

March 4 – Read 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12. This letter was written about one year after Paul's previous letter. The good news was they responded to his first letter by growing in their faith. The bad news was there was false teachings about Christ coming back very soon and people were quitting their jobs as they waited for the world to end. We don't get through life by simply waiting, we endure pain, suffering and trials by our faithfulness. Suffering can either destroy our lives or add meaning to it. Our problems can help us look upward and forward, instead of inward; they can build strong character; and they can provide us with opportunities to comfort others who are struggling. As Christians, our calling from God is to become like Christ. This is a gradual, lifelong process that will be completed when we see Jesus face to face. To be "worthy" of this calling means to want to do what is right and good. We aren't perfect yet, but we're moving in that direction as God works in us.

March 5. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Paul describes the end of the world and Christ's second coming. He says that great suffering and trouble lie ahead, but evil will not prevail, because Christ will return to judge all people. Although Paul presents a few signs of the end times, his emphasis, like Jesus' (Mark 13), is the need for each person to prepare for Christ's return by living rightly day by day. If we are ready, we won't have to be concerned about the preceding events or the timing of Christ's return. God controls all events.

March 6. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17. Paul consistently taught that salvation begins and ends with God. We can do nothing to be saved on our own merit – we must accept God's gift of salvation. There is no other way to receive forgiveness from sin. Paul is encouraging the Thessalonian believers by reminding them they are chosen by God from the beginning. Being made holy is the process of Christian growth through which the Holy Spirit makes us like Christ. Paul knew his friends would face pressure from persecutions, false teachers, worldliness, and apathy to waver from the truth and to leave the faith. So he urged them to "stand firm" and hold on to the truth they had been taught both through his letters and in person. We also may face persecution, false teachings, worldliness and apathy. We should hold on to the truth of Christ's teachings because our life depends on it.

March 7. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5. Beneath the surface of the routine of daily life, a fierce struggles among the invisible spiritual powers is being waged. Our main defense is prayer that god will protect us from the evil one and that he will strengthen us. The following guidelines can help you prepare for and survive attacks from the evil one. 1) Take the threat of spiritual attack seriously; 2) Pray for strength and help from God; 3) Study the Bible to recognize Satan's style and tactics; 4) Memorize Scripture so it be a source of help no matter where you are 5) Associate with those who speak the truth; and 6) Practice what your taught by spiritual leaders.

March 8. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18. Paul was writing here about the person who is lazy. Paul himself worked hard to have what he needed to live. The rule was “whoever does not work doesn’t eat.” There is a difference between leisure and laziness. An idle person who doesn’t work ends up filling his or her time with less than helpful activities, like gossip. Rumors and hearsay are exciting to hear, and make us feel like insiders. But they tear people down. If you often find your nose in other people’s business, you may be underemployed. Paul counseled the church to stop supporting people who were simply idle. Paul wasn’t advising coldness or cruelty, but the kind of tough love that a person would show a brother or sister. Relaxation and recreation provide a necessary and much needed balance to our life; but when it is time to work, Christians should jump right in. We should make the most of our talent and time, doing all we can to provide for ourselves and our dependents. Rest when you should be resting, and work when you should be working.