

Perseverance in Suffering – 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5 – March 1st, 2020

- I want to talk with you today about perseverance in suffering specifically concerning, that which makes the trials of life bearable.
- By that I mean, why it is, and how it is, that we are able to bear up under the persecutions and trials, in our lives as Christians.
- In our text today, the Apostle Paul will provide us with two principals of paramount importance when it comes to our suffering.

1. Trials produce perseverance (Verses 1-3)

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.

- It's believed that a year has gone by since Paul's first letter and during that time, there were those confusing the church there.
- They had gone as far as forging a letter from Paul saying the Tribulation had already begun as evidenced by the persecution.
- Sadly, it seems to have worked by virtue of Paul not mentioning their hope as he did in his first letter, only their faith and love.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 - 2 We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. 3 We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

- It seems that in a period of just one year, the new believers there in Thessalonica had lost hope in the soon return of the Lord.
- The question becomes one of what happened and the answer is that the enemy caused confusion and robbed them of hope.
- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most successful strategies of Satan, it would have to be stealing our hope.

John 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

2. Trials purify faith (Verses 4-5)

4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

- Here Paul says their suffering is evidence to the contrary, such that, it proves that God's ways are right in counting us worthy.
- In other words, the fiery trials and tribulations prove us as they purify us preparing us for the kingdom of God for all of eternity.
- This because the being "counted worthy" carries with it the idea of a judicial decree, as Christ's worthiness is accounted to us.

Romans 8:18 - For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

1 Peter 4:12-13 - 12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Bible Prophecy Update – March 1st, 2020

- For today's update, I sense from the Lord that I would be grossly remiss were I not to address the spread of the Coronavirus.
- If you're reading the same news feeds that I am, and I suspect that you are, it's abundantly clear that this is causing much fear.
- Just the headlines alone foretell a frightening tale of what may be coming in the weeks and months ahead. Here's just a few:

- World must prepare for 'potential pandemic': WHO
- China faces the possibility of a financial crisis, which would send a shockwave through the world
- China postpones parliament amid coronavirus battle
- Coronavirus wipes out \$1.7 trillion in US stock market value in two days
- 10-year Treasury yield hits record low as coronavirus sends investors fleeing to safety
- Coronavirus fears cause mortgage rates to plunge to 8-year low
- White House struggles to contain public alarm over coronavirus
- San Francisco declares state of emergency over coronavirus
- Will coronavirus spread in the US? It's not 'if' but 'when,' CDC says.
- CDC urges Americans to prepare for coronavirus outbreak: 'This might be bad'
- 'Severe disruption to everyday life': CDC warns Americans of coronavirus
- CDC outlines what closing schools, businesses would look like in a pandemic
- Hong Kong government extends school suspension amid coronavirus outbreak
- Hong Kong's construction industry grinds to halt, and union says coronavirus has left 50,000 workers jobless
- 'The City Has Been Annihilated': South Korea's Coronavirus Epicenter Is a Virtual Ghost Town
- US-South Korea military exercises expected to be scaled back due to coronavirus
- Olympics officials wrestle with threat of coronavirus
- Israel Election: Special Polling Stations Set for Coronavirus Patients
- In unprecedented move, Israelis advised to avoid all travel over virus fears
- El Al official warns airline could go under 'in weeks' due to coronavirus
- No one in Hawaii has been tested for coronavirus as health officials wait for kits from CDC (Star Advertiser)

- This is a textbook case of when you don't know turn to that which you can know namely, the Word of God and God of the Word.
- We know that the Bible says mankind will be capable of destroying all life vis-à-vis nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.
- So much so, were it not for God himself intervening, no one would survive this unparalleled and unequalled global catastrophe.

Matthew 24:21–22 - 21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. 22 “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was the greatest concern over the Coronavirus I would have to say that it's fear and panic.
- This because, God has not given us a spirit of fear. To be full of fear is to have no faith such that, I'm either full of fear or faith.
- In other words, I'll be full of fear when I have no faith that God is in control. As one said it, “God rules over all and over rules all.”

- I would submit that everything happening in the world today, is exactly what we were told would happen at the time of the end.
- Replete throughout the pages of Bible prophecy are dire warnings about catastrophic events that come upon the whole earth.
- Namely, that of famines, diseases, pestilences, wars, natural disasters, economic collapse, and even heart failure from the fear.

Luke 21:25–28 - 25 “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

- This is why we do these weekly prophecy updates and end with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the simple ABC's of Salvation.
- The Gospel, or good news is that Jesus was crucified, buried, rose again on the third day, and is coming back for us one day.

The ABC's of Salvation

- The A is for Admit you're a sinner and your need for the Savior, (Romans 3:10, 23 – 6:23).
- The B is for Believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and God raised Him from the dead, (Romans 10:9-10).
- The C is for Call upon the name of the Lord and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, (Romans 10:9-10, 13).