

Topic	The Gospel Centered Life
Reference	2-Thessalonians 1:1-12
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This is Paul's second letter to the church of Thessalonians. This is a young church, barely six months to a year after he has left them, undergone great persecution and today

FAITH THAT IS DYNAMIC:

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2 (ESV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: **2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

So he starts off as most of his letters with a blessing for the church. Basically, grace and peace.

What is the dynamic faith looks like?

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 (ESV) We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. **4** Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. **5** This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering

This is what a dynamic faith looks like. It has got faith, love and hope in endurance during suffering and the important thing about the three characteristics is that it is growing. The faith is growing, the love is growing and the hope is enduring. Some years ago there was a young lady called Lauren McCain who was actually shot dead in one of the universities in United States. She was a committed Christian and she wrote in her Myspace website,

“The purpose and love of my life is Jesus Christ. I don't have to argue religion, philosophy, or historical evidence because I KNOW Him.” He is just as real, if not more so, as my 'earthly' father.”

The issue of faith basically is, faith is not a commodity, it is actually a relationship and in a relationship as any relationship has to grow if it is dynamic, if it is authentic, if it is real. Relationship does not remain stagnant. It is like an aero plane, which fly forward. It begins with a promise.

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV) Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

This is the covenant given, it is a promise and faith begins with a promise. Your relationship with God begins with a promise of him giving you eternal life to believe in him. Abraham left Ur, stuck in Haran for couple of years until his father dies and then he goes off to Canaan and takes a little bit detour, bit of loss of faith, went down to Egypt, suffered a bit then came back to Canaan and he waited for his son and then couldn't wait anymore had an affair with Hagar, got Ishmael and then God taught him that lesson and he started to improve again, then he prayed and he got so faithful to the Lord that he actually prayed for Abimelech that his wife and female slaves would have children. Imagine a guy who has got no children, prayed for other people to have children. That's a sign of faith and then it takes a jump and he now has Isaac and the epitome of his faith is Genesis 22, where he actually is able to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice and just before that God stops him and God says to him, do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything for him, for now I know that you fear the Lord, fear God, seen that you have not withheld your only son from me. So faith is a journey and it climbs and a vibrant real authentic faith must grow. It cannot stay stagnant.

How does it grow?

If we look at the Book of Genesis, every time, he falters,

- Gen 12: 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country
- Genesis 15:1 (ESV) After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.
- Genesis 17:1-2 (ESV) When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, 2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.”
- Gen 21:12 But God said to Abraham, “Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman
- Gen 22: 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”
- Genesis 22:15-16 (ESV) And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son

Every time the word of God comes, faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ and this is a young church in Thessalonica.

Acts 17:2-3 (ESV) And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **3** explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”

That’s the gospel. Our faith grows through the gospel which is Jesus Christ is Lord. Not only it has grown in relationship, there is love.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 (ESV) ... and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

The love doesn’t stay the same, it increases. Jesus in John 8 says

John 8:34 (ESV) Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

We are all slaved to sin and the most important feature is what Martin Luther says, *we are homo incurvatus in se*, which means humanity is curved in upon itself. We are all facing one direction. If you sit here, you are thinking is this sermon okay, am I falling asleep, am I suitably entertain. We are always focused on ourselves. We are curved in. That is our slavery and the most important sign that we have broken this slavery is when we start to look out, when the curve is broken and we start to pour our lives out for others.

1 John 3:14 (ESV) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death

We can talk about our faith, all about doctrine but if we do not see love then we are still curved upon ourselves. We are still stuck as slaves to sin. So Jesus said

John 13:34-35 (ESV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

A growing faith will result in an over-pouring of love to others. Thirdly, there is perseverance.

