

1 Thessalonians Ch2v13-20 - Equipped By The Gospel

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] Thessalonians, in chapter 2. Johnny is going to be sharing with us from this passage. So it's 1 Thessalonians, chapter 2, and this is on page 1186 of the Red Church Bible.

Just a reminder that everyone is so welcome to stay on for food and fellowship after the service. We look forward to sharing that with you. So it's 1 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 13, and it's page 1186.

Verse 13. And we also thank God continually, because when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus. You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out.

[1 : 47] They displease God and are hostile to everyone in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.

In this way, they also heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last. But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated, you for a short time, in person, not in thought, out of our intense longing, we made every effort to see you.

For we wanted to come to you. Certainly I, Paul, did again and again, but Satan blocked our way. For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes?

Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy. Thanks, Johnny.

Thank you, Sam. Let's keep our Bibles open there.

[3 : 19] I'll open mine and we'll pray and ask for the Lord's help. Let's pray.

Father, thank you that your word is true, that it is living and active. And so we pray that by the power of your spirit, it would be at work within each one of us right now.

That we will be changed. And that we will know how to live our lives together in this world, filled with the glorious hope that is to come.

Help us, we pray. Amen. So do you know the how-to videos on YouTube?

You want to know how to bake a cake or how to change a tyre? You just type in how-to, etc., etc.

Well, the other week I had to replace our attic ladder.

[4 : 46] It was becoming unsafe, an accident waiting to happen. So I ordered a new one online.

Easy job. No problem. Just a bit of drilling.

Cut some wood. An hour or two. Tops. Well, a whole Saturday morning and afternoon. Sweat and blood, literally.

It was still not working. And that's when I remembered. How to. Typed into the phone, how to install an attic ladder.

And guess what? It really worked. Within an hour, it was up and ready. I just did what they said and I installed it in no time.

You see, knowing how to solve or fix something is all important. Well, I want us to think of our text this morning that we read as like a how-to video.

[5 : 50] It shows us how to deal with real church life, Christian life concerns. You may remember in chapter 1, we saw how the gospel takes effect in our life.

In chapter 2, we have seen how the gospel was entrusted to us to share with others. And at the end of chapter 2 now, we're going to see how the gospel equips and enables us to live out the Christian

life.

So on our how-to video this morning, there's three sections to it. It's going to equip us in three different ways. How to experience change in our life.

How to face suffering in our world. And how to find joy in our ministry. How to change. How to face suffering.

And how to find joy. So, the first one. How to experience change in our life. And that's something that we all want, isn't it?

[7 : 03] We want to change things. We have things in our lives that we don't like. And we try to hide. Not necessarily external things. But heart things.

Sinful behavior. Selfish attitudes. And we desperately want to stop. We want to be better. And the harder we try, it seems to get worse.

But we don't have to despair. Because God has given us the means to experience real and lasting change.

And the way in which we change is through God's word. There's a fundamental change in that God's word saves us.

Have a look at verse 13. We thank God continually. Because when you received the word of God.

[8 : 01] Which you heard from us. You accepted it. Paul had come with his team to preach the gospel. They heard the word.

And their response was to receive it. To accept it. Verse 13. Not as a human word.

Because human words aren't so important. But as it actually is. The word of God. They were humble before God's word.

They received. They accepted it. They trusted. What God's word had to say about them. And their need of Jesus. It's like they took God's word into their lives.

And they came to believe. Paul explained it like this. Back in chapter 1. He reminds them of their story. Of how they became followers of Christ.

[9 : 05] Verse 5. Chapter 1 verse 5. For our gospel came to you. Not simply with words. Yes it was God's word.

But it also came with power. And with the Holy Spirit. And what change did it bring about? Well look down at the end of verse 9.

They tell how you turn to God from idols. That is anything we put in place of God. They turned from idols.

To serve the living and true God. And to wait for his son from heaven. Whom he raised from the dead. Jesus. Who rescues us from the coming wrath.

You see God's word. Changes us. It saves us. It makes us new people. Yes it does. It exposes our hearts. But it shows us our need of a savior.

[10 : 03] It helps us to turn. From ourself. And to turn to God. So God's word. Can change us.

In terms of salvation. But it has an ongoing effect. In our life. It transforms us. Look.

Let's read verse 13 again. Just to get the. Theme of it. We also thank God continually. Because. When you received the word of God.

Which you heard from us. You accepted it. Not as a human word. But as it actually is. The word of God. Which is indeed. At work.

