

2 Thessalonians: The Ministry of a Growing Church

_____ is needed among God's family. Paul knew how to _____ the church. How do you and I need to encourage (refresh) another church member? He thanked God for the growth he witnessed in the Thessalonian church. In 2 Thess. 1:3-4, Paul said, *"We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring."*

- Paul _____ God for the church.
- The _____ of God's people grew abundantly.
- The _____ among God's family increased.
- The Thessalonian church served as a spiritual _____.
- The church experienced and overcame the _____ attacks.

Many growing churches are _____ churches. A church with spiritual vitality is a constant _____ to the enemy. Growing churches worship God, proclaim truth, love people, reach non-believers, disciple Christians, and serve others. A maturing church is _____ about pushing back spiritual darkness. As a result of God's grace, Paul prayed for the church to follow the Lord's leadership and glorify Him in all things.

- Is _____ (spiritual and numerical) evident in our church?
- Is our fellowship a threat to the _____?
- Is God _____ by what we do and speak?
- Is our faith family _____ spiritual darkness?
- Is our _____ for one another increasing?

Is _____ a real place? Are the Bible and popular opinion in agreement about eternal torment? The Bible has a great deal to say about eternal punishment. As for *"people who don't know God and obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus,"* in 2 Thess. 1:9, Paul said, *"They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."* The reality of missing Heaven and spending eternity apart from Jesus Christ is sobering. However, we have an _____ message to share.

The Lord commands His people to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Our message (the Gospel) _____ changes! Jesus lived a sinless life, died a sacrificial death, experienced a glorious resurrection, ascended back to Heaven, promises to come again, and calls us to die to self and follow Him. Are you and I telling other people about Jesus? I was recently faced with two questions about evangelism. First, when was the last time you led another person to Jesus? Second, when was the last time you tried? Evangelism isn't reserved for the "ministry professionals." _____ in Jesus Christ is

expected to share the Good News. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, shared his angst over the lack of evangelistic concern demonstrated by many professing Christians when he said, "If I were God, I would make every Christian spend five minutes in hell. Then, we would be on doorsteps pleading with people to be saved."

It's an alarming thought to feel that an important event was _____. Your heart sinks. You feel sick at your stomach. You missed an appointment; you missed a call; or you missed an opportunity. Paul sought to _____ and _____ the Thessalonian church. Many people in the church thought they missed the coming of Christ and the gathering of His people (the Rapture). In 2 Thess. 2:1-2, Paul stated, "*Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.*" Paul made it clear that certain events must happen first.

- The truth will be _____.
- The restraint on the man of sin will be _____.
- The Antichrist, the man of sin, will be _____.

Paul shared many principles with the Thessalonians that indicated their growth in the Lord.

- Paul asked the church to _____ for him (2 Thess. 3:1).
- Paul declared the _____ faithfulness and the _____ victory in Him (2 Thess. 3:3).
- Paul encouraged the church about their _____ (2 Thess. 3:4).
- Paul cautioned the church on the dangers of _____ (2 Thess. 3:6).
- Paul mentioned again the " _____ " of the gospel ministry (2 Thess. 3:7-8).
- Paul stated the value and need to _____ (2 Thess. 3:10).
- Paul sought to correct the ungodly _____ of some in the church (2 Thess. 3:11-12).
- Paul called the church to stay focused and not grow _____ (2 Thess. 3:13).
- Paul asked the church to _____ other believers who refused to obey what the Spirit led Paul to write (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

The Thessalonian church wasn't a _____ church. However, it was an amazing faith family. The people loved God, one another, and people in their city and around the world. Our church isn't perfect. Your _____ has many weaknesses and flaws. The enemy despises the church's unity. Nevertheless, it's a church that God is growing and using. God's grace is blessing our church. You're love for God, one another, and people in our city and around the world are increasing, and I'm convicted to give all the praise to _____.

