

SERMON THEME: FACING THE END WITH SOBRIETY

SERMON TITLE: THE LORD JESUS WILL BE GLORIFIED IN YOU, BY REV JEREMY YAP

SERMON TEXT: 2 THESSALONIANS 1:5-12 (NIV)

⁵All 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. ⁶God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷and 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. ⁸He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might ¹⁰on 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. ¹¹With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. ¹²We 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.

PROLOGUE

- Recap on last week sermon:
 - God works through us through:
 - Other people,
 - The church we are in, and
 - The challenges in our lives as we work for Him.
 - As we work for Him, we are changed to become more like Christ.
 - The Christian life is progressive and not static, as we move towards the Day of the Lord.
- In this sermon theme of 'Facing the End with Sobriety', Paul talks of:
 - How we are to live our lives bearing the hope of Christ in us.
 - Encouragement (2 Thessalonians) for us as we live to the end, when Christians awaken to a new heaven and earth with the Second Coming of Christ.
 - As we meditate more on the Second Coming of Christ, we will see and understand the true hope that we have.
- We will observe the following in today's scripture text:
 - Paul uses:
 - 2 reasons for hope (v5),
 - 2 actions (v6, 7),
 - 2 different groups of people (v8), 2 outcomes for these groups of people (v9), and
 - 2 prayers (v11) Paul concludes this portion of the epistle, then going on to his argument, exhortation, and encouragement that as we wait for the Second Coming, Jesus will be glorified in us.
 - Two main points for today's study:
 - We should face the Day of the Lord with peace and purity.
 - That God's peace and purity descends upon our church as we mull over the passage, encouraging us as we live in this peace and purity.
 - Paul instructs on the ways and attitudes that we should live by, in preparation for the Second Coming of Christ.

A. REITERATIONS ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST/DAY OF THE LORD/JUDGEMENT DAY

- The 'evidence' (v5) mentioned in today's text refers to the substance from last week's sermon.
 - God is working in us and our faith is growing.
 - our love for each other is increasing.
 - We have faith in persecution and trials.
- Number '2' in the Day of the Lord:

2 REASONS FOR OUR HOPE	
This 'evidence' proves that (v5):	God's judgements are right. We will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God.
2 ACTIONS	
God is just, He will take 2 actions (v6):	Revenge on injustice. Give relief to the persecuted.
2 GROUPS OF PEOPLE AND THEIR OUTCOMES	
He will punish <u>the unbelieving</u> (v7):	Who do not know God. Who do not obey the gospel.
The punishments are (v9):	Everlasting destruction. Shut out from God's presence.
He uplifts <u>the believing</u> (v10):	"This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you."
He will be exalted (v10):	Glorified in His people. Marvelled at by those who have believed.
2 PRAYERS	
Paul prays that (v11):	God will make us worthy of His calling. God brings fruition to our desire for goodness and deeds that are prompted by faith.

- The wicked looks for a corrupt judge, while the righteous longs for an impartial judge.
 - E.g., Story of Solomon's judgement on the 2 women fighting over 1 surviving baby.
 - The oppressed and persecuted Thessalonians longed to see a righteous judge who will make things in their lives right.
 - They knew that they were incapable of facing the persecutors on their own.
 - *They are also aware that judgement belongs to God.*
- Judgement Day/Day of the Lord/Second Coming of Christ
 - Paul has been consistent in his teachings on this topic (v7).
 - The judgement is guaranteed to come at the end of time.
 - Paul do not know when this will happen and gave no specific time.
 - We must not overread and go into speculation over the events and happenings of the world to decipher when the Second Coming of Christ is.
 - However, Paul does tell us two things:
 - What will happen when the Second Coming of Christ is here.
 - How we should live before it comes.
- The Bible is clear that there will be judgement, punishments, and rewards.

1. PUNISHMENT

- Everlasting destruction & being shut out from the presence of the Lord.
 - Presence of the Lord = Holiness.
 - Unless we are covered by the blood of the Lamb, we can never enter His presence.

- When the new kingdom comes, only those who are holy and clothed in the righteousness of Christ will be there.
 - This message has been clearly set out since the beginning of time, since the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.
 - Even when Adam and Eve were banished, because of His love, God set in motion a plan of redemption. – to send Jesus to die on the cross to pay for the sins of the world, including that of Adam and Eve.
 - This message of banishment, love and redemption reappears in the time of Israel.
- However, at the Second Coming of Christ, we are *forewarned* that the banishment this time, will be everlasting.
- *We cannot say that God is unjust, because He has repeatedly warned us throughout the biblical history.*

