All Things in Light of Eternity Pt. 2

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 March 2025

Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. We continue today in 2 Thessalonians. We're looking in verses 5 to 11 around this theme of all things in light of eternity.

We began this passage last Sunday and we'll continue it this morning. A couple of things that we looked at last Sunday already. One is that our suffering has a cleansing effect.
The suffering that we go through in life has a cleansing effect for us. It helps us to not love things of the world more than we should.
Suffering has a way of teaching us humility and we rely on the body of Christ for strength. For help and for encouragement and for prayer support.
And for most of us, we'd much rather be the one helping someone than the one receiving help. But suffering has a good way of allowing not only our own hearts to be clarified with what matters most, but to allow us to benefit from the body of Christ serving us.
[1:20] In our suffering, if we're believers, we tend, if we're believers, we would be running toward Christ with all of our heart. And while we can do that and should do that every day, in a season of suffering, it does have a way of causing our hearts to run with even more purpose toward the things of God.

And that is good for us. Suffering reminds us how fleeting the treasures of this world can be. Things that one day may mean everything to us when suffering arises.
All of a sudden, we recognize those fleeting treasures of the world must be kept in their proper perspective. And suffering has a way of helping us because of the assurance of salvation it brings in the life of a believer.
When a believer suffers, and our first thought is, how can I glorify God? How can I honor His name? It's a good way of reminding us and assuring us that we truly belong to Him.
So, the first thing we looked at last week is that our suffering has a cleansing effect. Now, remember, when I was very young, it was the first time that I had ever tried to shoot a basketball on a 10-foot goal.
[2:42] I was at a gym with my dad, and there were some other kids older than me, and a couple of their men that were in the gym. And I just wasn't big enough and strong enough to get the ball all the way up there.

And I was trying, of course, when you're the only one who can't, I was the smallest kid. That was always true. And I was trying with all my might to get the ball up there. And everybody's telling you, just do this.
Just do this with your wrist. Just bend with your legs. And everyone's telling me how to do that. And my thought was, it's easy for you. You're way up there. It's harder when you're down here.
Sometimes we feel like that even with the Lord. Let me remind you that Jesus, the Word of God, became flesh and dwelt among us, suffering, tempted and tried as we are.
He knows what it's like down here. And even in our suffering, it has a way of cleansing us to remind us that He is enough. And the second thing we looked at from this passage is that God's judgment will have a condemning effect on unbelievers.
[3:54] God's judgment is coming. And when God's judgment is poured out in its finality, it will have a condemning effect on unbelievers.

When Christ returns, He will repay the rebel and He will relieve the faithful. And that frees us up because while we can rightly have our hearts broken over the sin in the world and the unrighteous that we see, we don't carry the weight of having to make sure everything gets paid back.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Vengeance is not our responsibility. Let the Lord deal with that. We'll pick up today looking at a third truth that I want you to see from verse 10.
And that is that the Lord's return will have a comforting effect. The Lord's return will have a comforting effect. Let's pick up in verse 10.
When He comes on that day to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.
[5:06] To this end, we always pray for you that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our suffering has a cleansing effect. God's judgment will have a condemning effect on unbelievers. But third, the Lord's return will have a comforting effect. Look back at the language of verse 10. When He comes on that day to be glorified in the saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed, believers, when they see the Lord, will marvel at Him.
However you meet Him. To be absent from the bodies, be present with the Lord, the Bible says, when you meet Him by death, you will marvel at Him.
Or if you're here when the church is lifted and taken away, you will marvel when you meet Him. For those who are converted in the time of the tribulation, and many will be, they'll be alive, many of them at the second coming, and they will marvel when they see Him.
[6:29] And the emphasis that I want you to take from verse 10 is that for the believer to meet the Lord is a marvelous thing. Now, I'm no different than you in this.

I want to enjoy as many years on this earth as I can. I love my wife. I love my family. I love our church.
I love the ministry the Lord allows me to have. I'm thankful. I'm grateful for every day the Lord gives to me.
And I'm in no hurry to stop doing what He's called me to do. My hope is to do this for a long time. I'm grateful for the gift of life.
I'm grateful for every day that He gives me. You are too, I know. And that's good, and that's fitting, because life is a gift. The Bible tells in Philippians, to live is Christ.
[7:30] It's a good thing to be alive. It's a good thing to live for Christ. It's the second half of that verse that believers sometimes struggle with.

