

Text – Passages in 1 and 2 Thessalonians

SERMON NOTES

A. Introduction:

1. Life gets tough and we experience trials, troubles, difficulties on various fronts.
2. God's word helps us know what to do so our lives can be like the house still standing after the storm – Matthew 7:24,25.

B. A Church and Pastor in Troubled Times.

1. Suffering:

- a. The Thessalonians were under affliction (1 Thes. 1:6; 2 Thes. 1:4). Affliction is any pain or distress in life causing uncertainty. It entered the world with sin and comes to all of us—good and bad, deserving and undeserving.
- b. Paul had a history of suffering (1 Thes. 2:2). It was often because of his faith.

2. Spiritual forces:

- a. Satan, our enemy, hinders and interferes with life (1 Thes. 2:18).
- b. The “secret power of lawlessness” (spirit of antichrist) is also at work in the world (2 Thes. 2:7).

3. **Unsettled:** Circumstances & expectations in the spiritual and natural realms can cause us to feel shaken, upset, spiritually disconnected, thinking we've been spiritually tricked (2 Thes. 2:2,3).

C. In Troubled Times We Must:

1. **Have faith in God** (1 Thes. 1:8; 2 Thes 1:3). Relax in God like you relax in your computer repairman when your broken computer is in his hands. **Pastor Derrick:** *“Have a living confidence in God. He has always been there and is always going to be there.”*
2. **Leave justice in God's hands** (2 Thes. 1:6,7; 3:3). **Pastor Derrick:** *“We all work for justice, but at the end of the day, after the work, leave it in God's hands for Him to work on your behalf.”*
3. **Surround yourself with godly people** (1 Thes 3:6) and **stay away from unhelpful, antagonistic people** (2 Thes. 3:14).
 - a. People can fill or drain us. We need to surround ourselves with company that is good, beneficial, strengthening, and empowering. **Karalee Fielding:** *“I was surrounded by aunts in this church.”*
 - b. Paul came to them like a father with comfort and exhortation (1 Thes. 2:11,12).
 - c. Paul sent Timothy to establish and encourage them (1 Thes. 3:2).
4. **Listen to God's word** (1 Thes. 4:2; 2 Thes. 2:15): **Pastor Derrick:** *“Let the word of God minister to you every day. Sit under the word of God in meditation and through teaching and preaching. Memorize and internalize the word and let the word live in and through you.”*
5. **Pray** (1 Thes. 3:10). This verse is the reason for letter. See also 2 Thes. 1:11. Pastor told of a mother in our congregation who was awake and praying for her traveling son through the night. He did have an accident but all in the car lived. **Pastor Derrick:** *“Prayer moves the hand of God, defends and intervenes.”*
6. **Persevere** (2 Thes. 3:10). In the midst of difficulties at home, at work, through uncertainty and change, persevere. Continue in the Christian life. Perseverance is a favorite theme of Paul's.
7. **Encounter the Holy Spirit for power and peace** (1 Thes. 1:5; 2 Thes. 3:16). **Pastor Derrick:** *“If you're fighting fear and anxiety, God wants you to encounter Him today as the giver of peace.”* This is peace with God and peace in all our relationships.

MINISTRY:

1. Pastor named three kinds of trouble: affliction, spiritual attack and feeling unsettled. Which of these have you or are you experiencing? What did or is helping you through this trouble? Share your experiences and testimonies.
2. Do you find it hard to leave justice in God's hands? Why?
3. How do the people you surround yourself with affect you? What qualities might you cultivate within yourselves to become godly people that benefit those with whom you spend time?
4. What part does God's word and prayer play in your life? Share with each other how you study the Bible, memorize it, and make Bible study/reading and prayer a part of your routine.
5. When have you been challenged to persevere?
6. How do you obtain and retain the Spirit's peace in the ups and downs of life?

PRAYER:

Dear Father, thank You for these books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians and how relevant they are to our lives. Help each of us to take the teachings in them that apply to us and put these things into practice in everyday living. When trouble comes, help us to do the seven things pastor emphasized: put our trust in God, leave justice to Him, surround ourselves with godly people, get ministry from the Bible, pray, persevere, and invite the Spirit to impart peace and power. Amen.