

When someone treats you unfairly there is a certain satisfaction that comes when justice is served. Take this for an example. You are driving down the Florida turnpike in the left lane. In the rear view mirror you see a large black pickup truck pulling up fast behind you. You cannot get over to the right because of traffic. That does not stop this truck from coming up close to you and riding your bumper. Finally you are able to pull over and the truck tears off down the freeway and pulls up close behind another car just as he did with you. Ten miles down the road you see the same truck pulled over by a Florida State Trooper. “Yes, yes, justice is served! He got what he deserved!”

The Christians of Thessalonica were not being hounded by a black truck, but they were being hounded and harassed by their heathen neighbors just because they were Christians. Imagine the children wondering when daddy was coming home because he had been thrown into jail for his Christian faith. Jobs were lost. People were being put to death for their faith. The cry went up, “Where is God?” “Why is he not taking care of us and hearing our prayers?” “Where is justice?”

Justice will be served when Jesus returns. Then he will cast down Satan into the lake of fire where he will no longer tempt us and torment us. Justice will be served when Jesus returns. Then he will end all the pain and suffering of this life and take us to the place he has prepared for us. Jesus said when that day comes we can lift up our heads for our redemption is drawing near. Justice will be served. So Christian, Wait Patiently For God’s Justice!”

Jesus told his disciples they would experience pain and suffering, even hatred from people, because they followed him. This was true for the dear Christians to whom Paul is writing, the Christians living in a place called Thessalonica. Paul says, “Therefore, among God’s churches, we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.” The fact that these people were willing to die for their faith was evidence that the message of Jesus Christ, his resurrection and his coming again in glory was something worth hearing and accepting. When Peter and John were flogged by the Jewish Sanhedrin, it says in Acts 5, “The Apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name (of Jesus).” Kayla Mueller, a Christian, had her fingernails removed when she was first captured by Isis, then was repeatedly raped and beaten by Abu Bahdadi until her death. When we are put down for our faith, or even when we face trials and troubles in this life, we are given opportunity to leave people the evidence that someday Jesus is coming in glory, and they need to put their trust in him to be saved before it is too late.

The time is coming when the Lord our God will bring justice to this earth. It says, “He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” We will physically see Jesus coming again on clouds of glory. He is not coming secretly to snatch up his church and build a kingdom on this earth as some claim. The words of Scripture are so clear. He is coming in blazing fire. He will judge all people. He will punish those who have rejected him and repay with trouble those who have troubled us.

The sin that exists inside of me and you always wants to seek revenge and even gloat over someone who finally gets what they deserve, especially those who made life miserable for us. Ah the satisfaction that comes at the class reunion. You come face to face with someone who

bullied you and put you down, and now that person is a washout and you are a success. God will set the record straight on judgment day. Those who torment and taunted and torture the Christians and even put them to death will receive their punishment from God. Do we gloat and rejoice when we think of this judgment coming? No, we have the mind of Jesus who prayed as he was being ridiculed and nailed to the cross. "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."

How awful it will be for those who do not have Jesus as their Savior when judgment day comes. We think of those we know and love who are not with Jesus and who are not covered with his righteousness. Tears come to our eyes as we hear these words of God's judgment. "They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power." There is so much evidence in the Bible about this place we call hell, this place of everlasting punishment. Jesus said the people who do not believe in him will someday hear him speak these words, "Depart from me, you are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for devil and his angels." The Jehovah Witnesses are so bothered by this that they have their own Bible called the New World Translation They purposely mistranslate the words about everlasting punishment to everlasting cutting off. How easy it is for us to live our lives as if this place did not exist and were not real. This is no nightmare that will go away when we wake up in the morning. "They will be punished with everlasting destruction and out from the presence of the Lord. When we become convinced of the truth of these words about God's justice and God's punishment of sin, then we want to run to the only place where we can find safety, and forgiveness and protection from this day of God's wrath. We want to find protection in Jesus and his cross and his blood and his resurrection from the dead. We want to find this safety for ourselves and we want this safety and protection for others.

Imagine for a moment that Jesus would come back on clouds of glory on this Sunday afternoon. What a huge sigh of relief that would bring to us. It says, "He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled as well." When you are undergoing great suffering and pain, you long for relief to come. Remember the commercial for Bayer aspirin that asked, "How do you spell relief?" and then answered with one word, "Bayer." How do we spell relief? It is JESUS. Jesus said "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." It was Jesus who spoke about a giving us the peace that this world cannot give. He is the shepherd who carries us in his loving arms. He is the one who holds us in his arms when our day of death comes or when judgment day comes. It was Jesus who told us to lift up our heads when he returns because our redemption is near. The Bible ends with these words from Jesus, "Yes, I am coming soon." The church responds with the words. "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." We long for the rest that Jesus will bring when he returns in glory.

On the day that Jesus returns we will join our fellow Christian and lift up our voices and shout for joy when we see Jesus face to face. It says in verse 10, "On that day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you."

The president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, did not like the words of Jesus in the New Testament Gospel accounts that spoke about judgment day and the coming destruction. So he cut them out of the Bible and made his own Bible. We cannot cut them out with a sharp knife, or use white out to blot them off the page, or cross them out with pen and ink. Nor can we

just put them out of our mind and ignore them. The words are clear, so very clear. Jesus wants people to obey his message of the gospel. He wants them to believe with all their hearts he has done everything necessary expunge from their record everything they ever did wrong. Without saving faith in him, there will be everlasting destruction and everlasting separation from God's power and his love for us.

As we observe the impeachment procedures going on in the House of Representatives, as we hear about 54 Trillion dollar Medicare for all program, and a Green New Deal that would halt fracking and the use of fossil fuels, we are concerned about what will be happening to our country in the future. What kind of country will there be for my children and my grand children? A far more important question facing us is what will we be doing to help people see the reality of what is facing them in the future without Jesus. The Christians in Thessalonica were models to other Christians as they boldly bore witness to Jesus and risked even death to warn people of what was most important in life.

When Jesus comes we will welcome him because we know what he has done to satisfy God's justice. "On that day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you because you believed our testimony to you." The Washington National fans were happy when their team won the World Series recently. That joy is nothing, it is so small, compared to the joy that will be ours when Jesus returns. Then he will be glorified and marveled at among those who believe. I can't wait to celebrate with my parents and all who have died in Jesus that day when Jesus returns in glory to take his people home because Jesus satisfied God's justice for us.

The story is told of pioneers who were crossing the Great Plains in a wagon train. It was a hot day and the wind was blowing hard. They noticed off into the west dark black smoke rising high into the sky. A fast moving prairie fire was on its way. The people panicked. The wagon master told them not to be afraid as he lit the dry prairie grass over which they had just passed. The fire moved quickly and then he led them safely into the burnt over area where the approaching fire could not hurt them. Dear Christian, you have safety in Jesus. God's justice has been served in Jesus. And now you can welcome the final judgment for this is your coronation day. Amen