1 Thessalonians - Commentaries by Wilbur Smith

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Address—W. Smith

1/2 before him. For. Different expressions. That are found in the word. And they are related. And one believes that we can find encouragement for ourselves in looking at them. The subject is large, we can't go into much detail. But I trust that your God's help will be able to find something. For our souls, and especially, one thinks of the young people, those who have not been on the path possibly as long as some of the rest of us. And who need that assurance that God gives us? In his own precious word of our place in Christ. And what it turned with me first. Through the 1St chapter. The First Thessalonians. Then will read the whole chapter. Oh, so Venus Antimorthius under the Church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father. And in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God always for you all, making invention of you and our prayers. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love. And patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. Knowing brother and beloved, your election of God for our gospel came not unto you in Word only. But also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. As you know what manner of men, we were among you for your sake. And He became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost. So that you were in samples to all the beliefs in Macedonia and a chaos. Or from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia, but also in every place your faith had gone with it spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God. And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. The expression which I wish to bring. To our attention this afternoon is a word assurance. Now the Apostle Paul has spent a very short time. In Thessalonians. Just a very short time he was there. While he was there. Bitter persecution against him and against the believers was raised by the enemies of the Lord, so that the apostle was forced to flee for his life. But he left behind him a little company of believers. And now the apostle is writing to them to encourage them to go on in the faith. And apparently they were going on. In a nice way. Because we find the apostle can make mention of them to God in his prayers. And give thanks to God for them. Now you know what's nice, dear young people? When we see one here, one there, we contemplate the young people in our own little meetings. And we can thank God for the faith that is in them. Oh, how precious it is to see young people. Those who were newly saved, those who were young in years, going on well, so that we can thank God on their behalf. Well, that was a case where the Thessalonians. The apostle could thank God for them. And he remembered without ceasing.

Their work of faith. Their labor of love. And patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. All what a commendation that is. And our attention has often been called to the contrast between what we have here. And what we have in the second chapter of the Revelation. Where the church at Ephesus had left its first love. And we find. There that in writing to that church, the apostle by inspiration. The speaks of their work. And their labor. And their patience. All is a difference. Yes, there are words. It was labored and there was patience, but the spring behind it was gone. These in Thessalonica. All they were in the freshness of the first love. And there was the energy behind these things. And when it came to writing to Ephesus, the spring was gone. And the thing had become pretty much a dead work. Not so with these young Christians. And may it be so with us. That that which we do, we do it for the Lord with a desire to please Him. With His glory before us. I know, he tells them. He said our gospel came to you. Not in Word only. But it came to them in power. The apostle could speak to them the gospel. And the power of God through the Holy Spirit was behind it. The word was given to them in power, the apostle who had seen the Lord from glory. The one that was spoken to him on the way to Damascus. The one whom all known men as strong as a Lord. Look what thou have me to do. Oh, we find him now coming and preaching the gospel. And the power of the Holy Spirit was with him. Yeah, and in much assurance the apostle Paul had been face to face with the Lord Jesus. He knew him as a man in the glory. He knew him. Who has spoken to him, saying I am Jesus of Nazareth, but now he was the Lord in the glory? All knew where I bespoke. And the word which you gave out had no uncertain sound. It came to the Thessalonians. Thessalonians. With much assurance. And how nice it is when we hear the word of God spoken that way. Organ as that which comes from God himself, the word of God proclaims. And we know it's true. The Word of God is true. It's inspired. And that which we find in it is that which comes God breathes to us. Oh, we can rest our whole eternity upon the Scriptures. And you and I who have believed have rested the salvation of our souls upon the authority of the Word of God. Oh, how precious it is when the gospel goes out in much assurance. Well, that's the way it came to the Thessalonians. Thessalonians. And they saw in the apostle that it was real with him. Oh, is it real with you and me? And when we speak to our friends, when we speak to those in school with us. Or in the office, or to our neighbor. Do we speak the gospel in much assurance to them? Or do they see that as something with us, that it doesn't have much reality?

