

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 24 January 2021

Sermon Title : Resolve to be Worthy

Speaker : Rev Eddie Ho

Text : 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

INTRODUCTION

Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians that the Thessalonians were model Christians, modelling for us a faith that shows, a faith that shines and a faith that speaks. However, the tone of Paul's second letter to them is slightly different because he might have received reports or sensed that some of them had been distracted by opposition and false teaching. Hence, he wrote this second letter to encourage them to stay on course and this letter is also for us.

Worthy or not worthy

- "Worthy" means "honourable" or "something of a high value". The word 'worthy' appeared twice (vv.5, 11) in today's passage. The Thessalonians were model Christians and Paul was very proud of them. It seemed like Paul would think they were worthy but in verse 5 he wrote, "that they may be considered *worthy* of the Kingdom of God" and in verse 11, "that our God may make you *worthy* of His calling". Hence, Paul actually meant that the Thessalonians were not worthy. Something had to be done so that they might be considered worthy and Paul had to specifically pray for God to make them worthy. Similarly, Paul is saying that we too are not worthy.
- The Greek word for worthy is a business term. It literally means to bring up the other beam of a balance scale so both sides of the scale are of equal weight when it is level. When we say something is worthy or another, it does not mean that they are the same thing. It just means we have brought the beam up and the two things are of equivalent weight or value. For example, we know a \$50 note is not equal in weight to 50 roti prata but a \$50 note can buy us 50 roti prata. They are not the same thing and do not weigh the same but a \$50 note is worth 50 roti prata. Similarly, we are not the same as God, we do not carry the same weight God carries but because we are made in God's image, our worth is being raised and we are worthy.
- Since the Fall of Man, the image of God in man is tainted and distorted and our worth has dropped to zero just like a torn and mutilated \$50 note, which according to our Singapore law is worth nothing. While it is damaged, we can still tell it is a \$50 note. Similarly, we still have some resemblance of the image

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

of God in us regardless of our beliefs, opinions or conduct, though we too are a mutilated image.

Eternal destruction (v.9)

Under Singapore law, a mutilated \$50 note will be permanently destroyed and likewise under the law of God, a mutilated image of God is worth nothing and will suffer eternal destruction.

Made Worthy

Whether we will try to recover the value of a mutilated note by going to the bank depends on how much the note is worth. The higher the value the more we are willing to risk embarrassment to recover the value.

What is the value of a human being to you?

When the pandemic broke out, there were people who risked their lives to serve in the hospitals, dormitories and amongst the homeless. But there were those who placed their own rights above the lives of others. In the USA, 64% surveyed did not want to wear masks simply because of their rights, comfort and convenience even though they knew wearing a mask was important in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. We may not be so extreme but we are like that:

- when we pretend not to see the uncle in a wheelchair selling tissue paper trying to make a living
- when we are inconsiderate to people at home, at school, at work, on public transport or at the food centre
- when we are oblivious to the needy in the community.

Our rights, comfort and convenience are more important than other people. This is very sad because we think we are more valuable than others.

Under the Law, we are worth nothing but God values every one of us

As mutilated image, we deserve to be destroyed permanently but the Good News is that:

- God took the trouble to send His Son Jesus Christ to redeem us
- Even though Jesus is God, He chose to descend as a mere human
- Even though He is perfect and always right, He gave up His right to live among sinners.
- He could have chosen to be born in the comfort of royalty but He gave up the comfort for us.
- He could have led an army to establish His Kingdom on earth but He chose to go to the Cross.

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

- At the Cross, Jesus was humiliated; He gave up His rights, comfort and convenience so that He could redeem worthless, mutilated images of God like us.

This is how God values us even though we are worthless. The beam scale is totally lopsided but Jesus brought up the beam on our side by adding His blood on the other plate. The precious blood of Jesus Christ shed to cleanse our sins, the life giving blood of Jesus Christ poured out to seal and reinstate our worth.

Resolve to be worthy (v.11)

But God is not finished with us yet. God wants us to live up to His calling. This is why Paul prayed that God would make the Thessalonians worthy of His calling and to “resolve” for good and every work of faith by His power (v.11); which is to resolve to grow their faith and love for one another (v.3).

- 1) Grow our faith in Jesus (v.3)
 - To walk closely with Him and obey God (Psalm 1)
 - Desire to be like Him and yearn to have the mind of Christ
 - See the world as He sees it.
 - Hate the things that He hates and love the things that He loves

He has shed his blood to bring up the beam for all of us. He now calls us to continue His work on earth; to harvest the seed that He has sown.

- 2) Increase our love for each other
 - Including our worthy opponent – Jesus died for them as well
 - Sometimes we may be persecuted but God is faithful and will not let us be tested beyond what we can bear. (1 Cor 10:13) God has also given us the church to support each other and spur one another on to love and good works.
 - We need each other to grow our faith. Our life and journey of faith is not a sprint but a long marathon and to go far we need each other.

To be intentional in growing our faith and our love for one another, we are called to obey our spiritual leaders and do what they say because their role is to watch over our souls and they are accountable to God. Give them reasons to do this with joy and not sorrow. (Hebrews 13:17)

CONCLUSION

As mutilated image of God, we are worthless and deserve eternal destruction. It is only by the blood of Jesus that we are made worthy because God values every one of us. Having our worth reinstated by God’s grace, let us resolve to be worthy of God’s calling; to grow in faith and love for one another. To see the worth in others and so continue His work on earth, to harvest the seed that He has sown.

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

Appoint someone to read 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, 'This is the Word of the Lord.'

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Resolve to be Worthy"?

- (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. Because of our sin, humans are mutilated image of God and deserve eternal destruction, but Jesus reinstated our worth by giving up His rights, comfort and convenience to go to the cross. How does knowing this impact how you will:
- (i) respond to Jesus
 - (ii) value yourself
 - (iii) value others
- 2b. God wants us to live up to His calling; to grow in faith and in love for one another, and so continue His work on earth; to harvest the seed that He has sown. How can you resolve to be worthy of His calling? (Consider the migrant workers, your domestic helper, those who are different from us and the lost, last and least)
- 3a. (i) Do you think you are more valuable than others?
(ii) What are some tell-tale signs that you value your rights, comfort and convenience more than others at home, work, school, on public transport, at the food centre or in the community?
- 3b. What is one thing you must change, to resolve to value others more than your rights, comfort and convenience, in the following week(s) until your next meeting?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you achieve 3b. in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your experience on how God has helped you to see the world the way He sees it and to love what He loves and hate what He hates.

OR

Give thanks to Christ for reinstating your worth through His sacrifice.

5. As a group, brainstorm on how you can plan to intentionally resolve to grow in faith and love for one another and your group leaders. Bring your decisions to the Lord and seek His wisdom and empowerment on which to implement and how to follow through.

With a prayer partner, bring all that has been shared in 3b and 3c to God, committing to encourage one another to be worthy of God's calling to grow in faith and love for one another so we may continue His work on earth; to harvest the seed that He has sown.

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