To die is gain. That's not to minimize how good life is. That's not to minimize the gift that every day is. It's to remind us that for the believer, we have nothing to fear.
In this text, it tells us that when you are with the Lord, when you meet the Lord, He will be marveled at. The coming of Christ to this earth, or for the believer, if you go first to be with Him before He comes, it's the greatest event you will ever experience.
As believers, we have nothing to be afraid of. To live is Christ. It's a gift. It's a joy. We make much of Jesus every day.
And when in God's providence, the time comes and the believer dies, it's gain. The Lord's return has a comforting effect.
[8:50] But the fact of the matter is, we don't know what the Lord's timetable is, or what His calendar is. It may be that the Lord returns for us in our lifetime, or it may be that every single one of us goes to be with the Lord by death before that happens.

And if that's the case, we'll marvel, and we'll rejoice, and we'll be more alive in that moment than we've ever been.
To be with the Lord is a comfort for God's people. Look back at verse 10. When He comes on that day to be glorified in the saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.
Comfort comes because we believe the Word of God. Let me be very clear here. The comfort of heaven is not the reward for people who tried hard.
The promise of heaven is not the home of everybody in the end just because. Heaven is the promised home for those who have been saved by grace through faith, who belong to the Lord, having believed His Word, trusting in His promise.
[10:14] Of course, the opposite of that is also true, that if you don't believe, there would be no comfort. This isn't something hidden from the Bible.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

It's right there in plain sight for all who read it. Hebrews 2 verse 3 reminds us, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? And the answer, of course, is there is no escape.
But for those who do believe His Word, this is where the real comfort comes from. Comfort comes from believing His Word.
Verse 10 again, He will be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. Because you believed the Gospel. Because you believed the teaching of Scripture. Because you believed the Word and the promise of God. So, this would be a good time to just stop and ask yourself, do I really believe the Bible is true? Do I really believe that God is holy?
[11:22] Do I really believe that I'm a sinner? Do I really believe that Jesus lived a perfect life and died on a cross and was raised back from the dead?

Do I really believe that Christ is risen and coming again? Do I really believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and that nobody comes to the Father except through Him?
Do I really believe His promise that nothing can take me outside of the love that He has given to His people? Do I really believe that Jesus is the way, there's a tragic number of people who come to church every single Sunday and do not truly belong to Christ?
And they live with constant fear and no comfort. And the answer to that is not that you need a song to give you a buzz, or you need some emotional talk to stir your emotions.
What you need to do is repent and call upon the name of the Lord and be saved. To believe His Word.
[12:40] Because while it's true that we will suffer, that suffering has a cleansing effect. And it's true that God's judgment will come and it will have a condemning effect on unbelievers.

It's also true for us that the Lord's return will have a comforting effect. Whether He comes to get us or whether we go to be with Him, Jesus said, where I am, you will be with me also.
There's a fourth thing in this text I want you to see, and that's that our prayers have a clarifying effect. Our prayers have a clarifying effect.
Verse 11, To this end, we always pray for you that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power.
Our prayers have a clarifying effect. There's a couple of things I want you to notice and to think about with me about how prayer does this.
[13:49] Number one, when you evaluate your prayer life, it clarifies what you truly value. And then secondly, when you pray according to the Word of God, it corrects anything that is wrong in your heart.

Let's think about that for a minute. When we pray, it clarifies what we truly value. If you could take about 20 minutes this morning and just reflect on the last two weeks of your life and to think about what have you prayed for and what have you prayed about.
That would have a very clarifying effect on what you really value. Some, if you're honest, would say, I've been really prayerless the last couple of weeks.
I'm not prayed about anything. And I think that would clarify, if that's true, that we have become very self-sufficient and self-reliant.
If you have been praying, the things you've been praying about would clarify what you value because you pray about that which is most pressing on your heart at any given time.
[15:09] If you've been praying for physical earthly needs, that's not wrong and that's not sinful at all. But if that's all you've been praying for, then that would clarify for us that our heart is thinking too much on the temporal and not enough on the eternal.

