

Prayer in Light of Christ's 2nd Coming

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[0:00] Second Thessalonians, turn with me there as we read our scripture reading for this evening. We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more.

! And the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches, we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 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.

God is just. He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled and to us as well.

This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

[1:07] They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

On the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you because you believed our testimony to you.

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you that our God may count you worthy of his calling and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you in him according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you ready for Christ's second coming? Several weeks ago now, we saw the glory and the terror of Christ's second coming from 2 Thessalonians.

[2:22] The Lord will be revealed with blazing fire and with the angels of his power. And he will punish the wicked with everlasting destruction and his coming will shut them out of his glory.

So the day is coming. Are you ready for it? If you have not believed the testimony that verse 10 talks about.

If you have not kissed the sun. If you have not surrendered yourself to that coming king, then you are not ready. You're not ready at all for that day.

And that was the message from 2 Thessalonians the last time we preached from this book. If you aren't ready, get ready. The coming of the Lord is too great.

It is too glorious. It is too powerful. It is too terrible to be caught unprepared. And so when God presses the glory of that day home into your heart, as the people of God, we should ask the simple question of how do we get ready for that day?

[3:43] How do we prepare ourselves for that day? Well, Paul in just these last two verses of this chapter, 11 and 12, he doesn't so much tell us exactly what we should do, but instead he shows us.

He tells us what he does. He shows us what he does in light of Christ's coming. Paul prays. Paul prays. And we want to look at Paul's prayer tonight and learn three lessons from it about how to pray in light of Christ's second coming.

So in verses 11 and 12, we have three lessons. And the first lesson is easy enough. It is you should pray in light of Christ's second coming.

You should pray in light of Christ's second coming. So look at verse 11. With this in mind, we constantly pray.

Well, with what in mind? That's the question. What is he talking about? Well, with everything that he said before, with Christ's second coming in mind, with the judgment, with the glory of his coming, with the justice, the unveiling of Jesus, the terrible punishment of the wicked, the glory that is waiting, the righteous, with all of that, with that whole package in mind, Paul says, I pray.

[5:04] So Christ's second coming infected Paul's prayer life. It changed. It determined. It shaped how Paul prayed.

You see, it's so easy for us to get caught up in this world and to have this world determine and shape how we pray. We easily forget that this world is coming to a very abrupt end.

And I think it shows something of our unbelief that we don't pray more in line and light of Christ's second coming. It doesn't figure into our prayer life very much.

At least as I look in sort of the chronicles of my prayer life, I don't see the second coming coming back into my prayer life. And I think that speaks to something of our unbelief.

We're like children on a long road trip to Walt Disney World, and all we can ask for so much of the time is more gas station goodies. I want some more of those little things as if the car ride was the important thing.

[6:21] And brothers and sisters, we are in the driveway to Disney World. We are on the approach to heaven. We are in the last days.

And so now is not the time to be asking for more gas station goodies. You would think that a child who thought the road trip to Disney World was the great part and who was caught up in that, you would think that child was very weird and very strange, and you would be right.

But when we pray like this world is the place to be, where this world is heaven, where if I can get it now, then I can enjoy it now, but if I can't get it now, then I'll never enjoy it.

If we act like this world is our best life now, and we pray like that, it shows our extreme unbelief in Christ's second coming.

So should you pray like this is your best life now? Well, if this is your best life now, then you must be going to hell. But heaven is your home.

[7:29] Heaven is your home. And so the second coming, the unveiling of Jesus Christ, will be the end of this world, and it will be the beginning of everlasting, eternal life. It will be eternal life's first day.

And so that day, Paul says, and Paul shows us, should infect how we pray. So you will stand before God. You will stand before God, and you will be judged.

And your children will stand before God. And your children will be judged. And everything hidden will be revealed.

And that day should make us pray differently. Don't you think so? If we really believed that glorious coming, and those things were going to happen, we would pray differently.

You would pray differently about your brothers and sisters in the family of God. We pray for all sorts of things here. We pray for jobs, and we pray for health, and we pray for houses to be sold, and all sorts of things.

