

MON.
June
28

2 Thessalonians
1:1-7a

Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring (2 Thess. 1:4).

PROUD TO PERSEVERE

TIM BRITTON

If you are reading this there is a solid chance you are a part of a local church somewhere. I hope you love that church! What is it that you love about that place and those people? What is it that makes your church special and unique? What would you share with a friend about why they would also love your church?

As followers of Jesus, we tend to avoid prideful behavior like boasting, but what if we were able to boast about the incredible people who make up the body of Christ and all the compelling ways we are working together to fulfill His mission in the world together? Paul tells this church that he has been boasting about their perseverance and faith during trying times. That is a strong testimony to the faithfulness and strength of God.

Can you boast about your church? Do *you* realize that you are the *church*? If you can't think of a good reason to boast about your church perhaps you could apply yourself to being part of the boasting that a fellow member of your church could do.

Rise up, O Church of God! His kingdom's task embrace . . . Give justice larger place.

"Rise Up, O Church of God"
by Norman O. Forness

**I form the light and
create darkness, I
bring prosperity
and create disaster;
I, the LORD, do all
these things
(Isaiah 45:7).**

Please pray:

For the development of
Christian leaders in Gabon.

TUES.
June
29

2 Thessalonians
1:7b-12

We constantly pray for you, . . . that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith (2 Thess. 1:11b).

LIVE WORTHY

TIM BRITTON

The call to live a holy life is the call to live a worthy life. Paul frequently urges his readers to live a life worthy of the calling. At first reading that may sound impossible. We were unworthy of the grace given to us in salvation and many Christ-followers struggle with feelings of unworthiness their entire lives. Certainly, the transformative work of the Holy Spirit empowers us to begin living in a new way as children of God.

The incredible news in 2 Thessalonians 1:11 is that God actually makes us worthy of His calling. His power brings good things to fruition in our lives. Paul specifies that every desire for goodness and every deed prompted by faith can be brought to life by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It's important we don't miss why Paul prays for this. It is "so that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified" (v. 12a). That is the point and purpose of our lives—that those who are far from God would see Christlikeness in our desires and deeds, and not make much of us but give glory to Him.

*Hold o'er my being
absolute sway! Fill
with Thy Spirit till all
shall see Christ only,
always, living in me!*
"Have Thine Own Way
Lord" by Adelaide A. Pollard

**Again Jesus said,
"Peace be with
you! As the Father
has sent me, I am
sending you"
(John 20:21).**

Please pray:

That many people in Ghana will come to know Christ and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

WED.
June
30

2 Thessalonians
2:1-8

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed (2 Thess. 2:3a).

DON'T BE DECEIVED

TIM BRITTON

In my part of the world, we have heard a lot about “fake news.” Media outlets, political parties, and other powerful forces have been accused of working hard to manipulate truth or present false information as truth to benefit their agenda and advance their cause. Popular social media outlets and other sources have responded by working even harder to try to filter out news that isn't true so that there is no deception. It is often harder to know what is real than to fall into a trap of deception.

How much more should we be cautious about whom we listen to concerning spiritual things! The young church in Thessalonica was concerned about false prophets and the confusion surrounding the timeline for Christ's return. With few resources to look to for greater understanding, it would have been easy for them to be misguided and misled. Today we have no shortage of resources both in God's Word and in the centuries of solid Christian scholarship. And yet, it seems many are easily led astray with whatever teaching is appealing or popular.

We, too, need to practice discernment and measure all the “truths” and “news” against God's Word and the discernment His Spirit provides us.

*Lead on, O King
Eternal, Till sin's
fierce war shall cease,
And holiness shall
whisper The sweet
amen of peace.*

“Lead on, O King Eternal”
by Ernest W. Shurtleff

**My steps have
held to your paths;
my feet have not
stumbled
(Psalm 17:5).**

Please pray:

For the development of
Christian leaders in Ghana.

THURS.

July

1

2 Thessalonians

2:9-17

So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter (2 Thess. 2:15).

STAND STRONG AND HOLD FAST

TIM BRITTON

What are you doing with your hands and feet right now?

Take a moment and think about it because Paul's charge to his readers calls them to be attentive to and active with their hands and feet. He tells them to stand firm and hold fast. It is an image of feet planted and fists clenched.

This is not a passive image: it is powerful and fully engaged. This is an image of someone who is battling against something and for something. They know the teachings of and about Jesus handed down by Paul, and they refuse to let them go. They have put down deep roots, and this truth is the solid foundation upon which they stand.