Here would be one way to think about that. How much time do you spend praying for lost people to be saved? For believers to grow in their Christ-likeness?
For those who are teaching and preaching the Word of God all around the world? For believers to be strong even in the face of suffering and persecution?
The things that we pray for clarifies what we truly value. Now there's a second side of that coin. That when you labor in prayer as the Lord would tell us to in His Word, it can correct our heart to where we now begin to value the things that we should.
So our theme these last two weeks is all things in light of eternity. If I were to ask you to take ten minutes to pray right now, but before you did that, to first meditate on the reality of heaven and hell and judgment and eternal rewards and how short this life is and how long eternity is and then you took time to pray, what you would begin to no doubt do is pray for things that maybe we've

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

overlooked.
[17:03] Praying for spiritual matters, eternal matters. Again, praying about earthly needs is not wrong or sinful, not at all.

It just should not be the totality of what we pray for. So what happens is when we evaluate our prayer life, it clarifies things for us. Am I loving this world too much?
Am I neglecting the weightier matters? James 4 says, you have not because you ask not. We may just be prayerless.
James 4 verse 3 says, you ask, but you've asked with the wrong motives that it would all be just spent on yourself. So sometimes we need to start praying and sometimes we are praying, but we just pray selfish or earthly prayers and what happens is when we begin to pray like the Lord in His Word tells us to pray, it not only clarifies what we value, but now it corrects our heart so we get back in tune to pray according to His will.
When we continue in prayer, our self-reliance turns to dependency upon the Lord and that's what He wants from us.
[18:24] Now I want to look at three specific ways ways that our prayer life can be clarified and strengthened. Let's look again here at verse 11 and verse 12.

To this end, we always pray for you that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and in Him according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
So He says, to this end, we always pray for you. Write down the word persistent. Our prayers should be persistent.
Back in verse 3, it says, we ought always to give thanks to God for you brothers. So He's praying always. Verse 11, to this end, we always pray for you.
Here's this bookend of this passage where the Holy Spirit is saying that God's people are to always be prayerful. And as we pray with this whole context in mind, we pray knowing that suffering is real, but praying for it to have a cleansing effect on us.
[19:45] We persistently pray for the unbeliever to be converted, knowing that God's judgment will have a condemning effect on them if they do not believe. We pray that our hearts would be satisfied and trusting in Christ so that we would remember that to be with the Lord has a comforting effect on us.

We always pray for you, He says. Prayer should be the persistent ministry of every Christian.
Now, can we just admit together that most of us in this sanctuary do not pray as we should.
And my aim in saying that is not to make you feel guilty. It's not to be heavy-handed with you. It's to let you know that if we're not careful, it'll always be our tendency to become decreasingly prayerful until something strikes that we have no control over and it drives us to pray as we should.
What we want to do as brothers and sisters in Christ is to be persistent in our prayer and let this text today be that call back to the central point of the Christian life that we need the Lord.
[21:28] There's persistence as we pray. I want you to secondly write down the present. The present. Because while we pray about eternal matters, as I've said already, it's not wrong for us to pray about needs in this life.

Not at all. We just want to pray for the needs of the present in light of eternity. So let's look here. To this end, we always pray for, that's the persistence, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power.
So we do pray for the present needs. We pray for them in light of eternity. It's not either or, it's both and. We pray for our daily bread and for His kingdom to come and will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.
We pray for the godly desires, for godly resolve. It's a good way to pray for your children, that they would have a godly resolve.
That they would have a spiritual heart that is soft and a spiritual backbone that is made of steel.
[22:59] Pray for your children to be soft to the things of God, tender and gentle and compassionate, but absolutely committed with no compromise in the things of God's Word to believe the testimony given to us, as the passage says.