2 Thessalonians 1:4-5 (ESV) Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. **5.** This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

Their faith is real, barely six months. Even during the time when Paul was there, the Jews had come into the church at that time and persecuted them and Paul had to run away and go to Baria, they were suffering and he was wondering whether they would survive, but they did survive. A true authentic faith not only grows, love grows but it is steadfast and enduring. Sometimes when we actually have persecution and suffering we ask the most basic question, *why does God allow Christians to suffer?*

All over the world if you look in the Middle East the world is talking about the Muslim suffering, but you don't understand there are a lot of Christians who are persecuted. The whole community is in Iraq that have been wiped out and there was a piece of good news. Something that Trump administration does which is correct. This came out in The Atlantic on 12th May 2017. What they have done is that instead of United States putting funds into United Nations, they put funds into a separate organization to channel funds to protect religious freedom and the Christian minorities there. Now if Trump can think about doing something in the face of suffering, what about Christians?

Suffering needs to be seen on a spiritual level. Here is suffering and affliction as enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God. So when Christians suffer, there are only two things that you think about.

- why I am suffering? Because I am sinful, life is bad, God is not pleased with me
OR
- Actually we can see suffering from another level. Suffering is sign that God's judgment is right. When you suffer, first thing you think about is that the things have gone wrong. Actually suffering is a sign that things have gone right. Paul is saying this is evidence of the righteous judgment of God. So when you are actually suffering, it means you are doing the right thing. If you are not suffering, you may not be doing the right thing. This is actual opposite. So when suffering comes, you see suffering at two levels.

On one level, you see suffering as, you are suffering where is God, he is so unfair. But Paul is saying, when suffering comes there is another level, in which we have to look at the suffering that God is saying, everything is going right, because you actually stand up for your faith, you will experience suffering and this is God making you worthy for the kingdom of God. We are not worthy for the kingdom of God, but when suffering comes God is refining us so that we are worthy of the kingdom of God.

Acts 14:21-22 (ESV) When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through **many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**

We are now coming to a season in church life all over the world where these kinds of verses are hidden away, we only talk about prosperity, blessing equals jackpot, so that through a jackpot or blessing we enter the kingdom of heaven, we don't. Entering kingdom of God is through tribulation and suffering, which is evidence that God is refining us.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 (ESV) We ought always to **give thanks to God** for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. **4** Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. **5** This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

There is a problem of flattery versus how do we actually boast. Actually thanksgiving and boasting are two sides of the same coin. When you face God, you thank God for the faithfulness of someone else and we actually can boast because of their faith, because of God's grace working in their lives.

EXPECTATION OF THE JUDGMENT DAY

7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels **8** in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, **10** when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

The last time you saw somebody talking to you about Judgment Day, you probably saw him on a street. It is not comfortable to believe that you are accountable and sometimes some day you got to answer but still deep in our hearts of human nature we actually feel judgment day is coming especially when bad things happen. I remember the Fukushima reactor problem due to the earthquake, Japan suffered greatly. The prime minister at that time actually thought this was a disaster as divine punishment for excessive consumerism. He actually thought it was, even though he didn't believe in God. However, in the west we don't like judgment. In the west you don't like to think about judgment, everybody is right. We have got this modernism, pluralism, you got your view, I got my view, we are all right. So therefore there is no judgment.

For us we feel that the persons that have done wrong should be punished. When we think about judgment, we actually mistaken judgment or revenge. That's why we don't like this idea of judgment. Actually we don't think of it as justice, we actually think of revenge and the translation by the NIV and ESV is problematic, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know

God. The actual Greek word is 'Ekdikesis', which is actually meeting out of justice. God is the one who meets out justice. So therefore the logic of judgment day is that there will be the righteous and there will be unrighteous and he will grant relief to those who are suffering and those who are unrighteous will be repayed with affliction, inflict justice for those who do not obey the gospel of lord Jesus Christ. It is a balancing; it is a logic there. Imagine judgment day gives meaning to life.

Remember the widow, everybody else was going to the temple and they were giving bags of money and Jesus recognized one widow who gave two coins, that's all she ever had and Jesus saw it. The logic of Judgment Day is that it gives meaning to life because one day no matter what we have done, God records it and He gives it back to you. Imagine if you have no judgment day then life would have no meaning.

