

2Thessalonians 12-08-10b

We pick up our study in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1. We're looking at this very powerful statement in verse 5 that says we are suffering for the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God in this context is not the portion of the kingdom that is already ours through natural basic inheritance. This is the other kind.

There is a different and better inheritance. It is a different and better possession and in that sense it is a different and better kingdom of God experience, entrance, possession, function, opportunity, potential. It is often alluded to throughout Scripture.

Even Jesus talked about it in some cases by way of analogy when he addressed the millennial kingdom that was being offered to and presented to the nation of Israel. There is a very close analogy to inheritance in the land going back to the Old Testament promises to Israel and reflected in Jesus preaching of the kingdom. The kingdom is in your midst.

The kingdom is at hand. You go to the Sermon on the Mount. Turn back to the Sermon on the Mount real quickly in Matthew chapter 5. It's one of the chapters we should know just like 1st Corinthians 13 or Hebrews 11.

Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5 through 7. But right at the beginning Jesus sees the multitudes. He goes up on a mountain. He seats himself and his disciples come to him.

Then he opened his mouth and taught them saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Anytime you see a condition it is part of that conditional type inheritance. That's what is in view.

The other kind is unconditional. You already have it by virtue of salvation. But you could be saved and not be poor in spirit, right? You could be arrogant in spirit.

You could be rich in your own eyes. You could be like the Pharisees who say we see and they don't know that they're blind and miserable and poor and naked as Jesus writes to the church later on. So blessed are the poor in spirit for they possess the kingdom.

When it says theirs is, this is possession, right? And that's one of our synonyms. So being poor in spirit and we could spend a whole lesson on what it is to be poor in spirit. But the essence of it is humility, isn't it? You don't count yourself as having attained.

You don't say I am full. I am rich. I have need of nothing.

When you're poor, you recognize need. That's the fundamental characteristic of being poor. You recognize need.

Well, those who recognize spiritual need will possess the kingdom because recognizing that need

is a concomitant. It accompanies. It is a manifestation of humility and humility is a condition and when we have it, we are on our way to possession.

Look at verse 5. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Of course in this context, you're looking at inheriting the earth in the Millennial Kingdom, but recognizing that close analogy and close association, who is going to inherit the kingdom of God? Same attribute, the same condition, the meek, humility. It's really almost a restatement of verse 3, isn't it? Look at verse 8. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Now, are there people that aren't pure in heart and they're going to to see God in the sense of being resurrected and get the basic resurrection, basic inheritance, basic kingdom of God package? Of course. This is something above and beyond. What does it mean to see God? Well, this is seeing God like Moses saw God when he was hidden in the cleft of the rock.

He saw something that mortal eyes did not ordinarily see. This is seeing God in the sense of knowing God in a way that is not common and is not routine and is not universal. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called in verse 9, sons of God.

You can be a son and you can be a son indeed. There is sort of an academic biological sonship that means, yes, I was the result of procreation. This is my father.

I am the son. And then there is a son in the sense of entering into the interests and the goals and the business of the father. Do you not know that I must be about my father's business, Jesus says.

That's being a son indeed. We can cry out under the witness and ministry of the Holy Spirit, Abba, Father. But that's what a child says.

We want to grow to the standard of a mature man. We want to get past the milk and get into the meat. We want to be useful.

Children, in the sense of a small child, weren't able to contribute and enter into the interests and the goals and purposes of a patriarch, a father, like they could later on when they grew up and became mature. Jacob's sons grow up and now they can shepherd flocks and transact business in their father's name and multiply the household and hold land and defend against enemies and do all kinds of things that they can't do when all they can say is Abba, Father. So there is this seeing God and knowing God and being a genuine son of God that is a function of accomplishing something beyond just existence, beyond just being, beyond just regeneration.

And this becomes clear throughout Scripture. Well, this is what we want to know. Paul says you've got tribulation and you've got persecution.

You need faith and you need patience as you endure it because you're suffering for the kingdom of God. So what is this kingdom? And if I'm going to suffer, how can I make sure that that

suffering eventuates in possession and inheritance and entrance and all of the blessings of God's kingdom, not just well, here I am and there's the kingdom. I'm out here and there it is.

