

2Thessalonians 12-08-31b

We pick up our study now in 2 Thessalonians, right at the end of chapter one. Paul says, therefore, because of this opportunity to be a reflection of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and to be one who celebrates his return and one who is worthy of his calling and fulfill the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power. And it says the good pleasure of goodness.

There's two words there, two different roots that talk about good. The first one is eu-dokia, and eu, of course, is the prefix that means good, just as you have eu-angelos, eu-angelia, the gospel, the good news, the good message. Here you have eu-dokia, and dokia comes from dokeo, which is a thinking word.

This is a judgment word, and it's to judgment in the sense of perceiving the qualities of a thing. And so you have good pleasure or good thinking, good analysis. And then the second word is, there is no word for his, but it's the good pleasure of goodness.

And this is agathosune. Agathos is the intrinsic quality of something being good or beneficial. And so to fulfill all the good pleasure of goodness or the good evaluation of goodness, might be a better way to look at it, is you have potential to accomplish good.

You think about your life. I've got some stuff I can do today. I've got some stuff I can do tomorrow.

I can do it badly, or I can do it well. I can do it in human strength. I can do it for my own purposes.

I can do it with a bad attitude, or I can do it as under the Lord. I can do it in a way that is pleasing in his sight and glorifying to his name. And if I fulfill all of the intended good that God had in that situation, the good that is, you know, you get 10 out of 10.

There's 10 questions. If you get all 10 of them right, you get the maximum score. You fulfill all of the potential of that situation.

This is what it's really saying here. And this is a part, again, of the prayer of Paul. We pray always for you that God might count you worthy.

And this, the word count is axio, we get axiom from this. It has the idea of regarding as worthy. There is no actual word for worthy.

Count worthy is all from axios, to regard or value or appreciate the worthiness of a thing. It was used by Epictetus when he was talking about the calling and the destiny of a man. Epictetus was a philosopher and he said, the destiny of man is to be regarded as worthy of a post by Zeus.

You know, that Zeus would enter you into the fold on Mount Olympus and find that you are useful, worthy, that you have value, you're worth bringing up there into the cloudy realms of the

gods. We have it in the New Testament with a prefix, kata, kata axio expresses unworthiness. For example, if you look in Luke chapter 20, verse 35, sometimes the best way to understand a word is to look at its opposite.

So if you look at Luke 20, 35, Jesus says, the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are counted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor can they die anymore, they're equal to the angels. Those who are counted worthy and kata is according to, you know, according to the standard of, so this is what he's talking about. If God is going to evaluate you as worthy, value you as worthy, recognize you as worthy, maybe the link to axiomatic is to understand that this is a recognized truth.

An axiom is recognized validity of something. And so God recognizes your worth and then you have the word for calling. And this is the clasis from kaleo, but it's simply count you worthy of calling.

It's the call that goes out from God. And if you respond to it, you're valuable. If you don't respond, you're not.

It's pretty much that simple. To fulfill all the good pleasure, this is the eudokia, the good evaluation, the good design, the good thought of goodness, of agathosune. And the sune on the end of that, you know, agathos would be good.

Agathosune, it's kind of like when we put A-T-I-O-N on the end of a word, you can inform someone and there is information. It's more of an abstract conceptual idea. And this is good as an idea, as a concept, rather than, oh, here's a good work, here's a good work.

This is just, this is the good and the work of faith with power. And we've talked about that, the goodness of faith with power. And of course, there's five different words in Greek for power.

This particular one is dunamis, and the one where we get dynamite. And this is power that does something. Dynamite doesn't do you any good sitting around in a stick.

You put it in the rock and you ignite it and you move things, you make a difference with it. It's, this is, we talk about someone being dynamic, a dynamo, there is practical power, power that accomplishes work. And the work of faith, this is another one of your power words in Greek, but this is ergon.

And ergon is the idea of the labor that is done. Energy, energeo, and ergon are sort of related. So the work of faith with power.

So there's ergon faith, there's faith in the course of doing your labors, living your life, doing your tasks. And then you have this dunamis, which is sort of an explosive power. It's above and beyond.

It partakes of the divine in many cases. So that hapos, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, just like we set up in verse 10, and you in him. And notice there is a reciprocity, there is a blessing by association.

