

# Evotional

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> August 2007 (am).

Speaker: Neil Durling.

Message title: "The just judge?"



## **Bible passage: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12:**

*Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 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. 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.*

## **The message in brief:**

Our idea of justice can so easily become warped. Paul, writing about one year after his first letter, tells the Thessalonian Christians, who are facing worsening persecutions and trials, that God's judgement is just ("right" v.5). He then tells them that there are two groups who will be judged when Jesus returns:

### **1: Those counted worthy:**

Paul says the following about them:

***They are counted worthy of the kingdom of God (v.5):*** God will make/count/declare them worthy after they have been judged (not for their faith in Jesus but, rather, it is their works for the kingdom that will be judged).

***They will get relief from their troubles (v.7):*** "Relief" means "a release of tension", like the slackening of a bow string after the arrow is fired.

***God will be glorified in his holy people (v.10):*** The Lord will be glorious and his glory will be in his people as well because they will perfectly reflect his image.

***God will fulfil their good purposes and acts prompted by faith by his power (v. 11):*** We don't do things merely in human strength and this will be shown as we see what God has done through us.

### **2: Those who are punished:**

Paul says the following about them:

***God will pay back trouble (v.6):*** God will pay back to those who trouble you because in a moral universe God doesn't allow sin to go unpunished.

***Jesus will punish these people (v.8):*** It is Jesus who punishes. Jesus reinforces this in John 5:21-23. He will punish those who:

- a: "Don't know God": Those who have rejected the light that has been offered them (Romans 1-3).
- b: "Do not obey the gospel": Those who have rejected the cross of Jesus.

***What will the punishment be (v.9)?*** It will be everlasting destruction (not annihilation but complete ruin) and being removed from God's presence for eternity.

Note: It is the compassionate Jesus of the gospels who will be punishing; not with a sneer, but a tear.

Some Christians seem to delight in God's punishment: They worry me. Other Christians hate the idea of Jesus punishing and so avoid it: They worry me.

Just as these verses interweave those who will be called worthy and those who will be punished so our lives should interweave with those who do not know Jesus so that they too can be declared worthy. So what can we do? **Pray earnestly and share Jesus positively.**

## **Question:**

Who are you praying for and sharing Jesus with at the moment?

## **A prayer:**

Father God, please use me to help others find Jesus and be "declared worthy". Amen.