Well, Scripture has a lot to say. You can begin back in Psalm chapter 8, Psalm 8. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth who have set your glory above the heavens. That's how it begins and there's a something of a chiastic structure here by the time you get to verse 9. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth.

But look at verse 4 and 5. What is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you visit him, that you pay attention to him, that you come around to check on his interests? You have made him a little lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor. There is a humbling and there is an exaltation.

And this is God's overarching program in the universe, in human history, in the creation on this planet. What is its goal? What is man that they are mindful of him? Well, here's the answer. You start out making him lower than the existing sentient creation of angels, but by the time it's all done, you crown him with glory and honor.

It is that lowering into this world of corruption and sin and fallenness and with the goal of eventually lifting us up. As it says in James, wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you when in due time in the kingdom.

Don't humble yourself under the mighty hand of God waiting for him to get you voted to be the president or the mayor or the you know promoted to be the colonel or the general or obviously humble yourself that you may be exalted in due time. We expect this exile. I don't want to be exalted until I am cleansed and purged and renewed and resurrected and entering into a glorified state.

I can't handle exaltation here. I don't want to be exalted. I don't want to be king of the world.

I want to be a servant of God and a faithful steward in the kingdom to come, in the kingdoms to come. Humble yourself now in this life under the mighty hand of God so that he can exalt you. So we find that one of the ingredients for possessing the kingdom, laying hold of inheritance, successfully suffering for the kingdom is humility.

What is the essence of humility? Well, it's sort of a negative not self-centered. You can't be humble and be self-centered. Self-centered people are never humble.

It's an oxymoron. You can't be a humble egotist. You can't be a self-centered meek person.

We have to be focused and centered on something outside ourselves, something better than ourselves, something more important than ourselves. That's what humility is. We serve a higher

call.

So we begin. This is a concept communicated throughout the Old Testament. Daniel chapter 7. You wouldn't necessarily expect to be in Daniel with this concept, but if you go to Daniel chapter 7 and look at verse 21.

Daniel 7 21 through 27 is the passage we will look at. This is the vision of the four beasts. And by the time you get to the latter part of the chapter, you've got the seven heads and the ten horns and the pompous words coming out in verse 21.

I was watching and this horn was making war against the saints and prevailing against them. Who are the saints? God's people, right? And they're in the conflict and this little horn is making war against them. What is your guess? Are the saints suffering at this point? If the Antichrist is making war on you, chances are you're suffering.

So he's making war against the saints. Look at verse 22, until the ancient of days came. Now end of the tribulation, ancient of days comes.

What are we talking about here? The rapture or the second coming? Second coming. Old Testament saints in view. 70 weeks are determined upon your people.

The angel tells Daniel, right? So these particular saints, once again, we're looking at at Old Testament class saints. They are suffering in the tribulation until the ancient of days came and a judgment was made of the saints of the most high. Did we not just see the righteous judgment of God on his people in second Thessalonians 1? Same thing here.

God is evaluating. God is looking. Who is worthy of the call? Was God right to pick these saints to be in this situation? And call them to faithfulness and to obedience under pressure in suffering? And you notice in favor of because this is the connotation of the Hebrew here.

Judgment is made in favor of the saints of the most high and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. To lay hold of the kingdom. They persevere.

They are faithful in suffering and God's judgment comes and says it is time for you to possess. Not just exist in, not just see, not just experience, but possess. Possession involves control, authority, rulership, reaping the fruits of a thing, enjoying the benefits of a thing.

Possession is a lot more than just entrance or experience. Possess the kingdom, lay hold of, have an inheritance in, right? Some of our synonyms. Skip down to verse 27.

26 says the court shall be seated. They shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to whom? Daniel 7 27.

What does it say? Kingdoms under heaven shall be given to the people, the saints of the most high. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him. This is rulership, possession, and dominion in God's kingdom.

Talking here specifically about the millennial kingdom, but again, very close analogy, very accurate reflection of higher and greater principles extending to, through, and the millennial kingdom and into the kingdom of the father. So, faithfulness under pressure. Still sticking with our foreshadowing of this, our teaching on this in the old testament context, look at Matthew chapter 25.

Matthew chapter 25. This is our passage where the Lord Jesus talks about the sheep and goats judgment. You begin at verse 31.

When the son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. If you have a throne, what have you got? You've got a kingdom. Throne of his glory.