[8:40] And those are important. Those are good. I'm not being insensitive at all. But Jesus is coming. And if a person has a job or not now, and if a person sells his house now or not, and if a person has cancer or not now, it really pales in insignificance, into insignificance, when you think of the glory of that day.

Because when you're standing before God, and if you are ready or if you're not ready, that has far more weight than whether you're sick or healthy.

And so, if we were thinking about the second coming, we would pray for our brothers and sisters in light of that. Will they be ready? Will they persevere to the end?

He's already talked about that. If you do not persevere to the end, you will not be counted worthy of the kingdom of God. So will they be counted worthy? That day, in Paul's thinking, is the all-important day.

And so we should pray like it. Shouldn't that day factor into how you pray for your children? Above my desk in my study, there is a picture of Phoebe, my four-year-old.

[10:00] And Phoebe will be there on that last day. As I was sitting preparing this message, I was thinking of that. Phoebe will be there on that last day. Phoebe will see the glory of Christ coming.

And she will be judged on that day. She will see Christ coming with the angels of His power. And she will see the wicked shut out. And that day makes me pray differently for my children.

Because, you know, basketball games, and school dances, and grades, and jobs, and all the important things of our children's lives, are nothing compared to that day.

And again, I'm not being insensitive, but I'm saying, where does the Scripture put its weight? It's nothing compared to that day. Parents, if you love your kids at all, you will pray for them in light of

that second coming.

that day will seal forever their everlasting destiny. So what will your children say to you on that day if that is the beginning of their hell and you didn't pray for them?

[11:14] What will they say to you on that day? Mom, Dad, you said you love me, but you didn't pray for me? Mom, Dad, you took such care that I would have clothes and that I would have health care and I would have food and the proper diet and I would have all these things, but you didn't look after my soul?

You cared about my body, but you didn't care about my soul. And you were so careful about all those things and you worked hard for me. You worked hard to provide for me so that I could go to school, so that I could go to college, so that I could get a good job.

And those things were important, but you didn't pray for me. Mom and Dad, you said you loved me, but you didn't pray for me, and now here I am.

And fathers and mothers, that day should have all-powerful effect on how you pray for your children today. If that day is a nightmare for them, let it be a nightmare despite your prayers.

Let your prayers be echoing in their ears, not the deafening silence of your prayerlessness. That last day influenced, it infected Paul's prayer life.

[12:35] And that's why he said, we pray constantly. We pray constantly for you in light of that day. Why constantly, Paul? He would say, because I love you.

I love them. And love is never satisfied with one act of love. Prayer is an act of love. When you pray for someone, you are showing them, you are showing God that you love them.

And love is never satisfied with one act of love. There must be more. And so one prayer is never enough. So we pray constantly for them. So if you love your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, if you love your brothers and sisters at Grace Fellowship Church, the point is that you will pray constantly for them.

If you love your children, if you love your lost friends, if you love your neighbors and your family, then you'll pray constantly for them. Diet prayer, prayer light, prayer once in a while, doesn't rise to the magnitude that the second coming demands.

He's coming with blazing fire. He's coming with the angels of His power, and He's going to give trouble to those who troubled you.

[13:53] So God is coming to earth, and so if you love it all, you will pray. If you love it all, you'll pray. And that's the first lesson.

You should pray in light of the second coming. And then the second lesson is this, that you, is answering the question, what should you pray for in light of Christ's coming?

So if you're anything like me, you're probably asking, okay, what do I pray for in light of the second coming? And this is a kind of a new idea. What exactly should I be praying for these people about? Or what should I be praying for my brothers and sisters? Well, let's see. Let's look again at verse 11. With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power, He may fulfill every good purpose of yours, and every act prompted by your faith.

And so Paul says, dear Thessalonians, I pray for two things. When I pray for you, in light of that day, I pray for two things. And the first thing is, I pray that God would count you worthy of His calling.

[15:12] And we've already run into this idea of worthy before. When Paul said in verse 5, your perseverance is evidence of God's righteous judgment, that you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God.

And so Paul now says, I pray that God would count you worthy of His calling. And we shouldn't be too confused by these things. His calling and the worthy of the kingdom of God, they're not really so different.