In you. Who believe. This is no ordinary word. It's a working word. It's a working word. When received and accepted. It takes effect.

[10 : 59] It does a work. Internally. In our life. Changing us. And transforming us. To be more like Christ. Here's how.

The Bible itself. The Bible itself. Speaks about God's word. He says. For you have been born again. That is. You have become. A new creation.

Not of perishable seed. But of imperishable. Through the living. And enduring. Word. Of God.

You see. It's a living. It's active. It does something. It's like a. A seed. Planted in the ground. That. Bursts up. Into a shoot. And into a tree.

That bears fruit. It's living. Or think about. This verse here. For the word of God. Is alive.

[11 : 56] And active. It's sharper. Than any. Double-edged sword. And it penetrates. Even to dividing. Soul and spirit. Joints. And marrow. In other words.

It cuts. Right to the heart. And it judges. Our thoughts. And our attitudes. You see. God's word. Is. Is powerful.

And effective. It works. In our life. To save us. And to change us. In fact. It's such a living. And active word.

That that's. What is happening. Right now. At this very moment. God is. At work. In your life. And at my life. If. If you're not. A Christian.

Well. God is. Convicting you. And convincing you. Do you know. Why you're here. If you're not. A Christian. It's because. God's word. Is active.

[12:52] In your life. Drawing you. To Christ. Christ. And if you are. A Christian. He's beginning. To change you. And transform you.

To be. More like Christ. It's a word. At work. Here's a simple way. Of explaining. What's happening. In our lives. When. We pick up. The very word of God. And read it. Or hear it. The spirit of God.

Uses the word of God. To do the work of God. In the people of God. Something powerful. Is happening right now. The spirit of God. Is taking the very words. That we read and hear. And he is doing a work. Internally. In my life. In your life. At this very moment.

[13:50] God's word. God's word. Has power. To save. And change. That's why we gather. On a Sunday afternoon. Or in the morning. That's why we.

Share God's word. And talk about it. To our children. Because it's living. And active. It brings. Salvation. And it brings. Transformation. So first. How. Do I experience. Change. Change. Well. Through God's. Working. Word. The second. Little clip. That we have. On our how to. Is how to face. Suffering. In our world.

Because one of the ways. We know. That God's work. Is at work. In us. Is. We will begin. To suffer. For the gospel.

[14:46] If you want to know. Is God. Working. In my life. Well. Then you will. Begin. To experience. Pushback. From people. As we're.

Saved. And changed. It will lead. To. Difficulties. And struggles. For that's. What happens. Look at verse 14. For you.

Brothers and sisters. Became. Imitators. Of God's. Churches. In Judea. Which are in Christ Jesus. You. Suffered. From your own. People. The same.

Things. Those. Churches. Suffered. From the Jews. You see. The churches. In Judea. Was where the gospel. Was first heard. And as they.

Obeded. And as they. Followed. They suffered. In fact. The persecution. In those days. Were so violent. Churches. Reduced. To just a handful. People.

[15:45] Had to leave. Escape. Run away. Leave their houses. All their belongings. Behind. And you know. Who was responsible. For all that. Suffering. And persecution.

In those days. The very person. Who wrote this letter. Thessalonians. Paul. He persecuted. Christians.

But the word of God. Took effect. In his life. Didn't it? And it changed him. And as he began. To preach the gospel. He began. To suffer. For the gospel.

And that's what will happen. To us. To some extent. We will get. Pushback. So we need to know. How to face. Suffering.

Well here's two ways. I think that will help us. First. First. Know your location. Look what it says. In verse 14.

[16:43] You brothers and sisters. Became imitators. Of God's churches. In Judea. Which are. In. Christ. Jesus. He could have just said. You know. What it was like. For the churches. In Judea. But he adds.

Which are in. Christ Jesus. If you were listening. To what Sam said. At the beginning. It was this very idea. That we have a. Physical location.

But we also have. A spiritual location. That's how the letter starts. Doesn't it? Chapter 1. Verse 1. To the church.

Of the Thessalonians. To the people who live. In Thessalonica. One location. In. God.

[17:37] The Father. And in the Lord. Jesus Christ. Their spiritual location. You see. As Christians. We are in. Carigaline.

But we are also. In. Christ. Jesus. When we believe. In Jesus. We're. United to him. We belong to him. We're with him. We are in him.

Now that's really important. For us. In facing. Suffering. Because our union. With Christ. Means that. Where Christ goes.