All the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on his right hand, goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right's hand, come you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. How do they qualify for this inheritance? Our understanding, the understanding I've offered you on this differs from a lot. A lot of people think that this is somehow at the inception of the millennial kingdom and that he is saying enter the millennial kingdom and take possession.

I suggest, I believe personally that this happens at the end of the millennial kingdom and he says you blessed of my father, you know, enter the kingdom of the father. And what did they do? During whatever time it is, whether you understand this to be their time on earth here or their time in the thousand year millennial reign, what did they do? They were obedient, they were faithful, they were humble and they established this as a pattern, right? I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me to drink.

Self-centered people do not worry about the hunger and thirst of others. Well, I don't really have time for that because I myself have needs. I am needy.

So I really haven't even gotten as far as thinking about if you might be hungry or thirsty. These people not only recognize that others are hungry and thirsty and in need of clothing or of comfort of some kind but they act to meet that need. This demonstrates, is evidence of, manifests humility, meekness, parlaying the grace of God that we have received into the opportunity to minister to others.

We saw this earlier in second Thessalonians chapter one. The comfort with which we are comforted enables us to comfort you. Remember that? We receive comfort and we now can comfort you.

That was a concept we reviewed earlier in our study and this is the same idea. How can these people provide food and water and clothing and comfort? They have already received it from God and they are looking for ways to share this bounty to minister to others. It is humility.

It is patience. It is meekness. All of those things qualify them.

The righteous say, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and take you in or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and come to you? The king will answer and say, assuredly I say to you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren. And here's the real challenge is we say, well, here's somebody worthy. They used to have this, I have no idea if it's still on, some years ago I saw a program where they started and they had extreme makeover and they were doing cosmetic surgery on people.

Then they said, well, there's people that need extreme makeover on their house. And so they had an extreme makeover house program. Well, they had to figure out whose house are they going to extremely makeover? And so they would say, well, here's a guy and he's got a child with special needs and he got his leg blown off at the knee in Iraq and his wife's got glaucoma.

And they would look around, they'd find somebody for whom this would be such a great improvement because they weren't just any old throw a dart at the phone book. Oh, look, Sam and Patty, let's give them an extreme makeover. They say, well, there's no drama in that.

There's no weeping and emotional investment and vicarious happiness involved in that. Their house wasn't so terrible that it needed mild makeover, maybe not an extreme makeover. They want to find somebody that's living in a hovel and has all kinds of needs and they come in and just take them from zero to 60 in 15 seconds flat and they say, wow, isn't that great? And people are weeping and it's so dramatic.

Here's somebody that's spectacularly qualified. Oh, look at us. Look at what we did for these people.

Jesus says, you know who I'm really looking for? Are these who did this for the least of these, my brethren? The ones that would be tended to be overlooked. Who gets overlooked? It's the least, almost literally. They're short.

They're small. They're insignificant. You just look right past them.

You look right over them. Nothing makes them stand out. Nothing makes them a dramatic

example and oh, the humanity and the rest of it.

You've done it to the least of these, my brethren. If you have the sight, if you have the sensitivity, if you have the mind and the heart of Christ, now you're entering into that realm. You've done it to the least of these, my brethren.

You've done it unto me. Who was despised and rejected of men? Who was thought to be unworthy of any sort of promotion or loyalty by the majority of people in Israel? It was the Lord Jesus. Man, crucify him or lease unto us Barabbas.

Least of these, my brethren. So inherit based on a condition of service, of humility, of faithful obedience, doing as unto the Lord. When we get to our New Testament scriptures and we look at this idea, and again, what are we talking about here? Let me ask you this question.

Are you ever going to suffer? Starting right now, look at the date, look at the time, till the end of your life. Will there be, is there any suffering in your future? Yes, yes, Jesus promised, in this world, you will have tribulation. So just take it for granted.

You're going to suffer. You will be bereaved. You will be persecuted.

You will suffer loss. You will have heartache. You will have difficulty and challenge.

What's it for? God got busy and something slipped through the defenses. It's an accident. It's slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

No, it is placed in our path as an opportunity for the kingdom. You suffer for the kingdom. So if we're suffering for the kingdom, what is it about the kingdom that we find worth suffering for? And how can we lay hold of it? That's what we're looking at.