When God calls a sinner, when God calls people, He calls them into His kingdom. And so really, these are one and the same thing. So when God calls us out of sin, He calls us into His kingdom. And Paul is saying, I pray that God would count you worthy of that calling. So Paul is praying for them. And he's praying that God would give them grace to live in a certain way.

He wants them to live in a way that is worthy of God's calling, of the kingdom of God. And so living worthy of the gospel or the kingdom or God's call, it's a very common thing in the Bible.

[16:24] Ephesians 4.1 says, As a prisoner for the Lord, then I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Or Philippians 1.27, whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

And so like I said a few weeks ago about verse 5, living worthy of something is living up to the standard that that person or that thing deserves.

It's living up to the standard that that person deserves. And so remember my example, you had the wonderful girl and she has a horrible, terrible boyfriend and he treats her very badly.

And then there's the third young man who says, You know what? If she was my girlfriend, I would treat her like she deserves. I would be worthy of her. The other guy, he doesn't know what he has, but if she was mine, then I would act worthy.

I would treat her like a princess. And that's roughly the idea here, that God's, the Lord's calling is so great. It is so magnificent that it demands a radical kind of life.

[17:36] It demands a life that is worthy of it. It demands radical devotion. So no half-hearted living, no wishy-washy living is worthy of God's calling.

It doesn't live up to what is demanded. So God has called us out of sin. We were dead.

We sang it. We were dead in our transgressions and sin. And that's when God called. I want you to think for a minute. What is it to be dead?

That's a very, you know, very common, very familiar verse. What does it mean to be dead in your sin? Well, it means that you're rotting. You are physically rotting, spiritually rotting away.

You are decaying. And you are helpless. A corpse cannot do anything. And you are hopeless.

Naturally speaking, a corpse is a hopeless situation.

[18:46] And you are powerless. And so to that, dead, to you, dead in your transgressions and sin, dead, rotting, decaying, helpless, hopeless, sinner that you were.

God called you. He spoke like Jesus spoke to Lazarus. And you came forth. And he sent his spirit.

And he stirred up your dead bones. And he put breath in your lungs. And so you breathed.

You became alive. And you talked. You showed life. And so life sprang into your hearts. We

breathed. We saw. We spoke.

Whereas before we were blind because we were dead. And now we saw the glory of Christ. And we saw. And we breathed after it. We loved it. It was our life. And we spoke. We testified that that is my life.

And so at his call, we came to life. But this is more than a call from death to life. It's a call out of wandering into God's family.

[19:44] God called us to live as children of the light. He called us to live as his sons and daughters. And it's by living as his sons and daughters that we live worthy of his calling.

When we live like what we are, then we live worthy of his calling. When we imitate his grace to us, when we shape our lives after his grace to us, we live worthy of his calling.

And what I'm trying to say is that when we live gospel-shaped lives, we live worthy of his calling. We live up to how great this calling is.

And so it's living lives of purposeful imitation of the gospel. Purposeful imitation of the gospel. Now think about, well, what is the gospel?

Well, at its very heart, it is sacrificial substitution of Jesus Christ. It is love showing itself in sacrificial substitution. And so the gospel began, like we just say, with the incarnation.

[20:56] Jesus, Jesus, who was God. He did not, he didn't consider equality with God something to be grasped. He didn't have to rob God.

He didn't have to lie or grab after divinity because he was divine. He was God. He became man.

And so he rightfully demanded, received the praises of angels and the love of his father.

He enjoyed every perk of divinity and he gave it up. He sacrificed it for us. So he who was in the very form of God became man.

That is gospel. And as we follow the gospel story, we see how low Jesus goes in his sacrifice. So we see Satan tempt and attack Jesus.

Satan was created for Jesus. Satan was created to glorify Jesus and now here his creature is attacking him and tempting him.

[22:05] That is humiliating. And Jesus' humiliation went further. He went lower and lower. He went to death.

The death of the cross. And so it was sacrifice. It was painful loss. And the gospel is not only sacrifice, it's substitutionary.

