**Community Group Discussion Guide**

**2 Thessalonians 1:5-12**

*Read 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12*

*Set the Context…*

**Context:** As we walked through the first letter to the Thessalonians we learned how the believer’s faith was “Unshaken” in the midst of these trials and the report from Timothy filled Paul with joy that their love for one another grew. Paul wished to be with them so that he might be able to supply what was lacking in their faith. Now Paul is writing to the Church at Thessalonica again because the trials and persecution have gotten worse. So Paul writes to them to tell them of the hope they have in the midst of persecution. Some of that hope is drawn from the truth that when Jesus returns, he will defend their cause by exacting vengeance upon those who have rejected gospel and persecuted them.

**Commentary:** The Thessalonians were physically tormented, while living for the kingdom of God. Suffering often causes us to question our commitment to Christ, and whether we are walking in God’s will. But Paul says that experiencing suffering from the world for following Jesus is not only to be expected but proves that we belong to the kingdom of God. “***This is the evidence of the righteous judgement of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering***.” (2 Thess. 1:5) As Jesus said if the world hates you, understand that it hated Him first. Paul also assures them that God ***considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you (1:6).*** With the gospel a radical shift from the Old Testament has happened. Where you might have heard it said “***you shall pay life for life, eye for eye***…” (Ex. 21:23-24) following Jesus now calls us to “***not resist the one who is evil but if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, tun to him the other also***.” (Matthew 5:39) Paul is reminding those who are being persecuted and afflicted that God is a righteous judge who will repay those who are afflicting them now, with affliction and vengeance from Him later. Christians are called not to seek revenge but to wait for the Lord Jesus to grant their ultimate relief as he is “***reveled from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus***.” (2 Thess. 1:7-8) This also serves as a severe warning of the urgency to trust Christ for the forgiveness of sin and flee the wrath to come. Verses 9 and 10 show a stark contrast between those who are saved by grace through faith and those who have rejected the gospel at the Lord’s return. “***They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed***.”

 Paul then comforts the Thessalonians reminding them that he is praying for them. Pray is how Christians are strengthened to keep their perspective on the coming relief of the Lord through suffering. He pray for them that “***God may make them worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power***,” (2 Thess. 1:11) As believers walk in this power from God, the Lord Jesus is glorified in their lives.

*Share main truths of the passage along with verses that teach them and discuss how to apply to our daily lives …*

**Key Points:**suffering and affliction proves us worthy of God’s kingdom (2 Thess. 1:5)

God will repay affliction and vengeance at the Day of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:6-10)
Prayer for strength to glorify Christ through resolve in affliction (2 Thess. 1:11-12)

**Application Questions:**

Verse 5

1. Suffering is “for the kingdom of God,” when we are suffering do we see it as a time to grow and be called worthy of the kingdom of God?
2. In what ways do Christians suffer for the gospel in America? How do we ensure that we keep a kingdom perspective when suffering?
3. How could you use suffering and affliction for opportunities to share the gospel with others?
4. Can you share a time when you had to “turn the other cheek,” and it opened up the door for a gospel conversation? How do we grow in the ability to “turn the other cheek”?
5. When you face adversity, trials, or persecution; what is your typical response? How do you seek to preach the gospel to yourself through those times?

Verses 6-10

1. How do we hold the tension of desiring Justice and not seeking vengeance?
2. How does it encourage your perseverance to know that Jesus will one vindicate the wrong we face from the world?
3. Hell is real, time is short, and the gospel can save. How is our group growing in evangelism, and how are you individually growing in evangelism?
4. Are you looking forward to Christ’s return joyfully or with fear and anxiety? Why?
5. Do you ever think about hell? Why is this something important to remind ourselves of as we pray, read Scripture, or share the gospel?

Verses 11-12

1. Paul prays for the Thessalonians faith. Who is praying for you and who are you praying for?
2. How can you form and maintain these relationships?
3. Do you typically see God making us worthy of his calling, through resolve and works of faith? If so how? If not what are areas you can begin striving for these?
4. Paul writes so that the Thessalonians might persevere to the end and glorify God. What is one way God can be glorified by the way you are responding to something in your life right now?

*Share a key take away or challenge for the week…*

*Pray together in light of 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12*

**Prayer Guide:**

Pray for our church that we will embrace persecution like the Thessalonians when it comes and we might share the gospel in light of the urgency of hell and the vengeance of a Holy God. Pray that God’s glory would shine through the way we handle persecution and various affliction.

Pray for our city that the righteous judgment of God might be revealed to Louisville and they might turn and believe in Christ who can save them from eternal punishment. Pray for peace and racial unity in the midst protests, riots, and hostility. Pray for LMPD, and for those mourning over the loss of life and loved ones.

Pray for our world that missionaries might go out not just preaching the gospel of heaven, but they might go to preach the reality of hell as well. Pray that God would strengthen those who follow him in persecuted contexts that their resolve would glorify God.