You will go. When I was small. I must have been. Very small. Actually. For this. My dad used to take me. On his bike. And sat on this.

Crossbar. With a tiny little. Red seat. Which I would sit on. And put my feet. On a foot rest. You could say. I was united. To my father.

[18 : 32] Where he went. I went. And if it rained. Which it mostly did. From memory. He got wet. And I got wet.

But if it was sunny. Well it was a different experience. Wasn't it? He got hot. And I got hot. His experience. Was my. Experience. Experience.

Now look what it says. In the rest of verse 14. You suffered from your own people. The same things. Those churches suffered from the Jews. Who killed.

The Lord Jesus. And the prophets. And also drove. Us out. He's saying. Look. Christ suffered. We suffered. So you will suffer. And for us. That might be a difficulty. Within our job. It may mean. That you don't get promotion. It may mean.

[19 : 28] That people are. Intolerant. Towards you. And push you off. And don't want you. In your circle of friends. It could be.

That you face it. In school. Where people think. You're just nuts. For some Christians. It will be the same. As what these people suffered.

Imprisonment. And worse. Being killed. As Christ suffered. So we will suffer. But here's the good news. Not only do we share. In his suffering. We also share.

In his resurrection. Have a look at chapter 4. Verse 14. Because the same thing. Is true here.

Chapter 4.

Verse 14. For we believe. That Jesus died. And rose again. And so we believe.

[20 : 22] That God will bring. With Jesus. Those who have fallen asleep. Or those who have died. In. Him. Can you. Can you see that.

Where Christ goes. We will go. If he suffers. We will suffer. If he rises from the dead. And lives forever. So that will be true for us.

You see. As we face hostility. We need to know. That one day. This will all pass. It will all come to an end. Our brothers and sisters. In Kashmir.

Those in North India. All the suffering. And struggles. That they face. It will all come to an end. Why? Because of their location.

They are in. Christ. So in facing struggles. Remember your location. And remember God's.

[21 : 21] Justice. Because God will bring about. His justice on all those. Who cause suffering. Look at the rest of verse 15. They displease God.

And are hostile to everyone. In their effort to keep us. From speaking to the Gentiles. So that they may be saved.

You see. Behind the opposition. Is an attempt. To actually stop people. Hearing the gospel. And turning. To the Lord Jesus.

And that. Is a serious matter. And God is not immune. To all that is going on. He is in. Acting. His justice. Even now. Look at the. Look at. Verse 16. In this way. They always. Heap up their sins.

[22 : 17] To the limit. All the opposition. All their behavior. Is seen. And remembered. By God. It's like he's keeping. A record. Of every day.

And every act. Against his people. And justice. Will be done. Yes. There will be. A future judgment. But he's saying. To us here. There is also.

A judgment. That is happening. Right now. Do you see that. At the end. Of verse 16. The wrath. Of God. Has come.

Upon them. At last. It seems. This. Record. Of sins. This. Remembering. All their acts. Is being built up.

And God's. Present. Judgment. Is that he will. One day. Enact it all. Justice. Will be done.

[23 : 11] This is summarized. For us. Really helpfully. If you just jump. A couple of pages. Forward. To. Second. Thessalonians. Chapter one.

And verse five. Encouragement. For those. Who struggle. As they follow. Christ. Maybe. It's a struggle. Within family. Or amongst friends. Or at work. Verse five. 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.

[24 : 09] As well. God knows. And God. Sees. So how do we face. Suffering. Or struggles. In our world.

Well. Know your location. That you are in Christ. And know. That God's justice. Will be done. Well. Our third. How to clip. Is how to find joy. In our ministry. history. Because. Living in this world. Where we will face. Opposition. Is not easy. It's hard. And it's difficult. In fact. Not only. Do we suffer.

We must see it. As a spiritual battle. Verse 18. Paul says. We wanted to come to you. Certainly. I. Paul did. Again.

[25 : 01] And again. But Satan. Blocked our way. He. He wanted to get back. In person. To see how these. Christians were doing.

But it wasn't possible. Because. Satan had. Blocked their path. Now. None of us know. What it was. Maybe it was a landslide.

They couldn't get through. The roads. Maybe it was a sickness. But it reminds us. Whatever it was. That we have an enemy. Who isn't pleased.

With what we do. And he can make the Christian life. Hard. So how do you and I. Find joy. In the midst. Of a life that can sometimes. Be difficult. Well here's how we find joy. First.