The Apostle Paul. Had been at Thessalonica. In persecution. Oh, the gospel was real to him. He valued it, and he proclaimed it as that which was of value to him. And they saw that. So he says he became. Followers of us and of the Lord, all they saw in the apostle how real it was, and they said this man has something that we want. Do your companions find that you have something that they desire, something that's real to you, and they want the same thing for themselves? Though they received the word from the apostle in like manner in much assurance. That came to them. They were assured that that was the apostle spoke. Was the truth that it was a word of God? And they found themselves in affliction. They found themselves persecuted. But something along with it. You know, persecution isn't easy to take. But Oh well, there is the persecution, the affliction for the sake of Christ. Oh, what joy there is with it to think. That we could suffer. For the name of Christ. In the early days of the Church's history, there were those who were joined, but they were counted worthy to suffer for his name. Yeah, they rejoined. Do we shun persecution? Or if we do, think of the joy we're going to lose. The joy that comes with the suffering for the name of Christ. But it was real with them, and they had the joy in the Holy Ghost. You know this world has its joys. And they don't laugh. But the joy in the Holy Ghost that the Thessalonians enjoyed. Was that which lasts and lasts for all eternity. And there are those who, when the Lord comes, he's going to say to them, Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Well, the Thessalonians. We're joining in the midst of their persecution. And now the apostle says, why your examples to all those? In Macedonia and IKEA. Why? He says it isn't even necessary for me to preach the gospel anymore. The

testimony that comes out from you. Is a real testimony to the gospel of the grace of God. In every place your faith that Godward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything. But here were these who once were poor heathen. Idol worshippers. And now they found something better. They had turned the guns from idols to serve the living and true God. Oh, what a change that was. Turned to God from idols and served the living and true God and to wait. For his Son from heaven, what a prospect they had. Now will you turn with me to Hebrews 10? Verse 12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin. Forever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made as footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us. For after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts.

And in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now we're remission of these is there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore present boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which gets consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. Having a high priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He is faithful to promise. Notice I changed the wording in the last verse that we read, and that's the way it should read. Well, now here we have a little progress from what we had before. We find here the Lord Jesus spoken of in contrast with the services that went on amongst the people of Israel in time fast. They had had their sacrifices, their offering, they had their priests which offered the sacrifices, and these sacrifices were being offered continually. Once a year on the Day of Atonement. The blood of the sacrifice was carried into the holiest of all and sprinkled on the mercy seat and on the ground before the mercy seat. But as this same epistle tells us, these sacrifices could never and never take away sins. Those sins were brought up before their consciences continually. Year by year, remembrance was made of their sins. But all the one who is the subject of the gospel. Which has come to us in much assurance. The Lord Jesus Christ. Has offered a sacrifice himself. The over the sacrifice. You know. In the days of the Tabernacle. There were no sheets there. There were no chairs in the Tabernacle. The work of the priest was never done. With the Lord Jesus. When it came the one whom we remembered this morning in his death. Did not sacrifice what he offered and. There was one sacrifice. And now he is seated forever. At the right hand of God. The sacrifice completed, the work of redemption done. Nothing more that needs to be done for your salvation or mine. How precious that is. But there's nothing more that needs to be done. As far as our salvation is concerned, the work is complete. And we rest upon them. The Lord Jesus. The woman also fully glorified God after the question of sin. Has taken his seat. At the right hand of government, he took that seat as an act of his own divine right to sit down at the right hand of God. Think of it. Thus your Savior and mine, He is seated at the right hand of God, because He had the right to sit down there. But to know the work. That he accomplished a Calvary has yet to have its completion. As far as this world is concerned. And thank God for everyone who has bowed. So the word of the gospel has bowed the needle to the Lord Jesus, but the time is coming when every knee is going to bow to him. He is there seated at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies those who rejected him, till they be made as footstools.