Jane M Lucretia D'Esterre, in 1815 she was a young woman with two little children. Her husband was a stupid man, was shot dead and she was alone, she was a widow and she was sitting by the river and she was going to kill herself. She looked into the murky depths of the river as she was just going to jump in, she was in middle of Scotland and all she did was one day watch a young man plowing the field, he did it very well, very hard working painstaking attention to meticulous detail, to make sure it was all done perfectly and when she just saw that, and she looked at herself and all she had was self-pity and that challenged her. If that man was so full of life and found so much value in just plowing the field, what about her and she actually pulled herself back. She came to know Christ two years later on and she is the great-great grandmother of Os Guinness, one of the greatest Christian philosophers in the world today. If it weren't for that one young boy plowing the field. In Judgment Day God will remember that young one boy plowing the field. He will remember the widow; He will remember everything.

Matthew 25:35-40 (ESV) For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, **36** I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' **37** Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? **38** And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? **39** And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' **40** And the King will answer them, Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

We see things in a superficial manner. The trouble is when you see things in a superficial manner, we don't see people and things as God sees, I mean I see many patients and so of our patients are very old, increasing number of my patients are like 90 and 80 and when you look at them the way I think is, 'poor thing'. If you can walk once around the table when you are 90, you must be really good and all you can do when you look at them is 'poor thing'. He may have

been the top CEO of a fortune 500 company you wouldn't know. All we see at the end of life is that and everything he did actually doesn't really matter if you didn't do it for Christ.

Judgment Day is important because God will take in consideration every single thing that you have done that people have not seen. If there is no Judgment Day, it will be for nothing. You either become depressed and you give up or you take the law into your own hands. Judgment Day is important. Rob Bell is a pastor of a mega church in America and he wrote a book called 'Love Wins' and he writes, "*God loves us. God offers us everlasting life by grace, freely, through no merit on our part. Unless you do not respond the right way. Then God will torture you forever in hell.*" Huh?

This means he doesn't believe in hell anymore, because the most important thing is love.

John 14:6 (ESV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

This is what Rob Bell writes, "*What [Jesus] doesn't say is how, or when, or in what manner the mechanism functions that gets people to God through him,*" "*He doesn't even state that those coming to the Father through him will even know that they are coming exclusively through him.*"

What Jesus does is declare that he, and he alone, is saving everybody. And then he leaves the door way, way open. Creating all sorts of possibilities. He is as narrow as himself and as wide as the universe."

That's rubbish, the most thing is love wins. So we are now in a situation where the most important thing is love, we cannot talk about justice or truth. True love must have truth inside. Love and truth are inextricably bound together. That's why when you get married, you tell your spouse I am your true love.

Wrath is a perfection of His character

J.I. Packer writes, "*Would a God who took as much pleasure in evil as He did in good be a good God? Would a God who did not react adversely to evil in His world be morally perfect? Surely not. But it is precisely this adverse reaction to evil, which is a necessary part of moral perfection, that the Bible has in view when it speaks of God's wrath*" (*Knowing God*, 136-37).

It is a perfection of his character. You cannot have a God that whatever you do will let you go. There is actually joy in judgment.

Psalms 96:10-13 (ESV) Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.” **11** Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; **12** let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy **13** before the LORD, for he comes for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Judgment brings relief and judgment brings joy.

Revelation 19:1-3 (ESV) **1** After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, **2** for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” **3** Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

Here there is rejoicing over the evil in the world that is judged. There is always joy when the unrighteous are being corrected in this world and yet when God punishes he does so with tears. Jesus stands outside Jerusalem and he knows Jerusalem will be destroyed in AD70 which is basically 30-40 years from his time and he says

Luke 19:41 (ESV) And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it,

God desires that no one suffer and therefore he has perfect wrath and still perfect love. So they have got all aspects of God’s personality, holiness, wrath, love, truth and righteous. There is not one part of his personality which is love that overwrites everything else. They are all in perfect harmony.

In all religions when you exercise mercy, it is always at the expense of justice. God just can’t forgive like that. Christianity is the only faith where love or mercy is exercised through justice.