See, because he wasn't doing all those things for himself. To get something for himself, he was doing it in our place. So he humbled himself for you. He gave up all those perks of divinity and he did it for you.

And he suffered that temptation and the trials of life. And he wasn't doing it for himself. He was doing it for you. And then when it came time to drink the cup of God's wrath, he drank it for you. And so he hurt so you could sing. And he groaned so you could rejoice. And he died so you could live.

[23:18] And so he was poor that you, through his poverty, could become rich. And so the gospel is substitutionary sacrifice. And that is the story of the Bible.

That is our story as Christians. And that is the only story we need. And that is the story that we are called to replay over and over again. That's the story that we are called to go back to and live on. And that is the story that we are to purposefully imitate in our lives. That's what it means to live as a son of God, a daughter of God. You live like Jesus lived.

And he lived a substitutionary, sacrificial life for other people. And we don't do it sparingly. We don't do it anything like that. But still, the general framework, the pattern, has been set for us.

And so that gospel story has to happen again and again in your life if you are going to live worthy of God's calling. So are you following the reasoning?

[24:22] If you are called to live as the son of God, then if you're going to live as a son and daughter of God, then you have to live according to that pattern. Your life has to match up to Jesus' life.

And so when we are insulted, we bless and return. And when we are wronged, we don't retaliate. And we willingly sacrifice our comfort, husbands.

We get up off the couch. We sacrifice our comfort for the good of our wife. And we sacrifice our comfort and our time and our energy not just for our children's physical welfare, but for their souls. And we sacrifice the beauty of our home and the things that we can enjoy in the American dream. We sacrifice that for other people. We give up what we have so that other people by our poverty can become rich.

And so we do it for people in India and China and Africa. We live a Jesus-shaped life, a gospel-shaped life for them.

[25:29] And so that gospel story, a sacrificial, substitutionary, I will suffer so that they can be, so they can have gain. That is how we live worthy of His calling.

So David Brainerd, he lived worthy of God's calling. I don't know if you know very much about him, but he lived a gospel-centered life, a cross-oriented life.

He lived a life like Jesus, and he sacrificed his life for the Native Americans. He was a missionary in the 18th century, in the middle of the 18th century, and so he was alone.

His life was hard. He slept outdoors, alone in the weather. And on top of all that, he was deathly sick. He spent the last several months, a year or two actually, of his life, he spent that time coughing up blood because his lungs were being destroyed.

And so as he coughed up blood, he would ride and ride to the next village to preach the gospel to the Native Americans. He suffered for them.

[26:43] Suffered for them. Because the only way that they could hear the gospel is if he suffered. The only way that they could hear the gospel is if he sacrificed himself for them. He had to suffer if they were going to be saved.

And so that's what he did. He lived like Jesus. He lived worthy of God's calling. And I see other people that David Brainerd is sort of this hero.

And he sort of sets a pattern for many people. And that can become so great that we're like, well, we can't do that so we don't do anything. But this call to live like Jesus, it's lived out all the time in his people.

I see young, middle class American families living gospel-shaped lives as they adopt children that are unwanted. Our adoption agency has a waiting child program.

And these children are older. Usually they have an incurable disease. Most of them have AIDS. And so these families adopt these children and it costs them.

[28:02] At great cost to themselves. So it's not only the money of doing the adoption process. That's really peanuts compared to the big picture. That cost. They give up much more than that.

They give up the ease of raising a child from infancy. It is so much easier to raise a child when you have them first thing as opposed to when you have them at 11 or 12 or 13.

So they give up that. And they take on shame. Because I don't know if there are a lot of people who take a lot of pride in hanging out with people who have AIDS.

And they take on ridicule as people mock them for doing something so stupid and so dangerous and whatever other accusations they have thrown against them.

And so they give up that they give up their dignity. They take shame on themselves. They take ridicule on themselves. And then they take this constant battle against a disease that cannot be cured.

[29:04] And the medical bills that never go away. And they do it because that's the price of love. That is the price that has to be paid if they're going to love.

And so they suffer shame and pain and loss. And they do it so that the children can receive love. If they suffer shame, the children have a family that will accept them.