God is going to cleanse this whole scene of sin. By the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. On that basis. And the Lord Jesus, the one whom this world rejected, is going to have universal dominion. But all for you and me. How precious that we enter into the good of it now. We enter into the enjoyment of it. For by one offering yet perfected forever them that are sanctified. God has a people set apart in this world for himself. And the perfect. And standing before God, not a sin, not a sin remaining. And why? All the writer of this epistle refers to the Old Testament to show that it was nothing new as far as God was concerned. It was not you. God has spoken. Time passed that he was going to create and the people. Of Israel. A clean heart. Yeah, she was going to get take away the heart of stone from them, give them a heart of flesh. And he was going to write his word not in tables of stone. But in the fleshy tables of the heart. And that is what the Lord Jesus spoke of to Nicodemus in the third chapter of John's Gospel. He must be born again. And so God has given us in that new life He has given us. Nature suited to himself, suited to his presence. Our precious that we can lay hold of that. And he says there sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Oh, what a contrast were the days of old. Well, I remember no more you annoyed your fellow believers have that assurance that not one sin will ever be brought up against us in the presence of God. No they won't. This God that justifies. Who was he that condemned? Oh God is a word issue that challenge. Who can condemn when I justify? Their strength and iniquities will I remember. No more. Now then, in the days of old, the children of Israel were shut out. From the holiest of all. They are shut out by that thick veil. But dear fellow believer, you and I have the privilege. To enter into the holiest of all. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest of all. How? By the blood of Jesus. How precious it is that we have the blood of Jesus. As the ground upon which we can enter into the presence of God. Because it's the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanses you and me and has cleansed us from all sins. By a new and living way. Which you get consecrated for us through the veil. That is to say, his place. The veil that type. Of the flesh of the Lord Jesus. When the Lord Jesus died upon Calvary's cross, that veil was rent from the top to the bottom. So that the way into the holiest of all was opened up. So that you and I. Could go into the very presence of God and so that God by grace now in all the love of his heart can come out in blessing to you and me. And we haven't hype reached over the House of God. Yeah, that same one. Who cleansed us from our sins is our high priest. So in the 22nd verse it says, let us draw nearer with a true heart.

In full assurance of faith. You and I lay hold of what we've been speaking. That our streams and iniquities will be remembered no more. That the way into the presence of God has been opened up. Through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Have you laid hold of it by faith? Oh, now, the apostle says. Let us draw near with a true heart, then full assurance of faith. What more do we want to bring us into the presence of God? Into the presence that God looked for. Over worship for Thanksgiving, for what He has done for us. Yes, that's what we go there for. And we had a blessed time here this morning. Yeah, to give worship. Thanksgiving and praise to the One who has wrought that perfect work. Or a heartless sprinkled from an evil conscience, our bodies washed with pure water. Nothing to disturb our being in the presence of God. Not a thing. We have the assurance, the full assurance, that there is nothing. That can come up against us. So then. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope. Without wavering. Oh, let's hold facts. We know that we're going to be in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. We're going to be in the glory with him. We have a hope before us. All this old fact, the compassion of the hope without wavering. Why should we waver when the work was all his, and the work completed to the glory of God? He is faithful that promise, the one who has made the promises. Upon which we rest this faithful, and He will perform those promises. Now turn with me to the. To Colossians. 2nd chapter. Or I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you. And for them it Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. That their hearts might be comforted being knit together in love, and of all the all riches of the full assurance of understanding through the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, in which I hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joining and beholding your order in the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walking in him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith as He had

been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving. Beware that any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. After the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power. We have been speaking. In our meetings in the last two days. Something. Seeking to learn things in this world, Understanding well, you know the word of God is wisdom. We find the wisdom of God revealed in the scriptures. Oh, how precious it is to be filled with the wisdom of God. And how can we know it? Except through acquaintance with the scripture, through reading and meditation. Upon the scriptures these at Colosseum. For those. Who were well grounded in the truth. And yet there was a danger. Of getting off.