Look at Revelation chapter 2, verse 26. We just get a chance to crack open various parts of our Bibles tonight. Revelation chapter 2, you already know, as with our other familiar chapters, Revelation 2 and 3, letters to the seven churches.

So in Revelation 2, 26, we're looking at the church in Thyatira. These things says the son of God who has eyes like a flame of fire. What do you know immediately when Jesus identifies himself in that way? Eyes like a flame of fire.

What's the subject? What's the topic? What's the emphasis? Eyes like a flame of fire. Everybody say it together. Judgment.

Judgment. Flame of fire. Eyes.

We're looking. We're judging. We're burning away the chaff, finding out what's real.

Where's the gold, silver, and precious stones, right? Judgment. Eyes like a flame of fire. Church

at Thyatira.

Look at verse 26. He who overcomes and keeps my works until the end. What would you call keeping works until the end? Perseverance.

Faithfulness. Obedience. Right? Patience.

Keeps my works until the end. To him I will do what? Give authority over the nations. When? Right now? Hey, you stuck it out through that test.

Go take charge of Russia. Go command China. No, it's in the kingdom, isn't it? Service in ruling authority, ruling and reigning with Christ in the millennial kingdom and evidently beyond.

You say, wait a minute. Are there going to be nations? We know there's going to be nations in the millennium, right? No question. The nations are going to bring their glory to Jerusalem and so on.

What about the kingdom of the father? Do we have any scriptural authority for there being nations in the kingdom of the father? There's no night. There's no sea. You got the city built four squares, 24 gates.

Lamb is the light. Tree of life. Tree of life.

Leaves are taken outside for what? Healing of the nations. So to him that overcomes and keeps my works until the end, notice, not just to him who overcomes I will grant, to him who overcomes and perseveres, is patient, sticks with it. To him I will give authority over the nations.

He shall rule them with a rod of iron. They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessel as also I have received from my father and I will give him the morning star. Wow, can't even imagine.

This has been called the order of the morning star, one of these beautiful rare awards. Do you guys in here let him hear? Quickly now, 2 Timothy 2 12 right after Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 2 Timothy 2 12. This is a faithful saying, if we died with him, we shall also live with him.

That's part of the basic inheritance package. If we endure, we shall also reign with him. If we endure, we shall reign.

If we deny him, he will deny us. If we have faith in us, he remains faithful. Basic inheritance package.

First statement, last statement, basic inheritance package. Two center statements, advanced inheritance package. Conditioned on what we do.

First one and last one, unconditional. Even if you're faithless, he remains faithful. If we died with him, if we're saved, we will live with him.

It's unconditional, the condition being salvation, I suppose. If you're saved, it's a done deal. You will live with him.

Center two, we've got both types of inheritance right there. And this idea of reigning, this is a kingdom opportunity. This is a kingdom potential.

First Corinthians chapter six, I purposely put these out of order just so we could flip around, get some exercise in our bibles. Don't want to have just one crease right there at Thessalonians. First Corinthians chapter six, verses two and three.

Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? Now, is every saint going to judge the world? Could all chiefs know Indians? No. Some of the saints are going to judge the world. If you keep taking each other to court, guess what? You try to judge people now, you're not going to be in a position to judge them later.

If the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? Ooh, Psalm eight, made him a little lower than the angels, crowned him the glory and honor. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time. We shall rule and reign with Christ if we are overcomers.

If we take advantage of the opportunity offered to us, when? In prosperity? In flowery beds of ease? Where is the opportunity to lay hold of all of these wonderful inheritance kingdom possession promises? Where's the opportunity? In suffering. The kingdom is offered to us in suffering. What did Jesus say when he offered the kingdom to Israel the first time? If any man would come after me, let him do what? Deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Deny himself. You can enter this kingdom if you are poor in spirit, if you are meek, if you can see something greater than yourself. Shed your self-centeredness and look to bigger things.

There is a huge amount on this subject in the book of Hebrews. I will just very quickly rehearse for you beginning in Hebrews chapter 1. You got 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 1 verse 14 says, These angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit deliverance.

Angels minister to those who will inherit salvation. That's where our concept of inheritance is introduced. Look at chapter 3 verse 14.

We have become partakers of Christ. We share in Christ. We have a share.