And if they suffer financial loss, then the children get some degree of health. And so brothers and sisters, they must lose the American dream in order to love like Jesus loves.

Well, why do they do it? Why did David Brainerd do it? Why do these families do it? Why do so many of you do it in your lives? Well, it's not to replace Jesus' sacrifice.

It's to honor it. Jesus did this for them. Jesus died for them. And so how could they not do otherwise? That is what is worthy of Jesus' death.

[30:11] And so it's, they don't do it to establish their righteousness before God. They do it because they are righteous before God. And so they live gospel-centered lives in a way, in that way, they live worthy of God's call.

And so living worthy of God's call is living a gospel-centered life. It's living like Jesus lived. And it's more than that. It's living up to the reality that God has called us to heaven.

He's called us to heaven. So God's calling is all one thing. It's a call out of sin. It's a call out of darkness and death.

And it's a call to a gospel-oriented, cross-centered life. And it's also this call to heaven. And so Paul wants them and he's asking that God will give them grace to live in a way that is worthy of where they are going.

So brothers and sisters, let this sink in for a minute. Let it sink in. You are going to heaven. You are going to heaven.

[31:21] You are going to live in the new heavens and the newer. And that future has a radical claim on your present.

It has a radical claim on your present. See, we do all sorts of things because something big and important is going to happen in the future. And so brides, you know, they work out and get in shape because they want to fit in that dress on that one day.

And moms, when they're ready to deliver, they go into nesting mode and they do all this and organize the house and get ready. Why? Because the baby is coming.

So the future, when you know something is coming, it has a radical claim on the present. You do things differently because of what is coming. The future intrudes on the present.

And so shouldn't your future, your eternal future that is so great, shouldn't that intrude on your present? You are going to live in heaven and you should live now like you are going to live in heaven.

[32:24] So Jesus said, don't store up your treasures here. It's foolish to store up your treasures here because the world is ending. So you send your treasures ahead so when you get there, they'll be waiting for you.

That's smart. And so you own things, but you don't do it like the world. And you give generously now because you know that in the kingdom of God, it's going to be repaid to you a hundred times over.

And that's what it means to live worthy of God's call. You live up to the reality of what God is going to do for you. And so God calls His children to live gospel-centered, future-oriented lives.

And that is an amazing call. And the point of all this is to say that that is way, that kind of living is way beyond what we can do in our own strength.

When we see that call and what God demands that we live like, it should drive us to our knees and say, you know what, if I'm going to do that, I desperately need your help, God.

[33 : 25] If I'm going to live worthy of the gospel, if I'm going to live worthy of the kingdom of God and of God's call, then God, I have to have your help. And so Paul prays. I pray that God would help you to live up to this glorious calling.

And that is the prayer that we need. Paul's prayer, we have to take it on board and pray it for ourselves and pray it for our brothers and sisters. We are called to live for heaven in a world that is trapped in the here and now.

Do you understand that? This world has this whole system, this whole way of thinking, and they have rules, and you have to do it, and you have to live the way that they say, because this is all there is.

And in that world, God puts us, and he says, now you live for the next world. And we're called to live gospel-shaped lives like Jesus lived in our neighborhoods, and in our jobs, and in our schools that are full of selfish, stuff-oriented people, where they measure who you are and what you do by what you have.

And the problem is, so much of the time, we want to impress those people. Because that kingdom, the kingdom of darkness, has that outpost still in our heart that wants to do what they want to do.

[34 : 47] And so if we are going to live worthy of God's calling, we need God's help. We need the Holy Spirit. Spirit, we need him flowing and working and moving in our lives.

And that was true of the Thessalonians, and it's true of us. And so Paul says, I constantly pray.

That's the key to this life. Not my own effort, but as I rely on God, as I seek his help, as we go to the throne of grace in our hour of need, that is where we get help to live this kind of life that is radical, that is completely out of step with this world and our own natural selves.

And so we pray for ourselves and we pray for others that way. That God would give us grace to live worthy of his calling. And Paul goes on and he builds on that last idea. And he says, what else should we pray for?