End of what today we might call higher learning. But the apostle wanted to go on. But they might enjoy that which God himself has for them. And so he has he has them in his prayers. And he says he had great conflict for them. He was striving with God in prayer. For these dear people at colossians that laodicea and. That their hearts might be comforted. Being knit together in love. Oh, is not the first thing. How is it? That you and I as Christians get along in this world, or is it not when we are in fellowship one with another, and the bonds of love between the people of God are in evidence? Hearts being knit together in love. Oh, when you see a Christian going on, well, you see the love of God flowing out of his heart. To those who are like wine children of God. But oh, when you see one who is cold or indifferent. To the people of God, you begin to wonder about the state of his soul. And how is it with you and me? Does the love of God show fill her heart that it overflows? To children of God and we find the affections flowing out. For one another. Because, you know, we're all members of that one body if one member suffers all supper with it. There is that bond of affection implanted in the heart by God Himself. And how precious it is when we see that love and exercise. We see the evidence of it. We don't see the coldness, the indifference to one another. Well, the apostle wanted these at Colossians to have their hearts nipped together in love. Oh, they're going to be knit together. They have to get close together and fellowship one with another. Oh, may we not be found walking in a park from our fellow Christians. You know they say that when a chicken is sick they will go off by itself and you can tell pretty quick if a chicken is sick if it's going on. By itself, Christians are like that. You see a Christian going off by himself. There is something wrong? So the apostle wants these at Colossians to have their hearts knit together in love. And unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding. Only one of them. That they could understand the intelligent in the things of God. In all the riches. Of the full assurance, Oh, think of the superlative that the apostle uses there. When a Manger. All the full assurance of understanding. We have to own how little we understand of the things of God. We have to admit it and owner with shame, but oh the riches of it are precious. To think that God is not limited. By what you and I are. But God according to his own. Of infinite being pours out upon us all the wisdom, the understanding. That is in his heart in this, he says, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God. And what is that? All that God and His love for you and me sent His own beloved Son down here in this world. To gather out. A people that they might be united to Christ. As his body, yes, that was in the plan of God. Within this council, before the world began, that the Lord Jesus would come down here. And die in order that he might have a people down here, but united to him above.

The people for himself. That which could not be spoken of in the Old Testament because Christ had not died. That God and His love could not manifest. His heart of love. To those who run to the block, but now that the Lord Jesus has come revealing. The Father. In all His grace and love. Now the mystery cut is revealed and. The apostle wants you and me to enter into all the riches of the full assurance of understanding concerning them, to think that Christ the Son of God. Would pick up four centers, cleanse them. Bring them to himself and make them his body. Do we enter into it? The way value. That would be apostle wants for these that Colossians, and through them you and me. Well, in this mystery of God are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Do we seek knowledge down here in this world? Oh, in this great work of God I hit all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. What more do we want? Are we occupied with learning down here? Were the things of this scene. All these things don't minister Christ to the heart. No, they don't. They but turn it away. And so the apostle is warning these here. Is I'm telling you this because there is danger that higher education is going to draw you away? This I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. There was that danger. They hadn't gone away yet. But there is a danger, and there is a danger today. If there was never any danger before, there is now of being drawn away by what this world calls its wisdom. And all it does is to glorify man, not the Lord Jesus Christ. They were going on in an orderly fashion there and he commends them for us. He says I'm with you in the spirit. He beheld their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ always that don't give it up, don't give that up. They need to hold that fast now, he said. As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk thee in him. That's a word for you and me, for our conscience. How have we received Christ Jesus the Lord? Ordered by simple faith in Him, we laid hold upon the Word of God. And we received the truth as to the Lord Jesus by faith. By grace are you saved through faith and not not of yourselves with the gift of God. They received Christ Jesus the Lord by faith. Now he says, so walk ye in him. Walk by faith. Oh, how many times we have to own that? We don't walk by faith. We make our own plans. We have our own schemes. We use our own wisdom. Oh, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are to be found. In the Lord Jesus. Him, as you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walkie in him. Rooted and built up in him. How can we be rooted and built up in him? This precious word is that which gives us everything we need to establish us. To guide us in our pathway down here. We have been Speaking of how the Apostle Peter.

Wanted those to whom he was writing to be established in the present faith. Now the Apostle Paul is saying the same thing, to be rooted. And built up in him. Established in the faith as he had been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving. Oh how precious It is one weekend, you know. Enjoy the word of God with Thanksgiving. That he has been so pleased to reveal his mind to us through the scriptures. Bewarelest any men spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. Or if you're going to add anything to Christ, if you're going to seek to lay hold of the things of God through higher education. Through man's wisdom. Is going to spoil it. It will spoil it. Very wireless and immense spoiled use of philosophy and vain deceit. Oh, don't be carried away by those things which men say. The traditions of men, the rudiments of the world, all these things are not after Christ. These things which the world has, the rudiments of the world, those things which are only half formed down here. Men have their theories and their hypothesis. All these things are not God's wisdom. They're not the truth of God. All beware. These are not after Christ. Now he says, For in him that is, in Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in hymns. Which is ahead of all principality and power. Dear young lady, dear young man, you who were Christians, you are complete in him in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwelled bodily. What a word that is. What can you add to us? What can poor puny man add to us? You are complete in him, don't add anything to it. Oil on this toilet you'll only take away from it and Rob Price of his glory. Oh, may you be found satisfied with that which God in his grace. Has given to you the blessed truth that you and I are complete in Him. Can you fathom the depth of it? When you add anything to the wisdom of God and so providing for you and me for that day when we're going to be in the glory with Him to be to the reflection of his glory. Oh bewareless, any man spoil you through philosophy and blame the sea. Now in Hebrews 6. Verse 10 God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have showed toward His name. In that you have ministered to the Saints and new ministers, and we desire that everyone of you do show the same diligence of the full assurance of hope. Unto the end that ye be not

slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Now the 19th verse. Which Pope? We have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil. Whether the forerunner is forested, Even Jesus made in high priest forever. After the order of Melchizedek. There we find full assurance again. We have seen the much assurance in the gospel we have seen. Full assurance of faith. And full assurance of understanding. And now we have full assurance of hope. These that the apostle was writing primarily to. We're in danger. They were about to lose that earthly place. Where the Jews had been their hopes on the city of Jerusalem. And he is turning their hearts away from that which is earthly to that which is heavenly.

You and I are a heavenly people. We are not earthly. That which was earthly has been done away, but we are a heavenly people. And they too were going through persecution. They were going through trial. But he tells them God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love. Which have showed toward his name. And it's just as true of you and me today as it was then. God will not forget. You know what you go through for the name of Christ. God is not unrighteous to forget it and he is going to reward and that Dane. Even a cup of cold water given in his name. Even a cup of cold water given the name of the disciple. You want to have a disciples reward. Oh, think of the details to which God goes to remember your work and labor of love. So these were found ministering to the Saints. They were continuing in it. They weren't giving it up because they were persecuted. They were, they had their hearts knit together and loved for one another. They were ministering to the Saints. Now, he says, we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end. Oh dear young men and dear young woman, this is not the time to settle down in this world. It isn't the time to give up. It's the time to use diligence. Let us therefore labor to enter into that rest which lies ahead of us. Oh, he said. We desired everyone of you to show the same diligence. We have a hope before us and he wants us to use that diligence. That we may be fully assured of that in our own souls. There is that hope that you and I have been enjoying. Is that real to your soul? So you'll go on with all the diligence? That there may be that abundant entrance that you may enjoy even today. Oh. Of the Lord's coming. Oh, don't be slothful. Don't settle down. The followers of them who through faith and patience, inherit the promises. In the 11 Chapter of this episode, we read of those who died in faith. They kept their face to the very day of their death. They counted that God was faithful. And that he would perform his promises. God will perform His promises. Oh, let's go on in their example. And have our faith anchored upon Him who is our hope. And so the 19th verse says which Pope we have is an anchor of the soul. For sure and steadfast in which entereth into that within the veil. Our hope is in the glory the Lord Jesus had gone there. He is within the veil and the glory, and that's where our anchor has been taken. And his firm in the glory. Oh, what a precious hope we have. The forerunner has gone to Jesus. The forerunner is now in the glory as He assures that you and I are going to be there with Him. He's going to have us in His presence. Yeah, he is there for you and me and all. What a hope we have and it gives us a full assurance to know that he is there now. And the one who said if I go away I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. So he is there now. And not only is he there to take us on Hind, but he is there.

For the present, as our High Priest, the one who undertake. For his people on the way to take us to the wilderness pathway in order to preserve us along the way. The one who has been down here, he knows all the pitfalls, all the dangers of the pathway, and he's going to sustain us in that pathway. And as we saw in the Epistle of Peter. How that he's made every provision for us. So that if we do these things, we need never fall. How precious that is. Only we go on with the assurance. All along our pathway. We have the assurance that the Lord Jesus died for us. We have the assurance through faith that we can enter into the presence of God without a sin upon us, perfect, without fear. He has given us the assurance of that understanding. So that we may enter into the mind of God and have wisdom for our pathways. And he has given us the assurance of hope so that we may look on to that coming day. When you have it with him.

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