

Scripture: II Thessalonians 1:3-12.

Topic: Worthy of His Call.

TEXT: II Thess. 1:11 --- "...we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call..."

Proposition: Only with a sense of the direct help of God, or of the Holy Spirit, can an individual ever develop a life which is in any way worthy of God's loving eternal care.

Dates written: October 4-6, 1961.

Dates preached:

Oct. 8, 1961, Montrose, Colo.
June 27, 1965 - Alamosa, Colo.

June 27

Topic: II. Theology of the Bible

Text: Genesis 1:1-5

Text: Genesis 1:6-10

Text: Genesis 1:11-15

Text: Genesis 1:16-19

Text: Genesis 1:20-25

Text: Genesis 1:26-31

Text: Genesis 2:1-4

Text: Genesis 2:5-7

Text: Genesis 2:8-9

Text: Genesis 2:10-14

Text: Genesis 2:15-17

Text: Genesis 2:18-20

Text: Genesis 2:21-22

Text: Genesis 2:23-24

Introduction:

1. In his book "The Birth of Britain," Winston Churchill tells of a system in use in England in Medieval times by which the "wergild," or exact value or worth of every man was described in shillings. A shilling was the amount of money that a cow was worth in Kent, or that a sheep was worth elsewhere. This system of valuing people had a prince ~~worth~~ worth 1500 shillings; an earl, or nobleman, 300 shillings; a "churl," or yeoman farmer, 100 shillings; an agricultural serf, 40-80 shillings, and a slave nothing. All these laws were logically and mathematically pushed to their extremes. If a churl killed an earl he had to pay three times as much in compensation, or fine, than did an earl who murdered a churl. These laws were applied to all families. With money all was possible; without it retribution or loss of liberty. However, the prince valued at 1500 shillings, suffered in certain respects. The penalty for slandering was tearing out the tongue. If a prince were guilty of this offense his tongue was worth five times that of an earl and fifteen times as much

as that of a common serf, and he could ransom it only on these terms. (From #1243, Gerald Kennedy's A Second Readers Notebook, Harper, 1959)

2. Merry old England had the worth of everybody, and of many specific acts, all figured out. Today in our American democracy we are unwilling to admit that one person may be worth more than another, regardless of differences in social or official position. We consider each person of **equal** value to any other person before the law, and in right to seek liberty, happiness and fortune. We have this concept because we believe that God values all persons equally, and that He gives these inalienable rights to every one.

3. Along with the equal rights of all go certain responsibilities: tax-paying, jury duty, voting, military service, serving in public office, etc.. Some citizens qualify for some of these responsibilities and some for others, according to qualifications and ability, but some responsibility is on each and all.

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(1901-1918, Journal of Education)
Second National Education Conference, 1959

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4. People who are professed christians and church members are part of the faith which is the source of the stress on equality in rights, worth and responsibility that is so basic in our way of life. In Christianity we stress that God loves each person and calls him to a satisfying, worthwhile life for now and eternity. We point to Jesus Christ as God's way of issuing this call to the new and good life. We think of the church as the organization, or institution, through which their christian responsibilities to God and others can best be carried out.

5. Frequently, people who are asked to take responsible positions in their church, positions of leadership, will refuse, explaining that they feel unworthy, or unqualified, to do the task asked of them. Sometimes there is real substance in such a statement, even if occasionally it is only an excuse, for

I. We all fall short again and again in our efforts at worthy christian LIVING.

1. People who are responsible for the success or failure of an organization are those who are in a position to influence the behavior of others. This is not necessarily a position of authority, but it is a position of responsibility. In our view, leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve common goals. This is not a simple task, as it requires a deep understanding of the organization and its people. It also requires a strong sense of purpose and a willingness to take action. Leadership is not a title, but a role. It is a role that can be played by anyone, at any time, in any organization. The most effective leaders are those who are able to inspire and motivate others to do their best. They are able to create a vision for the future and to communicate that vision in a way that is compelling and inspiring. They are also able to listen to others and to understand their needs and concerns. Leadership is a skill that can be learned and developed. It is a skill that is essential for the success of any organization. In our view, leadership is the most important skill that a manager or executive can have. It is the skill that makes the difference between a good manager and a great one. It is the skill that allows a leader to turn a vision into reality. It is the skill that allows a leader to create a culture of excellence and to build a team that is capable of achieving the organization's goals. Leadership is a responsibility that comes with a position of authority. It is a responsibility that must be taken seriously. It is a responsibility that requires a high level of integrity and a strong sense of ethics. It is a responsibility that requires a willingness to take risks and to make difficult decisions. Leadership is a challenge, but it is also a great reward. It is a chance to make a difference in the world and to leave a lasting legacy. In our view, leadership is the most important skill that a manager or executive can have. It is the skill that makes the difference between a good manager and a great one. It is the skill that allows a leader to turn a vision into reality. It is the skill that allows a leader to create a culture of excellence and to build a team that is capable of achieving the organization's goals.