2. REWARDS

- Those who have been saved and believes in God will be glorified.
 - The believers will be glorified by having Christ glorified in them, and will marvel at the return of Jesus.
 - Parable of the wedding banquet (Matt 22):
 - The righteousness of Jesus can only be given unto us and be accepted through the grace of God.
 - As like how the guests of the wedding banquet had been given clothes to wear for the banquet which they could not have afforded to.
 - Only those who have been clothed in Jesus' righteousness can enter the new kingdom of God.
 - Those who haven't been clothed in Jesus' righteousness, will be banished from God's presence.
- We see a 2-fold promise in v10, repeated in v12:
 - We will marvel and glorify Jesus, and Jesus will be glorified in His holy people.
 - During the Second Coming of Christ, we will look and behold the glory of God, but we will also bear a measure of the glory of Christ.
 - It is not an event that we merely witness, we are asked to be active participants.
 - How we face the Second Coming of Christ and our response to the truth and promise of Christ, determines if Jesus is glorified in us.
 - Believe in the truth.
 - Respond to the gospel, grace and mercy of God.
 - Live in hope of the Second Coming of Christ.
- *Respond to God in peace & purity so that Jesus will be glorified in us.*

B. PEACE

- Having perseverance and faith in trials + Live with peace in our hearts = Ability to live in peace.
 - Knowing that our lives are in God's hands; we need not be our own avenger, it pales in comparison to the divine justice that comes from God (Matt 5:38-40).
- Do you feel hurt by anyone, or does the thought of someone/something stirs up emotions of resentment in you? Do ideas of revenge cross your mind?

- “Holding anger is a poison... It eats you from inside... We think that by hating someone we hurt them... But hatred is a curved blade... And the harm we do to others... We also do to ourselves.” - Mitch Albom
- “The key to understanding anger is that it always arises out of an offended sense of justice. You can’t get truly angry at someone unless you can convince yourself he has wilfully deprived you of something that was reasonably and rightfully due you.” – Robert Farrar Capon.
- Is anything really ours/our rights?
- All that we have are given to us by the grace of God.
 - *We will return to Christ with nothing, except the integrity of the life we have lived, and with the hope that Jesus will be the judge of everything.*
 - With the love and justice of God in us, we:
 - Live a life of peace.
 - Have life that looks to the hope of the Second Coming of Christ and the new life that comes after.
 - Will be glorified and see Jesus glorified in us by our testimonies.
- Living a life of peace:
 - Does not imply passivism,
 - Nor that we continually put ourselves in danger with more harm threatened upon us.
- Jesus and Paul were not speaking about systemic injustice.
 - We still need to prosecute lawbreakers, bear arms to defend our countries against attacks, pursue social justice so everyone is afforded equal rights and opportunities in life.
 - However, Christians do not need to feel a need/obligation on their part to defend their own personal rights or avenge their own honour, because God is our Judge.

C. PURITY

- The purity of our lives is good, and the work that we do is good, because *it reflects the goodness of Jesus Christ* given to us by His word and His Spirit.
- There are 3 things that can bring destruction to our lives, and we need purity in overcoming them:
 - Money.
 - We need purity of thought and honesty when handling finances.
 - Power.
 - We need humility to treat people right and not take advantage of them.
 - Sex.
 - We live in a hyper-sexed world, that lives in contrary to the teachings of God.
 - E.g., Acts like homosexuality, adultery, sex before marriage and abortions are not illegal, even though they are immoral.
 - There is a need to preach and live out the Christian sexual ethics that is pure and worthy of God’s calling, one that is set out since the time of Adam and Eve (first marriage, first family), consistent throughout scriptures.
 - Marriage is between a man and woman.
 - Sexual relations exist only within the grounds of a marriage.
 - There are other grey areas of life we must be alert to, which not explicitly addressed in the biblical text, but runs contrary to the basic Christian sexual ethics.

- Pornography – indulging in the sins of others, degrades the worth of other people who are created in the image of God.
- Co-habitation – a doorway to pre-marital sex, invades the sanctity of marriage.
 - There is beauty in the life of intimacy that God wants to give us, that far exceeds what the world offers in the gratification of the flesh and carnal desire.
- The gospel, and death and resurrection of Jesus, and the hope of Christ's Second Coming give us the peace, and encouragement in our walk in purity, so that Jesus is glorified when He is revealed.

CONCLUSION

- We have a God that is so:
 - Loving, He died on the cross for our sins.
 - Powerful, He has conquered death and rose from a sealed tomb.
 - Faithful, He promised that He is coming again for us.
- If you feel that you are not living a life of peace and purity, has aspects of life plagued by anger and vengeance, and still living in sin, there is still hope.
 - We have the promises of the Second Coming:
 - We can live a life of peace and purity, where Jesus is glorified in us.
 - God is not done with you yet; we still have time to give our lives to Him.
 - Jesus wants to lead us into a life of intimacy with Him.
 - The work that God is doing in us is still progressing, we can still turn around.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. If Jesus returns tomorrow, will you be happy or sad? Why?
2. What is the first thing you think of when you think of the Second Coming of Jesus? Does it bring peace in your heart or give you a longing to lead a pure life?
3. Is God glorified in your life? In what ways can you move from where you are to glorify God through a life of peace and purity?