

READ 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

1. During the last few weeks on a Sunday we have been considering the subject of “how to thrive in 25”. What would you consider to be an essential practice to help you spiritually thrive?
2. This Church in Thessalonica appears to be thriving. Do you think this is **because** of persecution or **in spite** of it?
3. Paul says that this church’s “*faith is growing more and more*” (v3)
 - i. What do you think that a ‘growing faith’ looks like for a Church?
 - ii. What would help us at FBC to be able to say that OUR faith as a church is growing more and more?
4. Paul also says that the “*love all of you have for one another is increasing*” (v3). What would help us at FBC to be able to say that OUR love for one another is increasing?
5. When Paul talked about this Church to other believers he did so with a sense of holy pride, boasting about their perseverance, faith and endurance within their persecutions and trials (v4). When speaking about FBC to others what do you say is its most commendable quality?
6. As Paul reflects on this Church in Thessalonica it causes him to be thankful to God for them (v3). Who are you thankful to God for in your life and why?
7. Paul is not saying in verse 5 that their suffering reflects God’s judgment, rather that it will be “evidence” used in judgment against those who persecute them. Because He is just (v6), God will ultimately ensure justice is done by holding people accountable for their wrongdoing (v6-7). Do you ever feel troubled about people who have apparently “got away” with committing atrocities? Does knowing that God will eventually judge them bring you any comfort?
8. The return of Jesus is a great occasion for the believer to look forward to, but Paul speaks of it as also heralding a time of judgement for those who have not accepted the Gospel (verses 8-9). How do you think Christians should respond to Paul’s teaching in these 2 verses?
9. Paul prays that God will “*make you worthy of his calling*” (v11) – The Message paraphrases this as “*pray that our God will make you fit for what he’s called you to be*”. How can we best pray for churches going through times of persecution?
10. Paul also prays that God will use His power to “*bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith*”. The New Living Translation merges these 2 things saying, “*May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do*”.
 - i. Would you say that you have a “desire for goodness”?
 - ii. What is your faith currently prompting you to do?
11. Paul’s prayers for this church were, according to verse 12, to bring about 2 things in accordance with God’s grace: That the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified in them and that they may be glorified in the Lord Jesus. What is the difference between these two things?
12. Psalm 23:6 says, “*Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life*”. On Sunday Glyn suggested that not only is this a declaration of the certainty of the Lord’s provision of His goodness and love for us all the time but also it is a challenge for us to leave behind His goodness and love – i.e. it follows **us** – as a means of blessing to others. Discuss how you as a group (or as individuals) might be able to engage in some acts of goodness/kindness during the coming weeks to be a blessing to others.