

# Giving Thanks to God That Spiritual Love Grows Greater

## 2 Thessalonians 1:

Before we move into this second letter to the Thessalonians, let us get some idea of what is going on as Paul writes this second letter.

- 1 The bearer of the first letter (1 Thessalonians) brought Paul a report of some of the *things going on among these believers in Thessalonica*. So Paul now writes against *false teachers*. **False teachers** have been brought on the scene throughout the entire Church Age by Satan.
- 2 These believers were also suffering a great deal because of **their stand for JESUS CHRIST** and Satan attacked Thessalonica in personal suffering as well as teachers teaching *false doctrines*. And then, of course, there were the *Judaizers* who were always following Paul to counter his teaching on the LAW and GRACE.
- 3 *The Problem:* The *false teachers* had a letter saying that Paul said "the Church went through The Tribulation." This was a forged letter, of course, but it caused some of the believers in Thessalonica to believe that they had missed *The Rapture* and were left behind.

## 2 Thessalonians 2:2

<sup>2</sup> **that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.**

- 4 In spite of all this, or along with all this, the Romans were also putting pressure on them endangering their lives. So, many thought that this was The Tribulation and they had missed *The Rapture*.

## 2 Thessalonians 1:1

- <sup>1</sup> **Paul and Silvanus and Timothy**, three members of the same team, but with different spiritual gifts.

<b>PAUL</b>	Gift of <b><i>Apostleship</i></b> —none today
<b>SILAS</b>	Gift of <b><i>Prophecy</i></b> (Acts 15:32) (Silas, like Paul, was both Jewish and Roman)
<b>TIMOTHY</b>	Gift of <b><i>Pastor-Teacher</i></b>

- <sup>1</sup> **To the church** (The dative of advantage, **to** or **for** the advantage of this church. The Greek word for church is ***ekklesia*** ***called out***, a ***called out*** people used by Paul to describe the meeting of the ***called out*** ones...believers in JESUS CHRIST.

THE CHURCH IS TECHNICALLY NOT A BUILDING BUT PEOPLE.  
PEOPLE MAKE UP THE CHURCH.

- <sup>1</sup> **of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:**

First note that Paul says **our Father**.

**This simple expression does two things:**

**first**

Personal relationship with the first member of the Godhead.

**second**

Family relationship of believers.

GOD THE FATHER is the author and JESUS CHRIST is the one who executes His plans. Not named is the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit who places everyone who believes in union with JESUS CHRIST.

Dr. Walvoord points out that no other religion says this.

People are never said to be

***“in Buddha”***

or

***“in Confucius”***

or

***“in Allah or Muhammand”***

**Yet**

Believers are ***“in vital union with Christ”***

And here is something else you need to bear in mind,

YOU are always in this same relation ***‘IN CHRIST’*** regardless of circumstances or sins.

**Our position in Christ never changes**

*throughout our lives nor throughout all eternity*

**Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Grace** always precedes **Peace**.

**Grace** and **Peace** are two vital dynamics that we all need.

**Grace** reminds them of how they entered the Plan of God, the universal Church and **Peace** is the peace provided by JESUS CHRIST

—

**Peace** of God,

and

**Peace** with God

is the experiential peace we enjoy when in the power of the Holy Spirit by **Faith**.

**Grace** and **Peace** are both *from* GOD THE FATHER and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it also teaches us about our Heavenly Father

—

He knows what we are in need of:

**GRACE** and **PEACE**.

This construction reveals the equality of GOD THE FATHER and JESUS CHRIST.

Verses 3 and 4 describe this great assembly of believers.

3 **We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, ought always** (Is a Present Active Indicative— noting **continually—always** of the verb *to owe* or *be indebted* we are **bound, obligated**—this is one of those obligations that are placed on us by the very nature of things.)

We are obligated to tell others of just how wonderful it is to believe in JESUS CHRIST and to walk in the Holy Spirit by Grace through Faith.

Now WHAT EXACTLY ARE THEY OBLIGATED TO DO?  
**to give thanks to God**

Now WHAT DO YOU GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR?  
Do you give thanks to God for the Spiritual condition of other believers?

The Present Tense goes with the Present Tense of being obligated Indicating... daily activity, **daily giving thanks**. And note to whom He gives thanks: *TO GOD THE FATHER!*

Here Paul is so moved by these believers that he is just obligated to give thanks to God for them.

Just as I am daily obligated to give thanks for each of you're here in Spring Valley Bible Church.  
I thank God that you are so interested in the Truth of Scripture.

3 **as is *only* fitting,**

I love this, The Greek word is the root for English **AXIOM—WORTHY, something accepted as true**. The Greek word introduces the idea of weighing something as to **its value**.

This introduces something that is of **value indicating inherent value**.

You can tell when a person or a society is losing its moral structure when things that are inherently true are no longer considered as inherently true.