[25 : 57] Love. Others. Love for others. Our ministry. Our work. Our work. Is to be always for the good of others.

Verse 17. But brothers and sisters. When we were orphaned. By being separated from you.

For a short time. In person. Not in thought. We never ever forgot about you. Out of our intense longing. We made every effort.

We made every effort to see you. I can't bear. To be apart from you. I long. To see you. And the reason for them wanting to see them.

Chapter 3 verse 10. Night and day. We pray most earnestly. That we may see you again. And supply what is lacking in your faith. Now isn't that remarkable?

[26 : 54] Paul's heart. His desire. Is not for himself. His love and concern. Is for others. He wants to make sure.

That these newborn Christians. Are still walking with Christ. That they haven't become overcome. With all the troubles or difficulties. He's willing to suffer. For their sake.

For them. That they would keep going. He loves them deeply. And it's not one of this. Begrudging kind of love. Do I have to love them?

No. It's a deep love. Look at. Look at verse 18. For we wanted to come. I Paul did. Again. And again. You've no idea.

How many times. And efforts. I made to get to see you. You say. Where's the joy. In all of this. Well stick with me.

[27 : 51] Because here's where the joy. Comes in. It comes. With a glorious reward. Look at verse 19.

For what. Is our hope. Our joy. Or the crown. In which we will glory. In the presence of our Lord. Jesus Christ. When he comes. I want us to. To picture the scene. That Christ has come.

And there you are. Standing in the presence. Of Jesus Christ. Face to face. With your savior. What will be. Your reward. When Christ. Comes again. There you are.

[28 : 50] You're with him. What's going to be your joy. What's going to be your hope. What's going to be your glory. What's going to be the prize. The crown. Look at the end of verse 19.

Is it not. You. You. Indeed. You are. Our glory. And joy. My joy.

On that day. Will be to see. My brothers. And sisters. Who are in Christ. Also. With Christ. Christ. What I desire.

Is to see you. Safe. And secure. With Jesus. Having gone through. All the troubles. And all the trials. And that you're there. What I long for.

Is to see you. At the finishing line. That's what I'm looking forward to. That's my glory. And that's what enables us.

[29 : 51] To love each other well. Now. Because we know. That our loving service. And our giving of our lives. To others.

Will result. In overflowing joy. All the unseen acts. All your prayers. Done in private. All your financial giving.

To the work. And the life. Of the church. It'll be worth it all. Every hour. That you spent. Packing and stacking.

And getting ready. For polo. Every Friday afternoon. That you spent in rock. Or in the evening. With rooted. Every conversation.

And visit. That you had. With a struggling soul. Every text message. That you sent. Every discipleship class. Every Sunday school lesson. Every sermon preached.

[30 : 49] It will be worth. It all. To see you. In the presence of Christ.

Will be my joy. Living the Christian life. Can be hard.

Ministry life is hard. We will get pushback. We have an enemy. Who is against us. It will be costly. We suffer opposition.

From the world. And from Satan. But together. We keep our eyes. Fixed. On Christ's return.

Because we know. That all this gospel work.

Is worth it all. Brothers and sisters. Brothers. Who are in Christ. With Christ. That's the reward.

[31 : 51] That's the crown. My hope is you. My glory. Is you. I long for the day.

When we will stand. Together. All of us. In the presence of Christ. Christ. That will be joy.

So how do we experience. Change in our life. This living. And active. Word of God. Which transforms us.

From the inside out. A word that will enable us. To face suffering. And struggles. As we are reminded. That we are in Christ.

And in the midst of it all. There is deep joy. And happiness. Because we know. That it's all worth it. And we will be together.

[32 : 55] With him. What a day. What a crown. We will have. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

at the wonder of your all-sufficient good word, that it provides us with all that we need as it brings us to Christ, our Saviour.

Thank you for the work you have done in our lives. And we pray for a greater and deeper work in us individually and corporately as a church, that you would encourage us to stand strong in the hard days, that we would keep going and keep living for you, and that together we would have our eyes firmly fixed when Christ comes again and we will stand before our Saviour, filled with joy and glory, as we look at one another and say thank you, Jesus, for such great a salvation.

Amen. Please help us, we pray. Amen. Well, we're going to sing.

O church, arise and put your armour on. Why do we need armour? Well, because we're in a battle.

We have an enemy, but we are strong and we are secure in Christ.

[35 : 19] And we take these steps together until we are with him.