

Sermon followed by Service - November 16, 2025 - 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

Her hands were folded. Her eyes were closed. Tears were flowing down her cheeks. “Why does God let this happen? Why does God let them do that?” Moms and dads, who should love and protect their children, abuse and belittle the children entrusted to their care. And then those children turn around and hurt still more children. “Why does God let such evil go on?”

We watch the news - a husband and wife, old and blind, robbed - not just their money, but even their cane and walker. “Why does God let that happen?” We watch our country’s politics play out. With disgust, we wonder: “Why does God let this happen?” We watch the news around the world - Gaza, Ukraine “Why does God let it go on and on?”

We don’t see it much in the news. Christians attacked, bullied, persecuted. I said we don’t see it much in the news. But it still happens today - Christians beaten, arrested, thrown into jail, taken to court for showing their faith. Christians disowned and cut off by family and friends for holding on to Jesus. Christians belittled at home, at work, at school. And we wonder: “Why does God let it happen?”

Why? In our lesson, Paul is writing to people being persecuted for their faith in Jesus. So let’s go there first. “Why does God let it happen?” When you are persecuted for your faith, but you persevere, you show God to be right. When you are shunned and cut off for holding to Jesus, but you still hold on to Jesus, you show God to be right. When you are belittled and mocked for standing with Jesus, but you still stand tall with Jesus, you show God to be right. When the world pushes you to be wrong, but you still do right, you show God to be right. How? You show God to be right in counting you worthy to be saved.

When I hear Paul say that, my brain does a double-take - “what?!” When God chose me to be saved, I wasn’t worthy. When God called me to be his, I wasn’t worthy; truth be told - I was against him. If it weren’t for Jesus and his Spirit, I’d be standing against God today. And now, when I do stand with him, it’s not because of my strength, my goodness that I stand with him. It’s only because of his strength, his goodness, his forgiveness in Jesus, that I stand with God today. But what does God do? He counts me worthy; he counts us worthy. As I said, this is mind-boggling. God gives us the strength to stand with him, and he gives us the credit. He gives us the strength to stand with him, and as we stand with him in the face of evil, we show the world - God is right.

Paul didn't say it would be easy. When we see evil all around us, when we feel evil tear at our faith and tear at our hearts, it can be hard for us to stand with God. It can be hard to think God is right. It can be hard not to think: "Why is God letting this happen? Why is God letting them get away with this?"

"Why is God letting them get away with this?" He's not. They will get what they have coming. **"God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord."** "God is just. He will pay back. He will punish."

We see God reveal his wrath and judge and punish today as he hands sinners over to their sin. We see God reveal his wrath and judge and punish today as "forces of nature" disease and destroy throughout the world. We see God reveal his wrath and judge and punish today as people turn on and against each other.

But here in our lesson, Paul isn't talking about how God punishes in the here and now. Instead, Paul is pointing us ahead. "They will not get away with this. God will not let them get away with this." The day is coming when Jesus will return, not meek and mild with angels singing: "Peace," but Jesus will return in blazing fire with his powerful angels to pay back and punish.

This world with all its tools of evil, this world with all its idols and temples set up to deny God and distract from God, this world with all its brokenness will be burned up. Peter tells us this world will be burned up and made new for life with God. But that's not what Paul is talking about here. Paul isn't talking about the destruction of the world. Paul is talking about Jesus returning with his angels to pay back and punish the people of the world. People who reject Jesus in the here and now will be shut out from his presence in heaven. People who don't have time for God now will have eternity to think about their foolishness in hell. People who thought they could go their own way and do their own thing, people who thought they could go without God will find out how awful it is to be without God. The people of the world who make life hard for the people of God will find out what it means to anger God. It might look like the wicked are getting away with something today, but God will pay back and punish.

I need to hear that. Some days we look around and we see little justice and we might think there is little or no god. We might give up on God in despair. We might give up on God and join the wicked. We might put our self in place of God and work our own brand of justice. When we're wondering: "Where is God in all this?" ... it's good for me to know that our God is a God of justice and when all is said and done, he will work his justice. He will pay back and punish.