In context, there are things that are of inherent value and now Paul list some of these Christian values.

3 **As is only fitting because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever greater***

First note the two fundamentals referred to:  
FAITH and SPIRITUAL LOVE

There are several words that every pastor, evangelist, etc., uses:  
GRACE, PEACE, FAITH, LOVE

But they seldom mean the same thing that God does in His Word.  
So every time you hear someone use these words  
***it does not mean they are teaching truth.***

We have to know what the Word of God says to know the truth.

3 **As is only fitting because** (introduces the cause of their being obligated to give thanks to God and the reason it is inherently right)

**because your faith is greatly enlarged and the love of each one of you for One Another grows even greater.**

For the sake of time let us examine this entire verse as a whole rather than one phrase at a time.

2 **We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is GREATLY ENLARGED and the love of each one of you toward one another GROWS ever GREATER;**

Theological Question:

**CAN FAITH BE ENLARGED?**

**DOES FAITH NEED TO BE ENLARGED?**

**DOES IT TAKE MORE FAITH AT ONE POINT  
FOR GOD TO WORK IN OUR LIVES THAN ANOTHER?**

Will **Faith** the **size of a grain of mustard seed**  
save us from being an Unrighteous Sinner  
into His Righteousness and saved forever  
**but** it takes larger or **more Faith**  
for God to do less in our lives as Christians?

We have two different words used here:

one: **greatly enlarged** and another **grows even greater**

First: Can Faith itself be measured?

IF we answer YES---then we have made Faith a work!  
And God is not going to act in our lives until we DO  
more Faith! And this is Biblically UNTRUE. More Faith  
is not the answer!





What God is looking for is **Just Faith**

—

Our Just Trusting Him To Do For Us...And In Us!

Does God demand “more” Faith in the Christian life  
than He does to save us eternally?

**NO – Absolutely Not**

We come to a Principle of Scripture that we have seen over and over — The Bible is purposefully written where you can see it the way you desire:

You can see that God is asking for works — or —

You can see that all God is simply asking for is Our Faith.

HOW MUCH FAITH  
DID GOD NEED FROM YOU TO PERFORM  
THE GREAT MIRACLE OF YOUR ETERNAL SALVATION?

DID HE NEED A GREAT DEAL OF FAITH?

**NO – Absolutely Not**

All God was looking for was  
Faith the size of a grain of mustard seed  
to do the GREATEST MIRACLE in your life

# SAVE YOU

DOES HE NEED MORE NOW ????

The issue stated plainly:  
PRESENCE of Faith vs. ABSENCE of Faith  
Not an increase of Faith  
but just the exercise of Faith

Smallest possible portion of Faith can achieve  
what any measure of Faith can achieve  
— that is —  
Our **FAITH** allows **GOD TO ACT** in our lives...

God is not looking for *MORE FAITH* He is looking *FOR FAITH*.

We will not go through all 20 of these phrases but to make the point let's look at a passage where JESUS CHRIST is talking with His disciples.

Luke 17:3

<sup>3</sup> **"Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him."**

<sup>4</sup> **"And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."**

<sup>5</sup> **The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”**

They are not unlike most people, wow, to forgive someone  
*seven times a day* for the same sin...

This is just going to require more Faith than I have...  
so...*increase my Faith—give me more Faith to be able to  
forgive over and over.*

Now, note what the Lord says, or more insightfully, what He does not say:

<sup>6</sup> **And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea’; and it would obey you.**

JESUS CHRIST does not increase their Faith, JESUS CHRIST does not even imply they need more Faith...**no**;

JESUS CHRIST says if you will just use the least amount of Faith that you have... you can call on God to work wonders.

**Faith has no power, no merit!**

# So, therefore, the issue is *NOT HOW MUCH* Faith, but the **OBJECT** of that Faith.

It is the **object of Faith** that has the power!

Faith is passive, not active — that is,  
Faith receives from God;  
Faith does not work for God.

God responds to Faith in Him or His Son or His Spirit.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

<sup>3</sup> **We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, Because your faith is GREATLY ENLARGED**

Present Active Indicative of a Greek word used only here in the New Testament: Paul uses it to contrast with the word he will use to describe the increase in their Spiritual Love toward One Another.

What does **greatly enlarged** say?

Is it describing a larger Faith than  
a “Faith the size of a Grain of Mustard Seed”

?

The Word means

“TO GROW TO EXTREME LIMIT”

“TO ATTAIN GREATER POWER OR AUTHORITY”

“TO ACHIEVE THE HIGHEST POSITION OR STATUS”

Volume 8 of The Theological Dictionary of New Testament Greek  
Word Study:

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“The point at issue is  
*the increase of influence,*  
authority, or power, elevation in position”!

---

And this comes very close to our understanding of this word here!