Secondly, I pray that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. So fulfill, in this passage, it means to complete, to finish.

In Philippians 2.2, the same word is used. Then make my joy complete by being like-minded. Fulfill my joy. Make it complete.

[36 : 08] And so it's begun, now finish it. And that's the idea here. Paul is asking, God, finish what you have begun. Finish what you have begun.

Paul knows that the believers in Thessalonica, they have, they want to do good things. Faith is brewing in their hearts.

And faith is like a bubbling cauldron and it's going to shoot out. And that was true of them and it's true of you. If you are one of God's children, then you have inside of you this cauldron cauldron that is bubbling, ready to produce good works.

Because genuine faith always produces works. And if you don't have that bubbling cauldron, then you should really question your faith. Because faith lays hold of Christ.

Christ, our faith, excuse me, it goes into Christ like a branch goes into a vine. And as the vine sends forth its power, the branches bloom and blossom and produce fruit.

[37 : 29] So Jesus said, I am the vine and you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing. So living faith lays hold of Jesus Christ.

Christ. And so there is this irrepressible desire to produce fruit. There's this push, this impulse from Christ through our faith to produce fruit.

But without him, we can do nothing. But without him, we can do nothing. And so what must we do to finish what he has begun? Well, he needs to give us grace so that we could finish it.

So Paul says, I see the beginning. I see the beginning of faith working in your life, but you need more grace to complete it, to finish it. So how did David Brainerd do it?

How did he keep going on and on until the very end? And how do those adopted families do it? And how will we do it? Well, we'll only do it by God's grace, by his grace flowing and finishing in our lives.

[38 : 34] When God finishes what he begins, then we will start living worthy of God's call. And so let's pray for each other then. Let's pray that we'll have power to walk worthy of our call.

And let's pray that God will give us power to live gospel-centered, cross-oriented lives where these God-honoring desires can come to fruition.

we're weak, but he's strong. And his strength is only a prayer away. Now thirdly, and most shortly, why should we pray?

Well, here's the motivation. Verse 12. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you in him according to the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So why pray for the Thessalonians in this way? Why? It's so that Jesus Christ would be glorified.

Paul prays for the name, the reputation of Christ to be honored, to be exalted, to be magnified.

[39:45] And so how is Christ glorified, magnified in us? He's magnified when we bloom. When we produce fruit, then he is honored. He's glorified when our faith comes to blossom.

And so glory is all about visibility. visibility. It's all about visibility. To glorify God is to make the internal glory that God has in and of himself, the glory of his being.

We glorify him by showing the world what he is. And God glorifies himself by making that glory visible to the world. And so we just saw a few weeks ago that on the last day, Jesus comes to be glorified in his saints.

He comes to be unveiled and so his holy people will glorify him. And what Paul is saying is we actually can start ahead of time.

We can get a head start on the glorification of Christ. It's going to happen at its fullest, its greatest, it's going to reach its climax on that last day when Jesus Christ is unveiled. But we can actually get a head start.

[40:56] So let's suppose that there was a new Michelangelo statue found. And the experts saw it and they said, you know what, this is greater, this is more glorious than Michelangelo's David.

This is the greatest thing he's done. But it's a secret. It's hidden. And so the beauty of it, the finding, it was all a secret. Now does our imaginary Michelangelo statue have glory?

glory. Yes, it does. It has glory. But it's hidden. And then there's this announcement that they are going to unveil this beautiful statue.

And so this, this coming Saturday in Italy, it's going to be unveiled and you want to see it. And so you fly over there and you purchase tickets for the unveiling.

And then Saturday morning happens and you show up there at the plaza or wherever and there is the statue and it's covered with a white sheet. Its glory is veiled.

[42:02] And then some people come out with great fanfare and trumpets and whatever and they pull the white sheet back and there it is. Everyone sees its glory. The glory that was hidden is now revealed and the world wonders in amazement.

So what was hidden is now seen. And that is what the last day is going to be like. Christ has a hidden glory now and it's going to be unveiled on that last day.

But Paul says, I pray that God would fulfill every purpose of yours and every faith prompted act. Why? So that the name of Jesus would be glorified through you in you.