That said, the thought of the wicked getting what they deserve probably doesn't have us dancing in the aisles, does it? If we're honest about ourselves, we remember times we've been the wicked, perhaps cheering sin, perhaps wishing we were brave enough to join the world in its sin. And if we're honest about our family and friends, I imagine most of us have people near and dear to us who have left God behind and, unless they repent ... they will face eternity without God. So, no, the thought of Jesus returning as Judge to pay back and punish doesn't have us dancing in the aisles. But the thought of Jesus returning as Judge doesn't have us sidelined either, just watching and waiting for Jesus to do his thing.

No, when we were among the sinners, Jesus didn't just watch and wait for Judgment Day. No, Jesus stepped into our history to save us. He took your sin, my sin, the sin of the world as his own. Crucified on the cross he took the punishment we had coming; he paid the price to set us free. Now, today, with Easter power, he gives you his promise, God's promise - "Peace. Your sins are forgiven. Your guilt is gone." When Jesus comes back for you, it won't be to punish and pay back, but Jesus will come to give you relief, to take you to be with him in heaven. Instead of wondering: "Why God?" you will show the glory of God. Instead of wondering: "Why God?" you will marvel at the grace of God.

I know the evil around us can have us hurt and heartbroken, disgusted and angry. You're not alone in feeling that way. You have a world of people around you feeling just as hurt and heartbroken, just as angry and disgusted, just as full of questions. You may not be able to answer their every "why?" but you can show them the answer they need. You can show them Jesus. And then together, we can enjoy not only the peace and relief, but the justice of Jesus in heaven. Amen.

DIVINE SERVICE II

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we see suffering all around us. In our world today ... we see people cause suffering and trouble. In our world today ... we see people living like none of that matters.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see it matters to Jesus. Not only is he coming to bring healing and relief, but he is coming to bring judgment. Where do we fit in?

OPENING HYMN

"God of Grace and God of Glory"
Hymn 770

God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your pow'r;
crown your ancient Church's story,
bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us
scorn the Christ, assail his ways.
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**

For faithless worrying and selfish pride,

For sins of habit and sins of choice,

For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,

I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.

O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord God Almighty, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit that we may always look forward to the end of this present evil age and the day of your righteous judgment. Keep us steadfast in true and living faith, and present us at last holy and blameless before you; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Micah 4:1-6

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty.

“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

“See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.” The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 98A

Refrain



All the ends of the earth have seen the pow-er of God.



All the ends of the earth have seen the pow-er of God.

Tone



Sing to the LORD a / new song,
for he has done / marv'lous things;
his right hand and his / holy arm
have worked salvation / for him.
The LORD has made his sal- / vation known
and revealed his righteousness to the / nations. *Refrain*

Shout for joy to the LORD, / all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with / music.
Let the rivers / clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together / for joy;
let them sing be- / fore the LORD,
for he comes to / judge the earth.
He will judge the world in / righteousness
and the peoples with / equity.
**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

SECOND READING

2 Thessalonians 1:3–10

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

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. 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. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with

everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Luke 21:5–19

Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, “As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.”

“Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.”

Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

“But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. And so you will bear testimony to me. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. Everyone will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. Stand firm, and you will win life.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who in unity with the Father and the Son

is worshiped and glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead

and the life of the world to come. Amen.



1 Now let the heav'ns be joy - ful, let earth her song be - gin,
 2 From death to life e - ter - nal, from earth un - to the sky,
 3 Let all things, seen and un - seen, their notes of glad-ness blend,



let all the world keep tri - umph and all that is there - in.
 our Christ has brought us o - ver with hymns of vic - to - ry.
 for Christ the Lord has ris - en, our joy that has no end.

Refrain

He is ris - en! He is ris - en! Christ the Lord is



ris - en! Our joy shall have no end.

SERMON

2 THESSALONIANS 1:5-10

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



OFFERING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, our heavenly King, grant that the closer we draw to Judgment Day the more clearly we recognize and acknowledge your claim – your blood-bought claim on our whole lives – help us to live and give as yours! **Amen.**

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER OF APPROACH TO GOD

O God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth,
Have mercy on us.

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
Have mercy on us.

O God the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide,
Have mercy on us.

Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons in one God,
Have mercy on us.

PRAYERS FOR DELIVERANCE

Remember not, Lord Christ, our offenses nor the offenses of our forebears. Spare us, good Lord; spare your people whom you have redeemed with your precious blood.