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1. Paul recognized the possibility that the christians at Thessalonica would be tempted and fall short of living by christian standards. The words of our text, part of verse 11 of this first chapter of II Thessalonians, are, "...we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call...". Because he knew that humans tend to weaken and fail, even when they are trying to live righteously, he felt moved to pray for his christian friends at Thessalonica.

2. Halford Luccock tells of the experience of a minister who was speaking to a group of human derelicts who were gathered in a mission at a "skid row." He was urging his dreary audience to lift themselves to a better living, and recited, in an unctuous rotund voice, the whole of Kipling's poem "If." He ended with the lines, "If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run." In the pause which followed, a voice from a back seat asked, "What if you can't?" (#448, A Second Readers Notebook)

I. I had recognized the possibi-
 lity that the Christians of the
 East would be separated from the West
 or living by a Christian standard.
 The words of our text, part of
 II of the first chapter of II
 Corinthians, are, "...we always pray
 for you, that our God will give you
 wisdom that ye may know that
 ye are not ignorant of his will."
 Now that we have read the text and
 try to explain it, we find that
 the Apostle Paul is writing to
 the Christians of the East.

2. Before we look at the
 explanation of a minister who was
 speaking to a group of people in a
 church in a city in a mission
 "said you." He was saying the
 message to the Christians of the
 East, and saying, "I have
 come to you, and I have
 heard you, and I have
 heard you." He ended with
 the words, "If you can believe in
 the Lord, I will come to you."
 In the end, a voice from the
 East said, "What is your
 message?"

I 3.

"I never **cut** my neighbor's throat;
My neighbor's gold I never stole;
I never spoiled his house and land,
But God have mercy on my soul.

For I am haunted night and day
By all the deeds I have not done;
O unattempted loveliness!
O costly valor never won!

---Marguerite Wilkinson.

(#440, A Second Readers Notebook)

II. If when one experiences some failure his friends and loved ones seem to turn away from him, loneliness and hurt may drive him to desperation.

1. Two fishermen were telling their experiences. One told of fishing in a certain brook and catching a trout weighing ten pounds. The other fisherman told of yanking out his line and discovering a lighted lantern on the hook.

"Now wait a minute," said the first fisherman; "you may have hooked an old lantern, all right, but it wasn't lighted."

"Maybe I did stretch the truth a bit there," said the second fisherman.

3.

"I was out by the door's light
by the door's light I saw him
I never saw him before
but I had never seen him before"

For I had never seen him
by the door's light I saw him
O my beloved I love you
O my beloved I love you

(The second time I saw him)

II. The first time I saw him
I saw him by the door's light
I saw him by the door's light
I saw him by the door's light

I. The first time I saw him
I saw him by the door's light
I saw him by the door's light
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I saw him by the door's light
I saw him by the door's light
I saw him by the door's light

I saw him by the door's light
I saw him by the door's light
I saw him by the door's light
I saw him by the door's light

"I'll tell you what I'll do; you take eight pounds off your trout and I'll blow out my lantern."
(Paul E. Holdcraft, 400 nMore Snappy Stories that Preachers Tell, p. 12).

2. Fisherman are pretty human when they exaggerate. One of the most common times in which many of us exaggerate is when we consider what others think of us. People tend to go toward one extreme or another in this. Either we think that most people like and admire us; or we think that they dislike and abuse us. Fortunate is the person who can be realistic enough to recognize that, generally, most people accept others and spend little time plotting for or against them. People are usually too busy with their own affairs to worry about most other people very much.

3. Nevertheless, when things have been tough, and we feel that we have failed, then we often are super-sensitive, so that we feel that everybody is against us. I know a little boy, who, when scolded or punished, will cry and say again and again,

"I'll tell you what I'll do: you

take eight pounds off your trunk

and I'll give you ten dollars.

(The man, looking at the man

standing next to him, said:

"I'll tell you what I'll do: you

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"everybody hates me." When we feel like that we feel awful. Such feelings of being unwanted, even though based directly on overactive imagination, often causes the unacceptable conduct of people which puts some of them outside the law. The loneliness and bitterness which so often accompanies failure can make you very desperate, indeed.

4. This desperation can be overcome in ways which have constructive results; for

III .If in times of desperation you have a sense of the nearness of God, you feel that He understands and helps you.