So when people see our good works and our faith coming to fruition, the white sheet that hides Christ's glory is just peeled back very faintly. and the glory of that last day actually starts to intrude.

It comes out in our lives. And so the glory of Christ that will be unveiled fully at that day breaks through the clouds and people see it in your life.

[43:12] And that is exciting, brothers and sisters. That is exciting. That is what we were made for. We were made to glorify Him.

That is why God saved us. That is why we exist. And that is what drives our prayers. So we shouldn't be praying for gas station goodies. We should be praying that people would be able to see Christ's glory.

And so when we pray for our brothers and sisters, we pray that Christ would be glorified in them.

And when we pray for ourselves that we would have the power and the strength to carry out this act, we do it for the glory of Jesus Christ.

But Paul has another reason to pray. He says, and it's to see the Thessalonians glorified in Christ. Paul longs to see Christ glorified glorified.

And in love, he longs to see the Thessalonians glorified. And he says, I pray this in accord with the grace of God.

[44:23] The fact that we should be glorified with Jesus Christ is grace. The fact that Jesus Christ would gather us up into His glory so that we could join Him, so that as He comes down, we'll go up

and we'll come down together and be glorified with Him, that is grace and it's great mercy that He should take us up into His glory.

But that's what love does. And He loves us and so Jesus Christ wants us to be glorified. So He has loved us with covenant love.

And in love, He's joined us to Him. And so the head is not going to be glorified without the body.

And the groom will not be glorified without His bride.

And brothers and sisters, that just shows you that we are in the grips of an amazing, crazy love.

That He should take me from the gutter to be glorified with the King.

That is amazing. The Apostle John says, Dear friends, now we are the children of God and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

[45:39] So our glory now as children of God, the world doesn't see it. We're the despised one. We're the scum of the earth. But what we are will not always be hidden.

It will be unveiled. So when Christ is glorified, we will be glorified with Him. As His star rises, our star will rise because He has loved us.

And so Paul prays expectantly for these Thessalonians and we should pray expectantly for one another because of that love. Paul prays constantly because he knows that behind that, behind the Thessalonians, there is God who loves them.

And he prays for their glory and he prays for Christ's glory because God loves Christ and those people. And there is this motivation to pray in light of the second coming because at His second coming, God's grace will sweep us up into His glory and we will be with the Lord and never depart. And if that is His gracious purpose for you, will He not answer your prayers that you would be able to live worthy of that?

[46:52] that your life would match up with that? He's going to answer your prayers. So what does this all come down to? Here it is.

Living in the gospel like we heard this morning, living in the good of the gospel. Living up to the gospel, living worthy of our calling, depending on God's grace, depending on His strength.

that's how we prepare for the second coming. You know, we don't go to the army surplus store and we don't buy all sorts of food and wait for the apocalypse and things like that.

We live in the gospel. We live up to the gospel. We depend on God's grace. And that's how we prepare for that last day. And that's how we prepare for judgment. And brothers and sisters, those things are only possible by God's grace and in His help.

And so that means that if we are going to be ready for the second coming, then we must learn to pray. We must learn to pray. We must become a praying people.

[48:03] And Paul teaches us how to do it. He tells us why we should pray and what we should pray. And he tells us that we should pray. And so let's not just be hearers of the word. Let's be doers of it.

Our Lord Jesus, it is our joy to say that you are all the glory of Emmanuel's land. You are all the glory that we have. There's no one in heaven or on earth that we desire besides Thee.

And Lord, we long for the day when your glory would be unveiled. We pray that we would live worthy of that day. that we would live up to it as your people for your sake.

It wouldn't be right for us to live for this world and live like this world when you have called us to such a great salvation. Holy Spirit, please put your hand upon us and press us with the weight of the gospel.

that we would not live out of guilt but out of gratitude that we would live expectantly and hopefully because of what you have planned for us.

[49:20] thank you for calling us. Father, I pray for those who are lost here. They're asleep on the brink.

They do not know it. Please wake them up. Look upon them in mercy and call them and save them. Will you please do it for Jesus' sake and for their good.

And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.