We're not just abject flat mirrors doing nothing but reflecting. We are caught up together with him. We is the firstborn among many brethren, but there are brethren who inherit along with the Lord Jesus who serve the Lord God, the Father, along with the Lord Jesus, who are lifted up.

Man has been made a little lower than the angels. He is crowned with glory and honor in Christ. We surpass ourselves.

We become something of value. And you look at Adam and Eve in their unfallen state. They have intrinsic qualities.

They have tremendous beauty and intellect and power that it's God given, but it belongs to them. You look at Lucifer, the son of the morning in his unfallen state and the magnificence. He's the most beautiful thing that ever came from the hand of God.

And he has intellect and he has power and he has grace and he has the ability to do things in behalf of God and for God and in service to God and to reflect God's glory. He walks among the stones of fire. He's in the garden of God until the day that iniquity is found in him, until he starts making merchandise of his power and until he starts thinking of himself as capable of doing God's job and pride and arrogance and the five I wills cause him to fall.

And now he is no longer those things, but in the unfallen state, in the perfected state, we have intrinsic quality. And that's what this is talking about. The name of our Lord Jesus Christ is glorified in you and you are glorified.

We don't like to think about ourselves being glorified. We think, well, all glory to God, all glory to the Lord Jesus. And this is a healthy instinct.

We need to keep this perspective, but this is not the only place in the Bible that says this. Keep your finger in Thessalonians, let's turn back to Romans chapter eight, verse 28 and 29. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called.

And you have the same cluster of concepts from Paul in Romans that you have from Paul in Thessalonians. You have the grace of God. You have the good, the agathos.

You have the calling, the klesos, the called according to his purpose. His purpose is here. For whom he foreknew, he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, that he, the son, might be the firstborn among many brethren.

But he's the firstborn, he's the greatest of the brethren, but there's many other brethren who are

brethren. They are of a similar relationship and of a similar kind and quality. Moreover, whom he predestined, those he called.

Whom he called, he justified. And whom he justified, what did he do? He glorified. You and I will be glorified.

And it's just not just a resurrection body. It's not an aw shucks, just gonna take that glory and throw it at Jesus' feet. No, this, what is glorification? What does it mean to have glory? What does it mean when the Lord Jesus has glory? What's the nature of his glory? Is it just shininess? Is it just a lot of light and people going, ooh? That's not what glory is.

Glory is operational. Glory is practical. There's a great quote from George Washington.

I can't give it to you verbatim, but he said, as I take on this office of being the general of the continental army, I fear that I'm not up to the task, but the things I will bring to it are industry and diligence and I won't quit. And he said, I trust that these will be enough because it is not in words, but in actions that a man's reputation is established. Your reputation is not based on what you say.

It's based on what you do, in other words. Well, glory is based on what you do. This is why, and I mentioned a week or two ago about this society of the Cincinnati and how they wanted a hereditary clause and it caused no end of grief.

And Ben Franklin said, you know, a child can accomplish something and reflect credit on his parents, but the parent doesn't accomplish something and reflect credit on his kid. You can't transfer the glory of your accomplishments forward. And just because somebody served as an officer in the American Revolution, they can't transfer the glory of that service and that accomplishment to their kids.

And so it's silly to have this hereditary requirement. Well, my great, great, great granddaddy served in the, you know, daughter of the American Revolution, son of the American Revolution, my society of the Cincinnati, great, great, great, great granddaddy did something. Well, his credit doesn't pachinko down to you.

If you do something, you can bring credit to great granddaddy. Well, you know, you're good stock. Your parents get credit many times if you do something well, but you can't push that credit forward.

And glory doesn't devolve to us just because somebody else did something. If we are glorified, why is that? It's because God has given us things with which we have done something useful. Glory is based on accomplishment.

And I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. And we can't shy away from this and say, I'm just, Christianity is not a crutch, it's a stretcher. I'm just going to be carried to glory

and all glory will be bestowed on me.

Angels will whiff some fairy dust on me and I'll glow in the eternal future. No, whom he called, he justified. And it is our calling and our justification that makes it possible for us to do in accordance with his good purpose.

It is God who works in us, and this is the work, so that we can will and do for his good purpose. God makes it possible. It is all of grace, but we take that grace and we do something with it.

And because of that, we are glorified in him. We're not glorified outside of him. We're not glorified apart from him.