So we're praying with persistence and we're praying about our present needs. But as we pray about our present needs, we're praying in view and in light of what matters most.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

A couple of verses that for me are always near my heart as I think of these matters. One, Proverbs 21, 31, the horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the Lord.
Something we think about a lot here. That our role is to make the horse ready for battle, but victory belongs to the Lord.
So, all week long, what we're doing as leaders in the church is preparing the horse for battle. Studying for Sunday school lessons, studying for sermons, calling those who have not been here, calling those who have needs to minister to them, calling those who are new to our church to try to help them get acclimated, reaching out to those who are new members to help them make connections in our church, practicing music, making sure the facilities are prepared for this many people to be here.
[24:39] All these things. We're preparing the horse for battle day after day after day after day, but now, we're in the battle. Victory belongs to the Lord.

I can't save a soul. I can't convince a dead person to come to life. Only God can do that. Victory belongs to the Lord.
So, we pray about the here and now, but we do so in light of eternity. We practice music during the week and we study our Sunday school lessons and we study to write sermons and we do all of these things and that's the here and now, that's today, that's right now.
But it's not so that we would be impressive or look great, it's so that lives will be impacted for the kingdom for eternity. So, we pray about the present but in light of eternity.
Write down a third word. Praise. P-R-A-I-S-E. When we think about our prayer, it's an act of praise.
[25:58] Verse 12, that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you and him according to the grace of our Lord and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason why we are prayerful is to the praise of his name because we want to see his will done because we want to see people's lives change.
We serve, we study, we sing, we preach, we teach, we minister, we greet, we encourage, we visit. All the things that we try to do as Christians in this church is to be done unto the praise of his name. That must be our motive for everything that we do. It's his grace that allows us to do this. That's the end of verse 12. We serve, we pray, we do everything we're called to do according to the grace of our God.
His grace that saved us, sustains us, sanctifies us, and strengthens us to be faithful unto the very end.
[27:10] Now when you put this whole passage together, what do we see? That our suffering has a cleansing effect. If you're in a season of suffering right now, God hasn't abandoned you.

He's going to use this to cleanse you, to help you, to strengthen your faith. We see that God's judgment has a condemning effect for unbelievers, and that frees us up to be able to love and to pray and to serve and not seek vengeance.
We'll trust the Lord to make all things right on that day. Being with the Lord will have a comforting effect for us to live as Christ, to die as gain.
Enjoy every day. We fight for life. We fight to enjoy what God's called us to do, but we don't do so because we're afraid of what happens next.
We know we will be with the Lord. And our prayers have a clarifying effect. What do we really value? Are we trusting in His wisdom, in His power, in the strength of His might, or are we working and striving and serving in our own strength?
[28:34] Be persistent in your prayers. Pray about the present needs you have, absolutely, but even in that, pray in light of eternity and things that matter most.

and let your entire life be a praise offering unto the Lord so that whether you live or whether you die, it's all an act of worship for His name because of the grace that He has given you.
this past week, I'm about over it, but I've been battling some sinus infection of some kind that's just refused to let me go.
And one of, this is just me. There's medical professionals here who have a different opinion. Take their advice, not mine. Okay? This is just, this is just a quick testimony.
Okay? I think one of God's greatest gifts He's given to us is the gift of Afrin. This is just me. This is just me. But you've got to be careful with Afrin.
[29:47] It tells you not to use it more than twice a day and not more than three days. I'm a rule follower. And Marcy gives me medicine. I don't trust her because she's not a rule follower like I am.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

She's always like, you're 6'2". Actually, she says I'm 6'3". It's an ongoing fight we have but she thinks I can take more medicine than a 12 year old kid. And I'm like, what does the label say? I'm a rule follower.
So if I'm really, really congested, I don't take Afrin during the day because you're only supposed to use it six times in three days. So if I don't take it in the day, I can use a couple extra nights.
So I've been miserable during the day but sweet relief at night. Have you been there? You can't breathe and you're going nuts and you squirt this magic liquid of God up your nose and in like two minutes you can breathe.
I don't know if it's this way for everybody. This is the way it is for me. It's always this way. When I use that at night for the first time all day long, I can breathe which allows me to sleep.
[31:05] I can finally rest. When I wake up in the morning, I can still breathe but the way it works for me anyway is I know when I get out of bed and walk around within a minute I'm going to be completely congested again.