We have a portion in Christ if what? If we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Sharing in Christ is not the basic inheritance package. This is the advanced package, being a partaker, a sharer, ruling and reigning with Christ, sharing in his victory, helping to implement

his rule and reign in the future kingdoms.

That's available if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast. Now, why would you have to exert some kind of effort to hold fast your confidence? Because you are suffering under pressure. Don't have to hold on to anything very hard when there's no wind, there's no resistance, there's no challenge, no force.

You've got to have a really firm grip when there's adversity. Hebrews chapter 6 verse 12 We desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end so that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience sound familiar? Inherit the promises. Hebrews 6 12 Hebrews chapter 9 verse 15 For this reason he is the mediator of the new covenant by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant that those who are called May receive the promise of the eternal inheritance You can really apply that to either inheritance.

There is the basic inheritance. There is that full inheritance But notice when it says those who are called and you remember our romans 8 28 the called according to his purpose there is a Resonance in that there is an opportunity in that chapter 10 verses 35 and 36 of hebrews next page Do not cast away your confidence Which has great reward? You can be saved and cast away your confidence Don't Don't throw it away. Don't lose it suffering comes persecution comes tribulation comes don't throw away your confidence because it has great reward For you have need of endurance so that after you have done the will of god you may receive the promise Just sums up everything we've seen doesn't it? That's why we're suffering our opportunity To do the will of god to endure to hold fast to our confidence is in suffering in tribulation in persecution Chapter 12 verses 15 through 17 looking carefully Lest anyone fall short of the grace of god lest any root of bitterness Springing up cause trouble and by this many become defiled Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like esau who for one morsel of food sold his birthright Takes us all the way back to that old testament analogy.

Don't lose your birthright over a morsel of momentary Satisfaction momentary easing of discomfort. Oh, my tummy is growling Away goes my birthright in comes the stew You know that afterward when he wanted to inherit the blessing he was rejected He found no place for repentance though. We sought it diligently with tears Notice you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire We're not on the earth at mount sinai.

Look at verse 22 You have come to mount zion to the city of the living god the heavenly jerusalem an innumerable company of angels How would you sum that up? kingdom of god You have come to the kingdom of god The general assembly and church of the firstborn. Here's our last point for the night. Don't miss it Hebrews chapter 12 verse 23 pay attention now.

You will want to mark your bible I don't care if you're a bible marker or not. You need to mark this one To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven that word

firstborn notice It's not a capital f. That's not the church of jesus christ the church of firstborn capital f singular. This is firstborn plural What does church mean ecclesia? It means assembly to the assembly of firstborn ones This you have come to the assembly of firstborn ones Firstborn ones from all of the families.

Who was it that got redeemed at passover? The firstborn who had the double portion and the rulership And the priesthood in the family in old testament israel the firstborn ones You have not come to mount sinai. You haven't come to an earthly manifestation of this You have come to the kingdom of god. You have come to the assembly of firstborn ones inheritors in the kingdom of god firstborn plural Firstborn Registered in heaven to god the judge of all is that not what paul just reminded us of You vindicate the judgment of god you show god's judgment to be right in calling you to be one of these firstborn What an opportunity what a privilege what an honor what a blessing To be called to suffer for his name's sake to be called With this opportunity to enter into possession and inheritance service rulership and function Reflecting the glory of jesus christ in the kingdom of god.

It all depends on what we choose It all depends on how we view our suffering Are we going to not be meek? Not be humble going to be self-centered not going to look to the needs of others Only look out for our own interests try to get relief try to make the pain go away try to satisfy that momentary hunger we lose eternal Opportunity eternal inheritance eternal blessing eternal function eternal ruling and reigning with christ eternal white stone new name hidden manna All morning star all of these tremendous things that come to the assembly of the firstborn ones what Else can we say it's this is as good as it gets and the opportunity the essence that the moment For laying hold of this is in suffering can't get there without it Well, this is why paul says you're suffering for the kingdom of god what a Pregnant phrase that is well this Gives us a little bit of perspective and we'll continue in first thessalonians chapter one next next time father, thank you for the truth of your word, thank you for the Clear and explicit and manifold witness that you give us Of all of the many things that are ours through the lord. Jesus christ We pray that god the holy spirit will impress them on our hearts and we ask it in jesus name. Amen