



No Rest For The Wicked



Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 192–196.



2 Thessalonians 1:1-8 (NKJV)

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

5 *which is* manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;

6 since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,

7 and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The Christians in Thessalonica were grateful to God for Paul's first letter, but it did not immediately solve all their problems. In fact, the persecution grew worse and some believers thought they were living in the time of the Tribulation.
- Then a letter arrived claiming to be from Paul, stating that the Day of the Lord was actually present. Needless to say, the assembly was confused and frightened by this prospect.

- Some of the believers concluded that since the Lord's coming was so near, they ought to quit their jobs and spend their time waiting for Him.
- This meant that the other members were under an extra burden to care for them.
- Satan was working overtime as the lion he was seeking to devour.

1 Peter 5:7–8 (NKJV)

7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

- As the serpent, he was seeking to deceive.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NKJV)

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

- It was in response to these needs that Paul wrote his second letter.
- He began with their most pressing need, the persecution they were experiencing because of their faith. In this first chapter, Paul shared three encouragements with his suffering friends.

The Encouragement of Praise

(2 Thes. 1:1–4)

- After greeting his friends, Paul launched into a statement of praise to God for what He had been accomplishing in their lives.
- Paul was practicing his own admonition, “*In everything give thanks*” (1 Thes. 5:18).
- You cannot help but notice Paul’s repeated thanksgivings in these two letters.

1 Thessalonians 1:2 (NKJV)

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

No Rest For The Wicked **PART 1**
2 Thessalonians 1:1-8

EVERY
Member | Event | Time

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 3:9 (NKJV)

For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God,

2 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV)

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

**Not Only Does
Prayer Change
People And
Situations, But So
Does Praise.**

No Rest For The Wicked **PART**
1
2 Thessalonians 1:1-8

EVERY
Member | Event | Time

- Satan has many devices to defeat Christians, and one of these devices is suffering, as in the case of Job.
- If Satan can put us into difficult circumstances, he may be able to weaken our faith.
- *“One of the best weapons for fighting Satan is praise,”* I told my morning class.
- *“In spite of his pain, Job was able to say, ‘Blessed be the name of the Lord!’ So, the next time things go wrong and you are tempted to get impatient, turn to God and give thanks.”*

- No doubt the Thessalonican believers did not consider themselves to be very spiritual as they suffered, but Paul detected what God was doing among them.
- You and I are the worst ones to evaluate our own lives.
- Many times others can see the spiritual improvement when you and I miss it completely.
- For what blessings did Paul give thanks and thereby encourage his friends?

Their Faith Was Growing

(v. 3a)

- A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted. New believers must expect their faith to be tried, because this is the way God proves whether or not their decision is genuine. Faith, like a muscle, must be exercised to grow stronger.
- Tribulation and persecution are God's ways to strengthen our faith.

- An easy life can lead to a shallow faith. The great men and women of faith in Hebrews 11 all suffered in one way or another, or faced tremendous obstacles, so that their faith could grow.
- Paul had prayed for the believers in Thessalonica, that their faith might be perfected (*1 Thes. 3:10*); and now he thanked God for answered prayer.

Their Love Was Abounding

(v. 3b)

- Again, this was an answer to Paul's previous prayer (*1 Thes. 3:12*).
- Suffering can make us selfish; but when suffering is mixed with grace and faith, it produces love.

Galatians 5:6 (NKJV)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

- When Christians suffer, their faith reaches *upward* to God, and their love reaches *outward* to their fellow believers.
- For the Christian, suffering can help to produce abounding love.
- The early believers were only obeying the commandment of their Lord, “*Love one another.*”
- Their own suffering did not prevent them from sharing love with others who were suffering.

Their Patience Was Increasing

(v. 4)

- Perhaps “*perseverance*” would be the best translation of this Greek word.
- “*Tribulation works out endurance*” (Rom. 5:3, *literal translation*).
- You do not become patient and persevering by reading a book or listening to a lecture. *You have to suffer.*

What Were These Believers Enduring?

- Paul used several words to describe their situation: *persecutions*, which means “*attacks from without*,” or “*trials*”; *tribulations*, which literally means “*pressures*,” or afflictions that result from the trials; and *trouble* (*2 Thes. 1:7*), which means “*to be pressed into a narrow place*.”
- No matter how we look at it, the Thessalonian Christians were not having an easy time.

God never wastes
suffering.

Trials work *for* us,
not *against* us.

No Rest For The Wicked **PART**
1
2 Thessalonians 1:1-8

EVERY
Member | Event | Time

2 Corinthians 4:15–18 (NKJV)

15 For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

James 1:1–5 (NKJV)

1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

No Rest For The Wicked **PART 1**

2 Thessalonians 1:1-8

EVERY
Member | Event | Time

- If we trust God and yield to Him, then trials will produce patience and maturity in our lives.
- If we rebel and fight our circumstances, then we will remain immature and impatient.
- God permits trials that He might build character into our lives.
- He can grow a mushroom overnight, but it takes many years—and many storms—to build a mighty oak.