This reminds us that being a disciple of Jesus requires us to be unwavering. We are to be steady and resolute, not easily swayed. We need to be knowledgeable about the life and teaching of Jesus and live our lives devoted to Him. Our attitudes, actions, desires, and character should be submitted to His lordship and shaped by His likeness. The good news here is that the Lord himself will strengthen and encourage us in every good word and deed!

*By the living Word of
God I shall prevail,
Standing on the
promises of God.*

"Standing on the Promises"
by R. Kelso Carter

**Though people
tried to bribe me,
I have kept myself
from the ways of
the violent through
what your lips have
commanded
(Psalm 17:4).**

Please pray:

That many people in
Guinea-Bissau will come to
know Christ and receive the
fullness of the Holy Spirit.

SUPPORTED BY PRAYER

TIM BRITTON

"But the church." Isn't that a powerful phrase? Here we read about a challenging moment in the life of the early church. Their most visible and vocal leader had been arrested and was about to stand a public trial. It was almost certain he wouldn't be treated fairly, and the truth would not be heard. This could have been a devastating setback for this fledgling group of Jesus' followers.

They could have responded like we do. They could have called a meeting to plan and strategize. They could have been filled with worry and fear. They could have even shut down and given up. But they did none of those things.

They didn't call a planning meeting: they called a prayer meeting. They cried out to God to do what only He can do. They prayed for deliverance and rescue: they prayed for a miracle. God showed up and exceeded every hope and expectation. Read verse 16 if you don't believe it. God loves to surprise and amaze us, but sometimes we forget to ask Him to do so.

May we pray big, bold prayers with confident trust that He is always able and in control.

*In my distress He
kindly will help me;
He ever loves and
cares for His own.*

"I Must Tell Jesus" by Elisha
A. Hoffman

**God is our refuge
and strength, an
ever-present help in
trouble
(Psalm 46:1).**

Please pray:

For the development of
Christian leaders in Guinea-
Bissau.

NO SHAME IN PERSEVERING

TIM BRITTON

We spend most of our life avoiding hardship. As I am writing this, the world is in the midst of a global pandemic that is impacting people in every corner of the world. For some, this has been the most trying thing they have ever endured. While we generally tend to suffer individually and in seasons, we now find that we are suffering together, seemingly with no end in sight.

We find ourselves praying that God would bring a purpose to this pandemic and, fortunately for us, that is exactly how He works. He redeems the most painful and difficult things that we face and uses them to accomplish His purposes in and through our lives.

Rather than longing for an end to a season of suffering, we can open our eyes to the beautiful truth that He is closer than ever, doing His deepest work in us. He is developing strength and tenacity to persevere. He's forming and shaping our character to be more like Christ, and He's infusing hope into what would otherwise lead to despair while reminding us that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28a).

*I have blessed peace
with my Lord so
near, Leaning on the
everlasting arms!*

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" by Elisha A. Hoffman

**Know that the LORD
is God. It is he who
made us, and we
are his; we are his
people, the sheep
of his pasture
(Psalm 100:3).**

Please pray:

That many people in Guinea-Conakry will come to know Christ and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

SUN.
July
4

Psalm 32:6-11

Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart! (Ps. 32:11).

REJOICE IN HIM

TIM BRITTON

What do you rejoice in? We can rejoice in many different things. Some of them are healthy and helpful while others can be damaging and destructive. As a dad I rejoice in the achievements and accomplishments of my kids. Maybe you rejoice in time together with your family, or in fellowship and life together with your church family.

Sometimes we are drawn to seek joy in temporary things. We discover that any happiness found there is temporary and fleeting. Many of the sources where people seek fulfillment and joy ultimately disappoint us and leave us feeling empty and dry.

There is only one true source of joy and that is the Lord, in whom the psalmist instructs us to rejoice. We can rejoice in God because He is faithful, steadfast, and unwavering. We can rejoice in Him because He does not shift or change. This source of joy is not affected or impacted by our circumstances, and joy that is in Him and from Him will never disappoint or dissipate. When we rejoice in Him we have deep, rich, meaningful, and lasting joy.

*I have found the joy
no tongue can tell—
How its waves of glory
roll!*

“Joy Unspeakable” by Barney
E. Warren

**Therefore, since we
have been justified
through faith, we
have peace with
God through our
Lord Jesus Christ
(Romans 5:1).**

Please pray:

For the development of
Christian leaders in Guinea-
Conakry.