

WHAT TO REMEMBER WHEN THE CHURCH IS UNDER ATTACK

2 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Paul the apostle was used of God to pen not only one but two epistles or letters to the saints at Thessalonica, for their heavenly Father knew that they needed guidance, direction, comfort and consolation as they weathered all manner of attacks. It was the heart of God to speak to these saints His word of help, for He desired them to remain faithful in the midst of all types of persecution. The same holds true today as well. God never gives a person, or a church the right to withdraw from faithful devotion, but rather He will make it His business to come to them with His servant and with His comfort.

These saints as Thessalonica, give to all with a listening ear, insight during those times of trial and persecution. God knows full well that there has been and there will be times of extreme persecution to His people. Jesus even directed us to “rejoice and be exceedingly glad”, for there are rewards awaiting faithful, persecuted saints that weather hardship for the glory of God. There are some vital truths that all saints need to remember when God calls His people to undergo persecution.

1. GOD WILL MAKE IT HIS BUSINESS TO SPEAK SPECIFICALLY THROUGH HIS SERVANTS DURING TIMES OF SUFFERING. When you read the very opening verse of this chapter, you find not only Paul, but Silas and Timothy addressing the saints of God, the precious church of the Lord Jesus Christ. God wanted these saints to be aware that He knew their plight, and He had not abandoned them, rejected them, but was carefully watching their suffering, irregardless of what they may have thought or felt. God will always see to it, that He has faithful messengers to encourage His people, and His church during times of suffering.

Paul had remained faithful to the Lord’s church, and God the Father had a message to give to His people through His choice servant. When we are walking through the various difficulties of life, we ought not be surprised when God chooses to speak His word of encouragement to us through His servants. It is the servants of God that He uses to provide encouragement, direction, and comfort during the hard difficulties of life. All throughout time, as long as God has had a people, He has chosen to use His servants to carry His Word to His people especially during the difficult times of life.

When we fail to listen to God’s servant, we fail to hear what God has to say to our lives. When these saints were facing ridicule, persecution, pain, suffering, and even death, God had Paul positioned to be of help to His people, for that is the nature of God.

2. GOD WILL MAKE IT HIS BUSINESS TO REMIND HIS CHILDREN OF THEIR SECURITY DURING DIFFICULT TIMES. In the Living Bible, verse 1 reads like this, “To: the church of Thessalonica-kept safe in God our Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Though the people may well have been scared and afraid in their suffering, for the simple fact that they were human, God would not leave them alone, and comfortless during their time of fear and suffering.

It was and is the plan of God our Father, to come to us with His Word of comfort, security and safety, to all that are in Christ Jesus. These in the church had confessed Christ as Savior, invited Christ into their life, though they were not perfect, God wanted them to know that they were protected. Paul under the leadership of God’s Spirit, reminded them that they were in God, meaning that they had a “fixed” position in God that could not change. Persecution may rise, difficulties may come, and death may even occur, but nothing could remove them from their fixed position as children of God. The same holds true for all God’s children.

God is always yearning that we know the truth of our position in Him. For, it is only through knowing our true position that we can have comfort in difficult times. Paul on another occasion, was brought to realize that because he was in Christ Jesus, he was persuaded that height, depth, things above, or things below, principalities or powers could not keep him from the love of God in Christ Jesus. While our Father may not keep us from the storms, the nature of our Father is that He will keep us in the midst of the storms. One example of this is the life of Noah. God didn’t keep Noah from the flood, but God kept Noah safe in the midst of the flood by providing security in an ark. We have the security of being in God and being in Christ Jesus.

3. GOD'S NATURE IS TO COME TO US WITH HIS BLESSINGS AND PEACE IN THE MIDST OF PERSECUTION. Paul discovered that the nature of God is to come and bring in our lives a peace that is beyond human explanation and understanding, as long as we are dependent and reliant in Him. God was watching their faithful devotion to Him, and He chose to come and surround them in a divine way with peace, that was beyond their comprehension. They no doubt could not understand why the utter sensing of peace, but the peace was from above, as they stood firm in the truth, and in the very Word of God.

True peace is from God and He sends His peace to His people as they are deliberately walking in obedience to Him. Jesus declared in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Since every believer has the risen Christ living within him or her, they have access to constant peace in their lives. Paul reminded these precious saints, that it was God that would make it His business to visit them with His divine peace. That is His promise to His obedient saints.

4. GOD YEARNS THAT OUR FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN HIM GROW EXCEEDINGLY DURING TIMES OF CRISIS AND SUFFERING. Something was happening in these people that had not happened in the easier times of life. They found that their confidence, trust and faith in the Living God was growing. They were driven to praying more and more, and watching God at work in their lives, and as they watched God move in their lives, they became more confident in the Living God. It is the nature of our Father, that He yearns for us a deep confidence and trust in Him...that is the essence of faith. Faith means you completely trust another, despite circumstances.

These saints were growing in faith in an explosive way. They were growing beyond measure. Paul had watched their faith and confidence in God grow, and He declared that he was bound to give thanks, or he was under compulsion to give thanks, for the wonderful way they were living in trust in the Living God. These saints were living in complete trust in God, therefore despite all their suffering, they were not afraid, but they noised their faith in God out loud.

When a church grows in faith, they pray trusting God for more. They pray, seeing God do more among the fellowship. As they pray, seeing God do more, they become excited with a joy that is beyond human lips for they know and experience the very love of Almighty God. As this church grew in faith, they grew in a deeper love, one toward another. They knew God loved them, and they rested in the wonderful provisions of Almighty God. As a church grows in faith, they watch God move heaven and earth for them, as they walk in trust and in love for God.

5. GOD YEARNS TO EXPAND THE WITNESS OF HIS SAINTS THAT ARE ENDURING HARDSHIP FAITHFULLY. Paul was excited to tell others about the faith, trust and love that was taking place in the church at Thessalonica, for they were walking patiently with God in the midst of crushing troubles and hardships. God has a way of using hardships in our lives, to bear witness to a watching world. When His saints are undergoing crushing times, and remain focused and stayed on Him, He expands their witness.

Though these church members in this early church have been with the Lord for centuries, God bears witness today of their faith and confidence in Him. It is the nature of God to bless, and expand the witness of any church that will endure hardship faithfully and continually walk with Him during the struggles of life. This church found themselves being talked about by one of God's greatest servants, all because they chose to remain faithful in the difficult times. God has not changed. When our Father finds a people remaining faithful to Him. He will make it His business to come to them, bless them and do abundantly more than they could ask or think...all because of their servant spirit toward the Living God.