1. When he returned to England from the Oglethorpe colony at Savannah, Georgia, in 1738, John Wesley felt like a failure. He had not been able to learn the language or otherwise to communicate with the Indians, to whom he thought he had been sent to minister as a missionary from the Church of England. He had not been able to minister effectively to the colonists, either, and just couldn't

seem to get along with them. He felt so much a failure as a minister, that he wrote in his diary, "I who went to America to convert the Indians have myself never been converted of God." Back home in England real despair and desperation came on him, and he really hit bottom. It was in this low period that he had ~~an~~ experience that made him know -- it was knowledge as far as he was concerned -- that God was near, that God cared for him, that God understood his weaknesses and sins and forgave them, that God was with him at all times to strengthen and help him. He was so convinced that God would do for others what He had done for him that he spent the rest of his life trying to help others have an experience similar to his own. From one who felt unworthy of God's call John Wesley became one convinced that God was using him to call others

IV. With God's help you can develop a sense of confidence which results in a more and more ^{worthy} but never perfect -- life.

1. We would, of course, never

...to the Lord...
...so much...
...he wrote in his letter...
...to the...
...that...
...it was...
...that God...
...for his...
...his...
...and...
...that God...
...for him...
...rest of his life...
...have...
...from...
...call...
...that God...

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...in a...
...life...

develop the thought or doctrine that you can earn your way to heaven, or that you can earn God's favor. His love and help is free, a gift of love and grace, to all who will seek and accept it. When you accept God's forgiveness and get a fresh start, feeling that He is near, you can feel confident that He is concerned for you and for what you do.

2. The feeling is something like that of a son for a good and conscientious father. The son has the father's love all the time, no matter what he does. But when the son tries to please and help his father he himself feels much more worthy and proud of his sonship.

3. Here, too, is the secret of good churchmanship. When you are trying your best to help, knowing you'll never do a perfect job, or perhaps an even good one, somehow you feel a bit better, a bit more worthy of your call as a church member. If your membership is based on a real faith in and awareness of God, you should feel rather worthy, or capable, of trying to work and lead in God's church.

...theology of the church... the church is the body of Christ... the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit... the church is the bride of Christ... the church is the kingdom of God on earth...

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Conclusion:

1. In the Scripture which we read today Paul expressed his thanks that the church members at Thessalonica were constantly growing in faith and increasing in good works one to another. He told them that because of this faith, to which they held steady even in persecution, he boasted of them to other churches that he visited.

2. He told them that their steadfastness to God during their suffering, failure and hardship is the forerunner of rewards eternal which God has in store for them. Recognizing that in the severity of their testing they might be tempted to turn away from God, Paul tells them that "we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call."

3. Paul's writing here, and our thought and observations from present day life, lead us to see better that only with a sense of the direct help of God can you develop a life which is worthy of God's loving and eternal care.

Conclusion:

1. In the Scripture which we read, we have seen that the church is not a mere organization of men, but a living organism, which is constantly growing and changing. It is the body of Christ, which is the head, and we are the members. We are to be united to Christ, and to each other, in a love which is the bond of perfect knowledge. We are to be faithful to the Word of God, and to the sacraments, which are the means of grace. We are to be active in the world, and to bring the Gospel to all people. We are to be a light to the world, and to be a sign of God's love to all men.

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4. But, as you give yourself to great effort in doing the things you believe God wants done, you are more apt to feel Him near, more apt to feel worthy of His call.

at this time, but as you can see from the
report which is being prepared, the
information is being gathered from the
field and will be available in the near future.

II Thessalonians 1:3-12

Closing Prayer for
Sermon

O God, our Father, we feel unworthy of so much which you do for us. Often we feel incapable and unworthy of doing Thy work in the church and elsewhere. Sometimes our strong sense of unworthiness causes us to feel forsaken and alone.

Help us, O God, to focus our thoughts and lives upon Jesus. When He was forsaken and alone He turned to Thee, and found strength and help to conquer even death, that He might do Thy will. We are grateful that we, too, can know Thy presence, and that in knowing Thee we find incentive, strength and worthiness to do Thy will.

We need Thee. We would be worthy of Thy call.

In Jesus Name. Amen.

1948-1949
Closing Report for
1948

O. God, our Father, we feel
worthy of so much which we do for
the church. We feel that we are
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and that we are sometimes our
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was forsaken and alone he turned to
Thee, and found strength and help to
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thy will. We are grateful that we,
too, can know thy presence, and that
in knowing thee we find incentive,
strength and willingness to do thy will.

We need Thee. We would be worthy
of thy call.
In Jesus Name, Amen.