1. Paul Commends the Persecuted Church 2 Thess. 1:3-4

3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

4 Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

Public Commendation: Their growing faith, their increasing love, for one another, and their steadfastness and faith while enduring persecutions and afflictions.

2. Paul Comforts the Persecuted Church 2 Thess. 1:5-12

A. Sweet Comfort foretold: 1:5-7a

5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just it repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels...

• The sweet sense that you are considered worthy of the kingdom of God.
• The sweet knowledge that the injustice will end, and turn on itself.
• The sweet relief that comes when the persecution is finally removed.

B. The Comfort of Standing with the Righteous, when...

• When the One who is Holy and Just comes 1:7b-9
  ... when the Lord Jesus is revealed 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. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, [See Romans 1:18-24]

• When people get the judgment they deserve. [See Rev. 20:11-12, 15]

What is Justice? Justice is getting what you deserve.
What is the Biblical distinction between God's Justice and God's Mercy? 1. Justice is an obligation for God whose nature is Holiness and Truth; while Mercy is voluntary to God. God is not obligated to show mercy to a rebellious creature who deserves punishment. [See Romans 9:15] 2. God is both Just and Merciful but never Unjust. Sometimes God acts Non-Justly by showing mercy to those who don't deserve it; but he is never Unjust. 3. When God acts non-Justly by showing us mercy, he is still being Just, he assigns the just penalty onto Another. Justice is served.

• When we see Jesus as He really is; what a marvel. 1:10
  10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

To the church of the Thessalonians: The second apostolic letter to the Thessalonians begins almost exactly like the first letter. As was the custom in ancient letters, the authors identify themselves first (Paul, Silas and Timothy), after which the recipients are named.

We ought always to give thanks to God for you: Paul offers a thanksgiving to God for the church. In the case of the Thessalonians, the apostle recognized the necessity of offering thanksgiving to God for the growing faith and love demonstrated by this church (v. 3b). The presence of such virtues in the congregation was the result of God's activity among them, and for that reason he is the one who is worthy of their thanks.

Your faith is growing abundantly: As in 1 Thess. 1:3, the Thessalonians' faith and love moves him to offer thanks. These believers were noteworthy for their faith in God, especially because it's faith in the face of adversity. Likewise, the apostle notes that the mutual love of the Thessalonian Christians is increasing. This love characterized the believers' relationships among themselves (1 Thess. 1:3; 3:6, 12; 4:9-10; 5:8, 13). Paul had previously exhorted the church to exhibit love toward one another “more and more” and the Thessalonians had taken the exhortation to heart!

The mutual care and concern of this congregation and the reciprocal care among the members of this congregation moved the church founders to give thanks to God and stands as an exhortation to those of us who belong to fragmented Christian communities.
Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed 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. 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 to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, 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.

Resources used or adapted for this outline: 