From 1 Thessalonians we know that this assembly of believers is  
doing things right, they are in **The Battle of Faith.**

But as Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians **they were still struggling with the Faith or with just trusting God**—God the Holy Spirit as all believers do...and especially when viewed as an assembly.

The most difficult part of our Spiritual journey is to learn to  
**JUST TRUST HIM IN EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES!**

Look at the Bible: WHAT ARE MOST OF THE STORIES ABOUT?  
GETTING PEOPLE SAVED ETERNALLY?  
**NO – Absolutely Not**

Very few deal with Eternal Life Salvation  
like Paul's experience on the Damascus Road.

Most of the stories in the Bible  
are about getting believers to live by Faith.

Read Hebrews 11... It is about believers who became Heroes of Faith.

IT IS SO DIFFICULT TO JUST *TRUST HIM*  
**WITH FAITH THE SIZE OF A MUSTARD SEED**  
**IN EVERY AREA OF LIFE!**

We all have some areas where we **trust Him**---*but not in all areas of our lives.* And God desires us to **trust Him**, with a grain of mustard seed in EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES.

It is so difficult to Trust Him in EVERY area of our lives

These Believers assembled in Thessalonica are doing it!

This Entire Assembly  
Is Being Characterized By Walking Or Living By Faith In The Holy Spirit.

They have learned to trust Him in more and more areas of their lives...

**Faith greatly enlarged**

means

**YOU LIVE BY FAITH IN MOST AREAS OF YOUR LIFE.**

Faith has become their highest priority in struggles of life

—

**Because your faith is greatly enlarged**

That is...

the “**Exercise of Faith by them individually**”

is increasing in so many areas

where they will just “**TRUST HIM.**”

Whereas, yesterday they would have gone

to LAW;

or

to a Do and Do LIST

or

even to Sin.

They would have judged or attacked or separated or gossiped.  
BUT NOW – they are walking more and more by **Faith!**

MORE and MORE areas of their life—are now lived by **Faith!**

1. **IN REGARD TO THE SINS OF ONE ANOTHER**—they are now able to forgive 7x in one day or 70 x 7.
2. **IN REGARD TO INCREASED SUFFERING IN LIFE** they have learned to trust Him.
3. **IN REGARD TO FINANCIAL MATTERS, SUFFERING IN LOSS OF MONEY** — they have learned to just trust Him.
4. **IN REGARD TO DIFFERENCES AMONG BELIEVERS—DIFFERENT BELIEFS, DIFFERENT WAYS, ETC.**  
instead of making issues — they turn and trust Him.
5. **IN REGARD TO ONE ANOTHER’S SPIRITUAL GIFTS**  
they no longer judge One Another or boast of their own or jealous of others or back-bite One Another or compete with One Another.

# Now they simply relax and trust God!

More and more areas of their lives – they were living by Faith.

NOW WHAT HAPPENS  
WHEN WE LIVE MORE AND MORE BY FAITH?

WHEN THE AREAS IN WHICH YOU TRUST HIM  
IS INCREASED?

**SPIRITUAL LOVE INCREASES IN MAGNITUDE !**



Take a look at next thing in verse:

<sup>3</sup> **...and the love of each one of you toward One Another grows even greater!!**

**The love** with the definite article:

- specifies Spiritual Love
- love that comes from the Holy Spirit when we walk by Faith in the Holy Spirit

Spiritual Love is from the Holy Spirit — a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>3</sup> **and the love Spiritual Love of each one of you**

While he is addressing an assembly it is each individual believer who must walk by Faith in the Holy Spirit — individual walk with the assembly impact!

<sup>3</sup> **toward One Another**

New Commandment by JESUS CHRIST in Gospel of John 13;  
where Jesus says

**by this all know that you belong to JESUS CHRIST**

2 Thessalonians 1:3

<sup>3</sup> **...love of each one of you toward One Another Grows even greater**

In describing their Love for One Another; Paul uses a different word than he used in describing their Faith!

**Here:** Present Active Indicative of the Greek word which comes from the root “**MORE**” to have or be caused to have much, even more than enough — great amount —

Faith that God is looking for  
is always the size of a grain of mustard seed;  
**but Spiritual Love can and should get larger in volume.**

As we have seen Spiritual Love is a Spiritual force and remember 3 properties of force: **Direction** — **Magnitude** — **Effect/Impact**

John 3:16

<sup>16</sup> **In this manner God loved the world** (here is the direction) **that He gave His only son** (magnitude and now for the effect of impact of His love:) **that whosoever believes in Him shall have everlasting life**  
(What we have in this passage is magnitude of Spiritual Love and direction of Spiritual Love and Impact of Spiritual Love.)

Now in regard to these believers in Thessalonica:

The **Magnitude** of their love is seen in the words **grows even greater**

The **Direction** of their love **toward One Another**

**What we are seeing is beautiful fulfillment of a New Commandment given by Jesus Christ in John 13:34-35.**

Now for our text: watch what happens:

As these believers increase the areas they trusted God

—

Their Love for One Another increased in Magnitude!