I can only breathe clearly with that if I'm lying down. So, every morning this week I've woken up and I've thought to myself I slept I survived and I've got to get up and I know when I get up in about two minutes I'm going to be miserable.
I'm not going to be able to breathe. I'm going to be frustrated. I'm going to sound weird. And so what I've done the last several days is I've just laid in bed a couple of extra minutes and just breathed and delighted in it.
When you're not congested you don't think about breathing you just do it. But when you've been congested and sick and you can breathe it is an amazing joy.
And I would just take these deep breaths through my nose. And what I would do is think you know it's lunch time I've got to get out of bed and get to work. Not really but I've got to get up.
[32:33] And so I'd say here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to give myself five clear breaths and I've got to get up and go. Sure enough three minutes later I'm completely clogged up and miserable.

But while I was doing that Thursday morning I thought to myself about the reality that there are some of you even in our church right now that feel like that in a much more severe way.
that just to get out of bed reminds you that you're going right back into the battle. When you slept everything was fine and you woke back up and you've got to go right back into the battle at work that's right now such a struggle for you.
Or you're heartbroken over losing a loved one and while you were asleep it was sweet and now you've woken back up and just to start the day reminds you of the grief that you feel.
Or maybe it's physical pain and you're able to sleep but when you wake up and get out of bed it's right back to the battle again. Maybe it's a marriage that's just barely hanging on and to get out of bed and start the day just means I'm going right back into this stressful situation.
[34:15] Maybe it's suffering of an entirely different kind but you know what it's like to get some sleep finally and then you wake up and you know when I get out of bed and I start the day I'm jumping right back into the fire.

And I want to say to you if that's you the way you fight that battle first and foremost is by being persistent in your prayers.
Not relying on your own strength or your own wisdom. but saying Lord I need you to clarify for me what I'm to do how I'm to live how I can trust how I can point people to Jesus and persistently pray about the present needs in your life offering your day as an act of praise unto the Lord and saying I don't know what you have for me but if you get me through this day by the power of the Holy Spirit I want today to be all about Christ and one day I won't make it through the day and I'll go to be with you and I believe your word that on that day will be my greatest gain
God the way that God's people make a difference in this life is by truly believing his word and praying according to his word and offering your life as an act of worship unto the Lord and saying the only thing I long for is for your name to be praised we said in song we want to abide in him and again verse 12 we want to be glorified as we are in him according to his grace so if you're hurting and you're struggling and there's days you dread getting out of bed because you know three minutes after you get up you're going right into the fire spend those final few moments offering your life and your day and even your trial unto the
Lord Lord and saying the greatest desire of my heart today is to exalt the grace that has drawn me so close to you that even if this is the day I take a final breath and go to be with you I will believe

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

your word that it will be the greatest gain I've ever known living in the present in light of eternity is the blessing for God's people Lord we thank you for your word and I pray that through your Holy Spirit you would move in power and help us to understand to believe to respond and to obey we pray Lord for hearts that would believe and wills that would do what you've called us to do we pray in Jesus name amen real quick before you leave this morning if there is a way that we can pray for you use that connection card in the back of that let us know your prayer need drop that in one of the giving boxes on your way out we would love to be able to pray for you and lastly! [38:42] we are kicking off our Easter season today again we've got some things in the lobby to help you want you to go by there and see that also tonight we're going to be taking the Lord's supper together we're going to be looking at Isaiah chapter 53 that speaks of the suffering the prophetic suffering of Christ tonight will be a great way to help us get our hearts and minds turned toward the cross as we prepare ourselves for this next month so I want to strongly invite and encourage all of you to come back tonight and to be here to be a part of our evening service at five o'clock as we sing and study Isaiah 53 together and end the Lord's day by taking the Lord's supper together come and be with us tonight if you're able to I love you church God bless!

you're dismissed thank you so much for joining us via live stream this morning if you have any questions whatsoever about our church or the ministries that our church provides please visit us at fbcmustang.org we would love to follow up with you and get to know you better as always we try to emphasize if at all possible if you could be here physically present with us we would love that and that be a joy to serve you in that way but thank you again for joining us via live stream today have a great day what we do for now we have a great day we have a great day we have a great day we have a great day for now every day we have a great day

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host