How does judgment day work?

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels **8** in flaming fire, inflicting “justice” on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

It is a visible physical reappearance of Christ and there will be justice on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel. That is how you are going to judged.

If we look at the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. She was hitting on him, trying to grab him, having sex with him and he says no

Genesis 39: 9b How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

He was about to commit adultery and steal somebody's wife but all he mentioned is that sin is actually sin against God. Murder, rape, killing, evil, it is all an outward manifestation of an inward disease of a soul curved in on itself that loves nobody else but himself and that is the greatest sin.

CS Lewis writes on 'The Great Divorce'

"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done." All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. Those who knock it is opened."

So God is very democratic, if you want your will, your will be done. If you want His will to be done, then you go to heaven with him and it is exactly what hell is. Hell is finding your own way, but the trouble is CS Lewis writes.

"There is but one good; that is God. Everything else is good when it looks to Him and bad when it turns from Him."

So the further you turn from God, the more darker it is, the more painful it is, the less life is meaningful. There was a study in the United States on prisoners, who have been kept in Pelican Bay Prison for years and years. These are solitary confinement prisoners. 22 hours a day in a cage on their own, only let out for one hour a day just to walk and had no contact. Most of them, 50% of prison population suicide come from these people, absolutely alone, why, because human beings are made in the image of God, we are made to relate, every bit of kindness that you see in the face of another person actually comes from God. Imagine being locked away on your own, with no contact with any other human being alone will destroy you. Imagine being away from the face of God for the rest of eternity over and over again. That's Judgment Day.

Now for his saints,

2 Thessalonians 1:10 (ESV) when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

He is going to be marveled in his saints, which means he is not going to be marveled through his saints, not among his saints, but in his saints, which means all of us are going to be like a tungsten wire. When electricity runs through it, it will be absolutely incandescent. So when Jesus comes again, every single one of us we will be filled with the Glory of God. Because it says, he will be glorified in his saints. When he comes, already he will come in flaming fire, but on the other hand when you actually look at his saints, his saints will be incandescent. We will actually glow with the glory of God. We can see a bit of it in Matthew 17,

Matthew 17:2 (ESV) And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

So Jesus's physical body becomes a vehicle for his glory. Moses was in contact with God when He gave him the Ten Commandments. When he left the mountain the Israelites could not gaze at Moses because of his glory. He was so bright that they have to wear a veil. When in the last days just as we have born with the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. Just as Jesus glows we as the physical body of Christ, we will bear his image, we will bear his glory, He will be glorified in us, we will actually be absolutely perfect. There will not be a single desire in our hearts to do what is evil. We all will absolutely glow.

2 Thessalonians 1:10 (ESV) when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

Marveling is expectations exceeded, the overflow of the heart and minds. It will just blow our minds. At the end of time you are going to stand at the abyss and you look down in hell and you will say, wow it is a long way down and I am here and then you look at heaven and you look at the unshielded glory of God and you say, wow and he is there and that's what I mean by marveling. Nothing else matters.

Revelation 21:23-26 (ESV) And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

The day and night, the glory will be there.

PASSION FOR OUR CALLING:

11 To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, 12 so that the name of

our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

Here we actually have how we live matters. God will make you, this is a prayer. Paul prays for things that really matter, that you become worthy of his calling. Which means living up to the calling. You can never be worthy of his calling, but you can live up to what it means to be a Christian. That's what it means.

T. S. Elliot, the famous poet writes, *can a life time represent a single motive?* Yes it came, if the single motive is to live up to the calling.

Os Guinness writes, *Calling is the key to tracing the story line of our lives and unriddling the meaning of our existence in a chaotic world.* "The call" p 170

We live in a world that is confusing, chaotic, difficult, there are set backs, there are successes, it is all a mix bag, but you actually have a calling. The calling is key to tracing the story line of our lives. When we reach 50-70, can we look back and trace one storyline that goes through your story and can that be the as T. S. Elliot wrote, *can a lifetime represent a single motive and that motive is to bring glory to God.*

This means God is going to create a new desire to do good and when you actually step out by faith, he is going to give you that faith and by his power actually fulfill it, which means from beginning to end, right from the beginning when you want to do something for God, he gives you that desire, he gives you the ability and he finishes the job. That's amazing. So the calling causes a spiritual transformation and you got new goals and desires.

