

**“Just Right”                      2 Thessalonians 1:5-10**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of End Times            11/7/2004                      Pastor Jon Bergemann**

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Amen. The word of God for our consideration is taken from the book of 2 Thessalonians, chapter 1. (Read text). In the name of Jesus, our glorious Savior, dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

If you tuned into the presidential election coverage on television on Tuesday evening at about 5:00 p.m., you would have had good reason to anticipate calling John Kerry your next president. If you tuned into the presidential election coverage on Wednesday evening at about 5:00 p.m., you would have had no reason to anticipate such an event. President Bush had won a second term.

What happened in that short stretch of time? The exit polls – polls conducted by interviewers surveying voters as they exit voting booths, did not reflect an accurate picture of what was going on. What looked like a certain victory for Kerry turned out to be a win for Bush. This has left many in our nation wondering, “How could this happen? How could our judgment be so far off? How could the information be so poor?”

The frustration experienced by many Americans at the poor information from the exit polls probably doesn't compare to the frustration experienced by many Christians in the church at Thessalonica, the audience to whom our text was originally addressed to. These Christians were receiving some contradictory information and analysis regarding an event much bigger than election day. They were receiving skewed information about Judgment Day.

Some self-proclaimed expert analysts promoted the false idea that Christ had already returned in some sort of covert mission and they all had missed it. Others figured that Christ's coming on the last day to end the world was such a long time off that they could eat, drink, and be merry with no concern for spiritual priorities. Still others accumulated their good works like vouchers for eternal life, waiting for the day when they could cash them all in to an extremely impressed God. With all this confusion, no wonder 18 of the 47 verses in the book of 2 Thessalonians deal with the topic of Judgment Day!

So what does Paul tell these Thessalonians in the midst of all this confusion? In essence, he cuts through the misinformation and says, “Don't worry. God's got it all under control.” Look again at verses 5 and 6, **“All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well.”**

Note two important points that Paul makes: **“God's judgment is right”** (verse 5) and He **“is just”** (verse 6). If we put two words from those phrases together, we can sum up in a simple way exactly what Judgment Day will be like: “just right”.

It will come not a day too soon nor a day too late. It won't happen in a way that only some realize what's going on and others don't. It will be obvious to all, it will be exactly when God wants it, and it will accomplish exactly what God wants. It will be “just right”.

And yet, as we look forward to that day, we might not always feel “just right” about it. That's because as we imagine standing before God on the Day of Judgment, as He is able to see everything we've ever done, said, or thought in life, it doesn't take us too long to realize that much of what we've done, said, and thought has been “just wrong.”

After all, if, at the end of the world, God were to analyze our devotion to His Word – our dedication to His Word, our striving to give Him the glory instead of ourselves – would He proclaim that we are just right? Or rather, just pathetic at many times in our devotion and trust in Him?

If He were to view the way we treat others – whether we put others needs above our own, whether we selflessly serve others or selfishly worry about our own needs – would He say we are just right? Or rather, just selfish and self absorbed at many times in our relationships with others?

If He were to view our thoughts – whether our mind is full of hope, trust, peace, patience, goodness, or whether things like lust, laziness, jealousy, worry, negativity, greed, anger make a mold in our minds – would He proclaim that we are just right? Or rather, just sick in our thoughts and attitudes?

When we consider how far short of perfection we fall, how shamefully we sin, the prospect of Judgment Day might seem like something which is not just right, but rather something we just want to avoid. And, to be sure, God would have every right on that day to just send us into the fires of hell for everything sin we have committed that is just wrong in His sight.

But to our troubled hearts, God gives us a message that is just what we need. A message that is just right. A message that is just more than we could ever imagine.

He assures us in our text that on that Day of Judgment, **“you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God.”** (verse 5) What? How can he make that statement? Is He using faulty information? Are his exit polls incorrect? Is His analysis wrong?

No. God is right. We will be counted worthy. But not because of anything that we have done – most of that is just wrong. Rather, we will be counted worthy because of everything that He has done – which is just right.

You see, at just the right time, He came to earth as just the right Savior: Jesus Christ. He lived a perfect life in our place, which was just what we needed. He died on the cross to forgive our sins in an act of sacrificial love that was just right. He rose from the dead to prove that our sins are forgiven, that His perfect life is credited to us. To prove that in God’s sight, we look just right.

It means that on Judgment Day, we will be counted as worthy of the kingdom of God – not because we have become worthy ourselves, but rather because Jesus has made us worthy.

And that’s great news. Why? Because we live in a world where so many things seem wrong. Exit polls are wrong. The way others often treat us oftentimes seems just wrong. The sufferings and sicknesses and pains and pressures we face seem so wrong. The decisions we make seem wrong. But know how it all ends: it will be just right when Jesus comes back again.

In fact, God gives you a certain preview of that to assure you that it will all end just as it should. Check out verse 7. After He refers to repaying those who give us trouble on this earth, God then gives His promise to grant us relief from all our troubles. The Greek word means to loosen or release the tightly strung string of an archer’s bow. As we worry about the future and live in a hostile world, we can become stretched and tense like a string on a bow. But God will give us release. He will lift every pressure we feel on this earth. He will give us relaxing release from all the anxieties and struggles which make us tense. No longer will our beliefs be questioned. No longer will temptations trouble us. No longer will we fear, or worry, or get old, or get sick, or die. No longer will we sin. No, all the troubles and trials that press us on this earth will be lifted. We will have relaxation and release!

And then we will see something incredible. Verse seven says that we ourselves will see the **“Lord Jesus revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.”** As we gaze upon this picture with jaws dropped, Paul says that we will marvel at Him. How true this is! It will be a sight like we’ve never seen!

I always get a thrill as I drive north on Interstate 95 and arrive at a spot just approaching Washington, D.C. It’s very near to the Pentagon and as 95 elevates up a bit, you are able to get a great view of the city. You can see the Washington Monument, the Capital, and the National Cathedral in the distance. Every time I hit that stretch of 95, my eyes widen a bit and I say, “Wow. What a view!”

Of course, some of the marvel then usually disappears as I have to fight traffic in the city and worry about which turn lane I’m in while finding tourists everywhere and parking no where. And the traffic going south back out of the city is often times not so good.

Pictures of earthly grandeur like our capital may make us marvel. But now, consider for a moment the amazing picture that we’ll see in heaven. The Lord Jesus Himself, in all His

glory, will be there. And will we have to stand back? Look at Him in terror? Be forced to leave His presence?

No! In fact, verse 10 says that He will come to be glorified in us. That's right, we will reflect the glory of God Himself. We, who on this side of eternity are filled with sin. We, whose thoughts are so focused on the things of this world. We who feel overwhelmed with the pressings and trials we endure. We, who wonder if God really knows what He's doing all the time. We little humans, we will be the ones that will reflect God's glory as His perfect children in heaven, forever. We will see our Savior Jesus, the one who loved us so much that He endured every earthly trial and temptation perfectly in our place, the one who forgives us and makes us worthy of heaven. Yes, this is the one who will come to us in all His blazing power and glory and say, "Welcome home. All your earthly trials and pressings are gone. I give you rest and relief. I give you heaven. Everything is just right"

Wow. What a picture to look forward to. Kind of helps put things in perspective, doesn't it?

Exit polls lie. But God doesn't. He is going to take you to heaven. He makes you worthy to be there. Judgment Day is coming. And friend, it will be just right. Amen.