Spiritual Love is force—how do you increase magnitude of force?

If we are talking about force of gravity — how do you increase magnitude of the force of gravity?

Every one of you know this — you increase the mass.

You weight 100 lbs. — add 10 lbs. of mass — increase magnitude of force.

Gravity pulls greater on larger mass!

Let's convert:

MASS = the areas of your life where you walk by Faith;  
where you trust GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In those areas you see the **impact/effect** of force of Spiritual Love — as you increase the areas where you trust Him — **Magnitude** of Spiritual Love increases!

If I trust God to cloth me,  
Out of love, I will give my coat!

—

If I trust God to take care of me,  
I will give my money to someone in need.

But if I do not trust Him

———>then I will not give my food

———>nor my coat

———>nor my money

**but** I will claim that I love God and I love my fellow believer.

John tells us we lie!

1 John 3:17-18

17 **But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?**

18 **Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth**

So what are we seeing here?

Increase in Areas of Your Life Where You Trust God

— Faith —

Will Result in An Increase in Your Spiritual  
Love Toward One Another.

If You Trust God A Little

—that is in a few areas of your life—

The Magnitude of Your Love will be Small.

**BUT As You Increase The Areas Of Your Life Where You TRUST HIM**

**— Walk By Faith In The Holy Spirit —**

**Then Spiritual Love In Those Areas Of Your Life Will Be Magnified!**

As we increase the use of our Faith—

Increase the areas where we walk by Faith—

And Spiritual Love is greatly INCREASED !

Trust Him in regard to sins of others—Out of love we forgive 7 x day—

And now instead of judging— (attacking, separating)

We forgive and bear their burden of sin.

## **WE NOW RESTORE**

### **Law of Invariance of Faith**

—it does not take more Faith to forgive 7 x a day—

It does not take more Faith

to forgive and

to restore and

bear One Another's burdens.

**IT DOES NOT TAKE MORE FAITH**  
**JUST USE OF FAITH YOU HAVE**  
**INVARIANCE of FAITH—SAME AMOUNT of FAITH**

Now:

You use that same constant amount of Faith in MORE areas of your life.

3

**We ought always to give thanks to God for you,  
brethren, as is only fitting,**

Why ought he to give thanks for them?

<sup>3</sup> **because your faith is greatly enlarged**, by number of believers and in areas of the life of each one of them live by Faith; not increase in magnitude, but in areas of your life with the result that:

**and the love Spiritual Love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;**

It is a shame that believers try to increase their Faith — which does not have to be increased... and yet, DO NOT desire for increase in their Love which CAN be increased and SHOULD be increased !

What is God looking for?

NOT INCREASE OF OUR FAITH BUT PERSEVERANCE OF OUR FAITH

**The problem is not QUANTITY of Faith  
but EXISTENCE of Faith in most difficult of times!**

Especially, in the midst of persecutions and afflictions — sufferings, etc.

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***YOU DON'T NEED INCREASE OF FAITH  
BUT PRESENCE OF FAITH!***

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Many believers use this as an excuse:

You don't have an excuse – you don't need MORE Faith!

Many take on an attitude of defeat

– and their excuse is “I don't have enough Faith.

**You have a grain of Faith**

**— saved by it —**

**So You have enough Faith**

**For God to work in your life**

**USE IT !**

No excuse!

Just a little Faith in the most difficult of times of suffering...  
adversity in your life! YOU HAVE ENOUGH Faith!

**TRUST GOD — DO NOT TRUST YOUR FAITH**

It Is NOT Your Faith — It Is Object Of Your Faith

**Just A Little Faith Taps Into POWER Of God!**

**PRESENCE Of Faith vs. ABSENCE Of Faith**

PERSEVERANCE of Faith----just keep trusting Him each passing day!

We have looked where disciples ask JESUS CHRIST to **increase their Faith** and JESUS CHRIST did not increase their Faith, but informed them they had enough Faith:

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**STANDARD MEASURE OF FAITH IS MUSTARD SEED OF FAITH**

and that was more than enough to forgive 7 x a day or more...

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...and we now understand beautiful passage in 2 Thessalonians whereas Faith is greatly enlarged, Spiritual Love grows even greater--and noted that as the mass of Faith in our lives increase, the force of Spiritual Love grows greater in magnitude in our lives...and in assembly!

As Paul expresses in Galatians 5, this is the goal of every Christian.

A little Faith moves mountains...

A little Faith transformed you into New Spiritual Creature.

A little Faith will transform you into the image of JESUS CHRIST!!!

A little Faith used over and over increases the magnitude of your LOVE!

Galatians 5:6 NIV

<sup>6</sup> **The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love**