From all spiritual blindness; from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice; and from all lack of charity;

From all deadly sin and from the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil;

From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism, from hardness of heart and contempt for your Word and your will;

From earthquake and tempest; from drought, fire, and flood; from civil strife and violence; from war and murder; and from dying suddenly and unprepared;

In our times of trouble, in our times of prosperity, in the hour of death, and on the day of judgment;

Good Lord, deliver us.

FOR THE CHURCH

Govern and direct your holy Church, fill it with love and truth, and grant it that unity which is according to your will.

Give us hearts to love and reverence you, that we may diligently live according to your commandments.

To all your people, give grace to hear and receive your Word and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Strengthen those who stand firm in the faith, encourage the fainthearted, raise up those who fall, and finally give us the victory.

Hear us, good Lord.

FOR OUR COUNTRY

Rule the hearts of your servants, the president of the United States, and all others in authority, that they may work justice, love mercy, and walk in the ways of truth.

Bless and defend all who strive for our safety and protection and shield them in all dangers and adversities.

Grant wisdom and insight to those who govern us and to judges and magistrates the grace to execute justice with mercy.

Hear us, good Lord.

FOR ALL PEOPLE

To all nations grant unity, peace, and concord, and to all people give clothing, food, and shelter.

Come to the help of all who are in danger, necessity, and trouble; protect all who travel by land, air, or water; and show your pity on all prisoners and captives.

Heal those who are sick in body or mind and give skill and compassion to all who care for them. [Especially we pray for... *here name the person and the cause of the petition*].

Grant us true repentance, forgive our sins, and strengthen us by your Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to your Holy Word.

Hear us, good Lord.

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Son of God,
we ask you to hear us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
Grant us peace.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who will soon come again in glory to deliver us forever from this present evil age.

Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *Sanctus*

**O holy, holy, holy
Lord God of pow'r and might,
Your glory, earth and heaven
In countless ways recite.
Hosanna! Come and save us,
Lord God of hosts on high,
And in your grace and mercy
Receive our fervent cry.**

**Hosanna in the highest!
How truly blest is he
Who in God's name is coming
To set his people free!
He comes to bring salvation
And with his blood outpoured,
Deliver us from bondage — Hosanna, mighty Lord!**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the
 sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
 world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
 you take a - way the sin of the world;
 grant us your peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face"

Hymn 660

Hymn of the Day

1 Here, O my Lord, I see you face to face;
 2 This is the hour of ban - quet and of song;
 3 I have no help but yours nor do I need
 4 Mine is the sin but yours the right - eous - ness;

here would I touch and han - dle things un - seen,
 this is the heav'n - ly ta - ble spread a - new.
 an - oth - er arm but yours to lean up - on.
 mine is the guilt but yours the cleans - ing blood.

here grasp with firm - er hand e - ter - nal grace,
 Here let me feast and, feast - ing, still pro - long
 It is e - nough, O Lord, e - nough in - deed;
 Here is my robe, my ref - uge, and my peace:



and all my wea - ri - ness up - on you lean.
the brief bright hour of fel - low - ship with you.
my strength is in your might, your might a - lone.
your blood, your right - eous - ness, O Lord, my God.

Too soon we rise; the vessels disappear;
the feast, though not the love, is past and gone.
The bread and wine remove, but you are here,
nearer than ever, still my shield and sun.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
yet, passing, points to that glad feast above,
giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
the Lamb's great marriage feast of bliss and love.

CLOSING PRAYER

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

"All Is Well"
Hymn 802

Hymn: 802 All Is Well



1 The sun beams on be - hind the clouds and
2 He feels our weak - ness, knows our need, and



in the dark still grace a - bounds; all is well be-cause of
for our good he in - ter - cedes; all is well be-cause of



God's great love. The road of dis - ap - point - ment
God's great love. Through ev - 'ry fail - ure, ev - 'ry



runs where un - seen mer - cies wait for us, and all is
fear, the Lord of com - fort draws us near, and all is



well be-cause of God's great love.
well be-cause of God's great love.

Refrain



How bright - ly shines the love of the Fa - ther in our Sav - ior,



Je - sus Christ. With faith - ful hands he ful - fills ev - 'ry



prom - ise; he will nev - er leave our side.

12



3 His com - ing soon will fill the sky and

all that's wrong will be made right; with
 new - born eyes we will be - hold the glo - ry of the ris - en
 Lord. All will be well be - cause of God's great love;
 yes, all is well be - cause of God's great love. *Refrain*

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