We're not glorified without his work, but with his work, with his grace, with his provision, with his power, with his calling, with his justification, we have a responsibility to do. If the Marine Corps takes you as a raw elbows and knees civilian and breaks you down and builds you back up into a lean green, mean fighting machine, teaches you to fire a weapon, teaches you to be aware and cognizant and to lay down interlocking fields of fire and to take and hold ground and to properly operate a wide variety of lethal mechanisms and weapons, that's great. It is all of the Marine Corps.

You couldn't do any of that if they didn't train you and give you the uniforms and the weapons and everything, but it is up to you to take that and in the hour of battle to use it. And if you use it, you can be commended. You can be recognized.

You can be a benefit to your fellow Marines and anybody else in the area and you can help accomplish the mission and you are glorified. You are recognized. You are appreciated because you weren't just given a bunch of stuff and you said, oh, shucks.

Well, you know, I wouldn't have this helmet if it wasn't for the Marine Corps. I wouldn't have this M16 if it wasn't for the Marine Corps. I wouldn't have this grenade if it wasn't for the Marine Corps.

That's one kind of guy. Here's another guy that takes his M16 and kills the enemy, takes his grenade and throws it and opens a path so his fellow Marines can move forward and get out from under being pinned down in fire. He takes his training and uses it and accomplishes something.

He has initiative. He takes what he is given and he accomplishes the purpose for which it was given to him. Whom he justified, then he also glorified.

We can't be looking at Christianity as a passive, wait for God to do it all kind of thing. We are not puppets waiting for God to yank the strings. We are gifted.

We are enabled. We are provisioned. We are supplied.

We are called and we are justified. And when we respond to the call and we do what we're supposed to do, then Jesus Christ is glorified and we are glorified in him, in him, through our connection with him, because of him, as a part of his glory, we are lifted up. We are raised with Christ.

We are seated with him in glory. We are made higher than the angels in Christ, never apart from Christ, never on our own merit, but we have a responsibility to take what we're given and do something with it. This is something reformed theology can never figure out, can never understand, never grasp.

And these verses are lost on them. They don't know what it means to say that these he also glorified. They say, well, that's really just Christ being glorified and you're just kind of a parasite.

No, we have a responsibility to our calling that Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and you in him according to the grace of our God. Look at how God surrounds this. It is in Christ.

It is according to the grace of God. Don't get a big head. It is all of grace.

This is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works. You don't have grounds for boasting, but you do have grounds for responsibility.

You have grounds for opportunity. You have grounds to seize and lay hold of that for which we were laid hold of. It is active.

It is aggressive. It takes initiative. You respond with drive and motivation and hope and expectation and active claiming of the grace of God.

We don't just lay around waiting for Jesus to come back and suck us all off the earth like a vacuum cleaning dirt balls off a carpet. We should be ready. We should be expectant.

We should be waiting. We should be actively ready to move into the next phase. We know the plan.

We read the five paragraph order. We are ready to serve. We understand what's going on.

Jesus says, go over there and accomplish this task. We say, yes, sir, three bags full. We know exactly what to do because we have learned what we're supposed to learn.

We've responded to our calling. Now for chapter two, verse one. Brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, which has been the subject of the last half of chapter one, right? Instead of dwelling further on the tribulation and the persecution and the problems, Paul says, in light of what I've just told you, leave that stuff to God.

Don't worry about these synagogue Jews. Don't worry about this persecution. You've got the

promise of God.

You've got the provision of God. God is gonna take care of it. God is gonna pay back these that are trying to pay you back for your faith.

You leave that in God's hands. You will be vindicated in the day when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back. You will be a part of his glory.

You yourself will be glorified because you seized the calling. Now, concerning that day, let's talk about some other details. Let's get our mind off this short-term, mundane, earthbound set of problems.

And let's think about what's coming. Do not set your sights on things on this earth. Don't put your eyes on things on this earth.

You have a heavenly citizenship. You have a heavenly destination. You have a heavenly future.

You have a heavenly destiny. Let's talk about that some. Now, he doesn't say bye and bye when Jesus comes back, does he? He says, now, brethren, let's think about it now.

You might hear some of them say, but Paul, those synagogue guys are just down the street. They're having a meeting right now talking about how they can further persecute us. And Paul says, now, right now, you need to set your sights on your hope.

