



Elements Class - 10.45a - Choir Room - 7.27.14

LAST WEEK...

Our obedience to God will often mean risk... loss, disadvantage, harm, scrutiny and less comfort in this life.



Risk in
Obedience *to his commands and revealed will.*

Risk in
Love *for the sake of others.*

Risk in
Commitment *to the accomplishment of the great commission.*

Risk in

Pursuit of personal
and corporate
ministry ventures.

If safety, security and risk
avoidance is our goal...
**disobedience may be our
only option.**

It is **foolish** to think that one
of God's primary goals is for
us to be **secure**, **safe**,
luxurious and **comfortable**.

Quite the opposite:
One of God's primary goals
is for our security, safety,
luxury and ease
to be challenged
and even destroyed.

In this way:
We will learn to find our
security, safety and luxury
in God
and God alone.

SUFFERING
IS THE
MEANS

When we 'risk it' and set
aside our earthly
security, **safety** and **luxury**...



and
 through
 suffering
 we obey
 God...



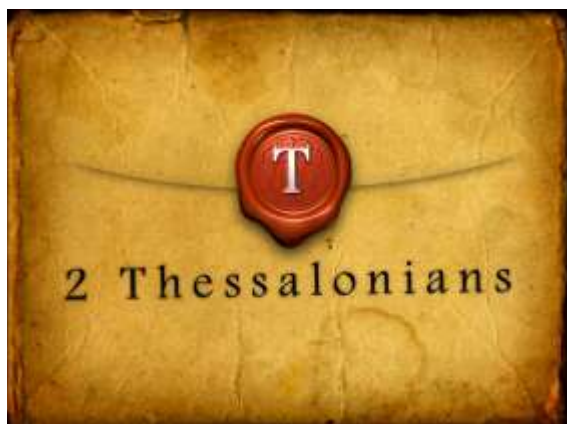
...that is the very thing
 that will make
God look 'all glorious'
 to a lost and dying world.

God appears more as the
 glorious, all satisfying and
 valuable Being that he is,
 when we can praise him
 during the storm of
 suffering...

...than if we only appeared
 to find him worthy or
 valuable during times of
 luxury and tranquility.

SUFFERING

*The state of
undergoing pain,
 distress, or hardship.*



*"Paul, Silas and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in
God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ: Grace and peace to you from
God the Father and the Lord Jesus."*

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2

*To the church...in **God** our Father
and the **Lord Jesus** Christ*

These truths are to
those who are...

(1) In God the Father

(2) In the Lord Jesus

What does it really mean
that the church is
"in" God the Father
& **"in"** the Lord Jesus?

As a church, we are
in a Father
and **in a Lord**

What does "Father" imply?

Primarily care,
sustaining, protection,
provision and discipline.

So to be in the Father
would mean mainly to be
in his care and **under his
protection.**

What does "Lord" imply?

Primarily authority and
leadership and
ownership.

So to be in the Lord
would mean mainly to be
in his charge, **under his
authority** and **in his
service.**

Paul greets the church in a way
to remind them that
they are a family
(in the care of a Father)
and that
they are servants
(in the charge of a Lord).

*Grace and peace to you from God
the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*

To those who are
in the Father and
in the Lord...

We are given grace.

The **Father's care** comes from grace. The **Lord's commands** come from grace.

Grace is God's powerful disposition to do underserved **good** to those in his care.

Which leads to peace.

When we know and believe that God is our caring Father, and that Jesus is your loving Lord...

Which leads to peace.

...and that all their dealings with us are dealings of grace, then what comes into our soul should be:
a peace that passes understanding!

"We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing."

2 Thessalonians 1:3

When the Church is confident in **its position in their Father** and **its purpose in their Lord...** incredible obedience occurs.

*“your **faith is growing**
more and more,
and the **love** all of you
have **for one another** is
increasing”*

*God’s goal for the Church
is accomplished **when**:*



***Faith** in the Father is
growing.*



***Service** to the Lord by
loving others is **increasing.***



Faith is the **vertical** response to grace: Confidence in God's care.



Love is the **horizontal** response to grace: Service to the Lord.



The care of God the Father
is to be trusted in faith...



...and the charge of Jesus the
Lord is to be obeyed in love.



The essence and sum of the
Christian life is faith toward
God and love toward man.

FAITH. **LOVE.**

**The barometer of spiritual life
and maturity is:**

Do we have a strong confidence
in God for our future and do we
have a visible, genuine love for
each other?

And is that faith and love
GROWING?



Paul praises them not only because
they have faith & love...but because
their faith is **growing** and their love for
is **increasing**.



What does this have to do with

SUFFERING

"Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring."

2 Thessalonians 1:4

*"All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and **as a result** you **will be counted worthy** of the kingdom of God, **for which you are suffering.**"*

2 Thessalonians 1:5

"God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels."

2 Thessalonians 1:6

"in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring..."

"as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, **for which you are suffering.**"

Not only does God **desire** that faith and love flourish in the presence of afflictions...



Paul says that this is precisely God's loving **plan** to prepare us for the Kingdom to come.



Paul is saying that suffering and affliction is a **major** part of the loving, gracious, **care** of the Father.

No only should we **expect risk** to be part of our obedience to God...

We should also **expect suffering** to be part of God's loving care.

“Our momentary, light afflictions **are producing for us** an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison...”
(2 Cor 4:17)

2 Cor 4:17 & 1 Pet 1:7

tell us that this persecution
is actually the refining fire
 that God uses to produce
 godliness in us...and that it is
 loving of Him to do so.

Romans 5:3-5 echoes:

“...we glory in our sufferings,
 because we know that **suffering**
produces perseverance;
 perseverance, character; and
 character, hope.

And hope does not put us to
 shame, because **God’s love**
has been poured out into
 our hearts through the Holy
 Spirit...”

Romans 8:17-18 and the same theme:

“...if we are God’s children, then we are
 heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with
 Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings
in order that we may also share in his
 glory. I consider that our present sufferings
 are not worth comparing with the glory
 that will be revealed in us.”

Next Week:

Church Picnic and
 Baptism at Pastor Mike’s
 (and Garber’s) house.