col 1.9-12 ~ “For this reason .. saints in the light.”
    - ◇ Good works / studying / patience / longsuffering / joyful / thankful
  - ✧ Earlier comments c/Thessalonians 1) work, 2) mind biz, 3) stay pure, 4) submit

- Only Jesus is Worthy to Save / Only God is Worthy to be Worshipped
- But we are urged by Paul to be worthy of our calling / our God / our Lord
- From day to day we are not all equally worthy / God knows
- “**James Ryan**” owed his life to the men who saved him / A debt he couldn’t repay
- We owe our lives to the God Who saved us / A debt we can never repay

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen \*pause\* Go in peace . . .