Get your mind out of this earthly gutter. Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a finger wagging now.

This is a temporal now. This is a get your mind where it's supposed to be. Think ahead.

The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him. We ask you. Isn't that an odd turn of phrase? He doesn't say, we tell you.

He says, on this subject, we ask you. We ask you not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled. What do you immediately think of when you read that? Remember John 14, verse one, Jesus in the upper room with the disciples.

What does he say? Let not your heart be troubled. I've been talking about the imminent crucifixion. I'm gonna be delivered, Jesus says, into the hands of men.

I'm gonna be betrayed. Guy dipping his hand in the dish. He's gonna betray me.

There's a traitor right there in the house of my familiar friend, and he's lifted up his heel against me. One of you will betray me. Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I? Jesus says, look, this is short-term stuff.

Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God and you believe in me, right? Who is God?

Who am I? Jesus says, if you believe in us, why should I fear what man is going to do? I can do all things through Christ. I've seen him still the storm.

I've seen him take us to our destination immediately. I've seen him heal all kinds of incurable maladies. I've seen him exercise authority over demons.

I've seen him glorified, standing in the company of Moses and Elijah. So why should my heart be troubled? Paul says the same thing here. We ask you, we plead with you.

Eroutao is the verb here in Greek, and it has the idea of an intense request. Not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter. Not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled.

Two different things. Seluo is translated shaken, actually it means to totter, to kind of fall over because you're wobbly. To be tottering in mind, to be unstable in mind, to not be able to walk a firm, direct path.

You're tottering. It's used in secular Greek to talk about the restless movement of the sea. When it's rising and falling, it's variations, it's waves crashing and it's not stable, it's not calm.

It's uncertain, it's unpredictable. But it talks about the peril associated with instability. The troubled sea when it cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt, there's no peace.

You got to watch out when the sea is troubled, things are uncertain. Nobody knew this better than Peter. Looking at the wind, he started to sink.

So Seluo, do not let your mind be made unstable. Don't start thinking wild thoughts. Don't be like a ship without a rudder tossed about by every wind.

This is a metaphor for instability. Do not be made unstable. Well, I didn't have any persecution today and I'm feeling pretty good, but tomorrow, oh, the Jews come after me and now I'm all mixed up again.

I'm all uncertain. I don't know if my path is right or not. And I'm up and I'm down, I'm variable.

I don't have any constancy. My patience is not consistent. It says, don't be that way.

We ask you not to be soon. And this is tachaios. We have tachometer, tachycardia.

It talks about the speed of a thing quickly. Tachy, tach is how fast is your engine turning over. And there is a time to be concerned.

There's a time to be aware of a danger or of a trouble and to consider it and take action. But don't be quickly, don't just be revved up and made unstable in short order. Well, just one little provocation and I'm all a jitter, a twitter.

Don't be quickly sent into instability. If you're gonna be unstable, have them really have to work at it. It should take a lot of stuff to make us unstable, not just one word, one circumstance.

Or troubled. And troubled here is throe, T-H-R-O-E-O, just like it sounds from throe my, which means to wail or to cry aloud, to have an outcry. And it comes to mean to be so disturbed that you're shouting about it.

You're exclaiming like they used to do in the Where Oh Where Are You Tonight song on Hee Haw. Whoa, this is the idea, throe. It's almost onomatopoeic where you just throe.

You're wailing because things are, you feel like it's out of control. And it has a verbal aspect, meaning to be frightened or alarmed. Don't be made unstable and don't be frightened and alarmed.

You can't think when you're scared. You just lock up. Fear makes cowards of us all.

Don't be that way. He says, we ask you not to be made that way by particular causes. And it says either by spirit or by word or by letter.

The first word is pneuma, actually pneumatōs. And it's through, *dia pneumatōs*, through spirit or through a spirit. And when you look at the parallels, a word or a letter as if from us, all three of these are modified by as if from us.

So a wind, and this is wind in the sense of a rumor. It's not an actual letter and it's not a quote. It's just a rumor.

You know, these are things that can cause people to be thorough and to be shaken in mind. And it's just a rumor. It's a third hand.

Well, somebody said that Paul said, it's all over. He said, don't let this invisible wind, pneumatōs. I don't think this is a demon.