2 Thessalonians: The Ministry of a Growing Church

Encouragement is needed among God's family. Paul knew how to **refresh** the church. How do you and I need to encourage (refresh) another church member? He thanked God for the growth he witnessed in the Thessalonian church. In 2 Thess. 1:3-4, Paul said, *"We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring."*

- Paul **thanked** God for the church.
- The **faith** of God's people grew abundantly.
- The **love** among God's family increased.
- The Thessalonian church served as a spiritual **example**.
- The church experienced and overcame the **enemy's** attacks.

Many growing churches are **suffering** churches. A church with spiritual vitality is a constant **threat** to the enemy. Growing churches worship God, proclaim truth, love people, reach non-believers, disciple Christians, and serve others. A maturing church is **intentional** about pushing back spiritual darkness. As a result of God's grace, Paul prayed for the church to follow the Lord's leadership and glorify Him in all things.

- Is **growth** (spiritual and numerical) evident in our church?
- Is our fellowship a threat to the **enemy**?
- Is God **glorified** by what we do and speak?
- Is our faith family **pushing back** spiritual darkness?
- Is our **love** for one another increasing?

Is **hell** a real place? Are the Bible and popular opinion in agreement about eternal torment? The Bible has a great deal to say about eternal punishment. As for "people who don't know God and obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus," in 2 Thess. 1:9, Paul said, *"They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."* The reality of missing Heaven and spending eternity apart from Jesus Christ is sobering. However, we have an **urgent** message to share.

The Lord commands His people to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Our message (the Gospel) **never** changes! Jesus lived a sinless life, died a sacrificial death, experienced a glorious resurrection, ascended back to Heaven, promises to come again, and calls us to die to self and follow Him. Are you and I telling other people about Jesus? I was recently faced with two questions about evangelism. "First, when was the last time you led another person to Jesus? Second, when was the last time you tried?" Evangelism isn't reserved for the "ministry professionals." **Every person** in Jesus

Christ is expected to share the Good News. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, shared his angst over the lack of evangelistic concern demonstrated by many professing Christians when he said, "If I were God, I would make every Christian spend five minutes in hell. Then, we would be on doorsteps pleading with people to be saved."

It's an alarming thought to feel that an important event was **missed**. Your heart sinks. You feel sick at your stomach. You missed an appointment; you missed a call; or you missed an opportunity. Paul sought to **instruct** and **comfort** the Thessalonian church. Many people in the church thought they missed the coming of Christ and the gathering of His people (the Rapture). In 2 Thess. 2:1-2, Paul stated, "*Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.*" Paul made it clear that certain events must happen first.

- The truth will be **rejected**.
- The restraint on the man of sin will be **removed**.
- The Antichrist, the man of sin, will be **revealed**.

Paul shared many principles with the Thessalonians that indicated their growth in the Lord.

- Paul asked the church to **pray** for him (2 Thess. 3:1).
- Paul declared the **Lord's** faithfulness and the **church's** victory in Him (2 Thess. 3:3).
- Paul encouraged the church about their **obedience** (2 Thess. 3:4).
- Paul cautioned the church on the dangers of **idleness** (2 Thess. 3:6).
- Paul mentioned again the "**hard work**" of the gospel ministry (2 Thess. 3:7-8).
- Paul stated the value and need to **work** (2 Thess. 3:10).
- Paul sought to correct the ungodly **behavior** of some in the church (2 Thess. 3:11-12).
- Paul called the church to stay focused and not grow **weary** (2 Thess. 3:13).
- Paul asked the church to **warn** other believers who refused to obey what the Spirit led Paul to write (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

The Thessalonian church wasn't a **perfect** church. However, it was an amazing faith family. The people loved God, one another, and people in their city and around the world. Our church isn't perfect. Your **senior pastor** has many weaknesses and flaws. The enemy despises the church's unity. Nevertheless, it's a church that God is growing and using. God's grace is blessing our church. You're love for God, one another, and people in our city and around the world are increasing, and I'm convicted to give all the praise to **Jesus!**