

HANDELING HARD TIMES

2 Thessalonians 1:3-7

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Bad things happen to everyone sooner or later and everyone has his/her own way of trying to cope, to handle those bad times. The Thessalonian Church, along with many others went through some very difficult times and how they handled those bad times is an example for every Christian to follow. Their faith grew, their love for one another was untouched, they were patient and the persecution they were undergoing continued, yet they managed to endure all that was happening to them. What can be learned from the Thessalonian Church?

I. FACE IT! HARD TIMES HAPPEN

1. There are some who give the impression that once one becomes a Christian, all his/her troubles are over.
 - Countless have suffered disappointment because they believed that all was well now that they were Christians.
2. The Bible warns of hard times:
 - Jesus warned His disciples - John 15:19-20; 16:33
 - The Apostles later warned the believers - Acts 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 3:4; 2 Timothy 3:12
3. Christians today can also expect hard times:
 - No person is spared the results of sin and evil in this world.
 - The world is still filled with sickness and death.
 - Consequences are often suffered because of choices made by someone else.
 - Every Christian can expect difficulties/persecution because he/she is a Christian.
 - Family, friends and enemies often criticize and physically harm one who is a Christian.
 - Christians have an enemy (Satan) who's goal is to destroy every Christian - 1 Peter 5:8-9

II. IN HARD TIMES, FAITH, LOVE AND PATIENCE IS NEEDED

1. A fast, great growing faith is needed:
 - a faith that is:
 - a strong conviction of things unseen - Hebrews 11:1
 - created by the Word of God - Romans 10:17
 - constantly growing - 2 Thessalonians 1:3
 - a growing faith is the kind that makes it through being persecuted (hard times).
 - Think about Job's faith - Job 19:25-27
 - Habakkuk had faith - Habakkuk 3:17-19
2. A love that moves toward others is needed:
 - a love that:
 - is taught by God, Himself - 1 Thessalonians 4:9
 - through the example of God's love - 1 John 4:9-11
 - through the example of Jesus's love - 1 John 3:16
 - increases more and more - 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 4:20; 3:12
 - a love that moves toward others is a love that sustains during hard times.
 - Paul was comforted in his tribulation - 1 Thessalonians 3:6-7
 - One can endure persecution, hard trials when surrounded by brotherly love.

3. A patience that holds up under trial and difficulty:

- a patience that:
 - is based upon the hope that a Christian has - Romans 8:25
 - is developed by reading God's Word - Romans 15:4
 - is needed if one is to receive God's promises - Hebrews 10:36
 - is strengthened the more one looks unto Jesus - Hebrews 12:1-3
- a patience that holds up under difficulties is the kind that makes a person stronger.
 - It makes a person complete, lacking nothing - James 1:3-4
 - It gives one experience which can strengthen one's hope even more - Romans 5:3-4

III. THINGS WILL BE MADE RIGHT ONE DAY

1. God's judgment will be righteous:

- God's children who have endured tribulation with faith and patience will be recompensed:
 - God's righteous judgment will make things right - 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5
 - They have been made worthy through all their suffering - 2 Thessalonians 1:5
 - Worthy to be recompensed, but God is the one who qualifies one for His kingdom - Colossians 1:12
 - God is the one who perfects, establishes, strengthens through difficulties - 1 Peter 5:10
- God will bring judgment upon those who have caused tribulation and difficulties for His Children - 2 Thessalonians 1:6

2. God will repay those who trouble His people:

- Tribulation will come upon them, being a righteous pay-back - 2 Thessalonians 1:6; Romans 2:4-11

3. God will give His troubled people rest:

- 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7
- This rest will be given when the Lord Jesus comes from heaven with His mighty angels - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

CONCLUSION:

1. Every person has trials, difficulties, hardships sooner or later, especially Christians.
2. Christians should look to God and His Word for the faith, love, and patience needed to get through.
3. There is coming a day when Jesus will come back for His Christians (Church) and He will give bring rest for His Church as well as judgment for those who have troubled His Church.
4. Christian, if YOU are going through difficult, hard times, go to the Lord Jesus, get into God's Word and know that some day YOU will receive recompense from the Lord Jesus.