I don't think it's certainly not the Holy Spirit and Paul isn't sending human spirits around. This is a wind. This is a rumor.

Either a rumor or a word. And this is a sort of a misquote. Somebody's taking him out of context and using some little snippet of what he said, a little soundbite.

Well, Paul said, the day's gonna come like a thief and the thief is here. Look, we've been robbed. Or a letter.

And there were actually spurious letters. And some of these have survived down into the third century and some of them they've dug them up and you've got these false gospels and the pseudepigraphic things that purport to be written by Paul and they weren't or Peter or somebody

else. And it's interesting, this combination of words, because it's pneumatos and then it's logos.

This is the actual spirit and the actual word, the Holy Spirit and the word of God are what are supposed to guide us, right? But he says, there is a false spirit. There's a false impulse, a false invisible influence. There's a false word and there's a false epistle, epistole, a false letter, false spirit, false word, false epistle.

Don't let this kind of stuff shake you up or make you wail in fear as if it is from us. And it's not, this is false teaching being given as though it's true. And this happens a lot, misconstruing the scripture, misapplying the scripture, taking scripture out of context, saying that Paul said a thing when Paul never said it, saying that Jesus said a thing when Jesus never said it, saying that this is the action and the impulse and the will of the Holy Spirit when it's not, or that we've got another epistle, another gospel, we ought to be reading the gospel of Judas, we ought to be reading the Book of Mormon, we ought to be reading these other epistles as though it is from us, from apostolic authority when it's not.

Well, what's the application of this? We need to stop for tonight. Where are we? In chapter two. When we think about the coming of the Lord Jesus, there are certain things that we absolutely know from the word of God.

And there's a lot being thrown at us. We have economic crisis, we have international crisis, we have domestic crisis, we've got everything from the West Nile virus threat to the loss of our savings, to the hiking of prices, to inflation, to war with other countries. Threats large and small.

And people saying, well, Christians ought to do this, and Christians ought to support that, and Christians ought to believe this, and Christians ought to vote for that. And it is as though this is the will of God for us that we should do and respond and react in certain ways. And Paul says, don't be made unstable.

Anything that makes you fearful, anything that shakes up your mind, isn't a spirit or a word or an epistle from God. God has not given us a spirit of fear. His word calms us, stabilizes us, centers us, empowers us, enables us.

And if somebody starts throwing out a teaching that shakes everything up, and we say, oh, well, wait a minute. Well, this is not from God. God has not given us that spirit.

It is power and love and sobriety, a sound mind, self-control. The word of God and the spirit of God and the epistles that God has given us, strengthen us, they don't weaken us. They stabilize us.

Let not your heart be troubled. You believe God, you believe Christ. And what does Jesus go to in 14.2? In my father's house, he says, think about the future.

Get your eyes off this present momentary light affliction. Think about where you're going. If it

weren't so, I would have told you, I'm going to prepare a place for you.

I'm coming back to receive you to myself. Let not your heart be troubled. I am in that place and I'm getting ready to receive you.

Paul says the same thing concerning the coming of the Lord and our gathering together to him. Don't let your heart be troubled. Don't let your mind be shaken.

Anytime we're shaken, anytime we're in disturbance, you know what we need to do? Turn loose of that disturbing influence and focus on why we're here. When we start thinking about the future and our destination and the glory of the Lord Jesus and the opportunity to be of service to him and to be glorified in him and he to be glorified in us, you know what it does? It makes us objective. It calms us.

It centers us. It gives us divine perspective and divine viewpoint. And in that frame of mind, we will suddenly see things in their true proportions and we will be possessed of power and love and a sound mind, not a spirit of fear.

It's an odd thing, but the best way to solve a problem, the best way to work through a crisis is to quit thinking about that crisis and think about the return of the Lord Jesus. Jesus says it in John 14. Paul says it here in 2 Thessalonians 2. And we'll see the development of this idea when we return to our study next week.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the resources you have given to us. Thank you for our calling, for our justification, for the opportunity to be glorified in Christ by your grace, through your gracious provision of everything we need to live in this life and be prepared for the next.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will keep these things in the forefront of our minds, that we will be counted worthy of the calling, that we can accomplish that good that is a part of your good purpose, and that in so doing, we will bring glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we pray these things in his name, amen.