Bob Pierce was a very famous American preacher who was in 1947 preaching in China and a missionary Miss Hoelkeboer from Dutch Reformed Church was there. When he preached the gospel actually 1000s in China came to know Christ and one of them was the little girl called White Jade. She was a 10-year-old girl and she confronted Bob Pierce. When White went back home, her father beat her and through her out of the house, never to see him again. This brought this girl to Bob Pierce. He was not a rich man, people supported him, gave him just enough to come to China to preach and he dug in his pocket and all he had was 5 US dollars which was his return airfare back to America and he just gave that and said, don't you worry Miss Hoelkeboer, you look after Jade, I will come back and I will send more money.

It starts just with the need of the world, being worthy of recalling is just when somebody brings you a White Jade and you do something, it may be 5 dollars in your pocket but three years later on this same Bob Pierce started World Vision, an organization that touches millions of Children all over the world, just from one simple act. God was able to fulfill that desire for good works

and create something beautiful and later on he left World Vision and he started Samaritans Purse which is another organization where Franklin Graham actually works and leads today. Bob Pierce write, *“Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God*

See that this is the desire; no man will write that unless God puts that desire in your heart. When he puts that desire in your heart, we need to be people of God, we need to just take that and be bold because the desire comes to your heart to help people not on its own, not on your own merit, because on our own merit we are all curved in, we never look out and if God puts that in your heart whether helping a child or teaching tuition or helping children or counseling someone else. The desires are reflection of the power of the Holy Spirit and if God gives you that desire, God will give you the ability and the faith and the power to achieve that. We only need to believe that and we move forward in our lives.

The goal of a worthy life

12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints

There is this issue of glory. We all want glory to a certain extent. It is like a glory in our children. We got glory from the person whom we love. If you look at the Maslow triangle of self-actualization, this actually describes human needs. Our first need is actually basic needs of safety and eat and drink to be saved. The rest, love, feeling of esteem that we are worth something and to actually find meaning in our life, personal growth and experiences, all these are theologically glory needs. We need to feel that we are something. Glory in the Old Testament word is ‘cabot’ which means weightiness, I must feel I am weighty. That actually is not wrong because God created us with these glory needs, but the thing is how do we get this glory? If we get this glory by ourselves, it is the most unsatisfying way of doing it. What we do is by giving glory of God and when we give him glory, he gives glory to us and that’s the best way it happens.

George Mueller started an orphanage, at the time in the whole of England there were only 3600 orphans being looked after all over. He himself started his orphanage, at the end of his life, he looked after 10,000 orphans and all of them without asking for a single British pound. He just went on his knees and he prayed and they asked him, why did you do that, his chief motive was so that God may be glorified. *Should he be pleased to furnish me with the means that in this being seen that it is not the vain thing to trust him that thus the faith of his children may be strengthen.* So basically the reason why he started orphanage is not because of the children but because doing this and proving that God can be trusted, means God can be glorified.

On the last day, Jesus Christ will be glorified in us on account of what we have become by his grace, and we will be glorified in him on account of what he has done for us.

If we are holding on to our lives, glorifying ourselves, seeking the admiration of our peers, then we will lose our life, but if we give up our lives and give all glory to God then our lives will be glorified in him

12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

All these things happen according to grace, which means you don't deserve it. Whatever God gives you, you won't deserve it, it comes as a prize. So these are the features of a gospel centered life, a faith that is dynamic, expectation of judgment day and a passion for his calling.

- Is our faith and love growing?
- Is it enduring through the storms of life?
- Are we expecting God?

We should wake up with one single motive in life that we will glorify his name and doing so we bring glory to ourselves.