# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“A Life Worthy of His Call”**

**2 Thessalonians 1:11-12**

 **February 6, 2022**

Last Sunday we finished 1 Thessalonians. This morning, we’re in the first chapter of 2 Thessalonians. In Paul’s first letter we learned that the beginnings of the church in Thessalonica were quite uncertain. Paul had to leave the city suddenly because of persecution from city leaders, and he wasn’t sure that the young church would survive.

All throughout 1 Thessalonians, we heard his relief and joy that they were doing well as a church, that their faith and love and hope were strong and growing. Now, as we get to 2 Thessalonians, he will encourage them to continue living a genuine Christian faith in spite of the persecution that they are facing. Paul knows from his own experiences that it is not easy to stay faithful when you are being mistreated by others. You want relief. You want the suffering to end. And, he promises, it will end. But, until God brings it to an end, they must focus on doing all that Jesus asks of them as his followers. Thankfully, they are not asked to do this in their own power; God himself will empower their faith. I invite you to turn with me to 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.

The key to living a life worthy of God’s call, to living according to his will for us, is to allow him to make it happen. Our human tendency is to want to fix ourselves so we can present ourselves to God in great spiritual shape. How many of you, knowing that your annual physical is coming up in a couple of months, decide it’s time to lose a few pounds and to improve your diet? You know you will be put on the scale and that your blood will be drawn, and you want the doctor to smile and say, “Good work,” rather than frown and say, “You could benefit from losing some weight and eating better.” So, we return to the gym, where we haven’t been in a while, and we watch our sugar and fat intake, all in an effort to get a good report from the doctor. And, while that may work in your physical life, it won’t work in your spiritual life. And, neither does God expect it of you. “Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” says Jesus. No preconditions, no spiritual improvement programs to complete before admission, no spiritual test questions to answer for a passing score. Simply, come as you are with faith in your heart and you will be received. Are you familiar with the hymn, “Come, ye sinners?”

“Come, ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore;

Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love and power.

Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream;

All the fitness he requires is to feel your need of him.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden, lost and ruined by the fall;

If you tarry till you’re better, you will never come at all.”

 If you wait until you have made yourself worthy, you will never come at all for you can’t make yourself worthy. But, if you trust that God will enable and empower you to do the good things your faith prompts you to do, then all you need to do is ask: “Lord, give me the strength to live a life worthy of your call.”

Let’s unpack a bit more what Paul means by the phrase, “A life worthy of God’s call.” This is a phrase that Paul uses often in his letters. For example, in his letter to the Christians in Ephesus he writes: “I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” He goes on to give several characteristics of such a life including humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and peace.

To live a life worthy of God’s call is to humbly say: “Not my will but yours, Lord.” The greatest obstacle to living God’s way is pride, the belief that what I want and how I want to achieve it is always right. God says, “Trust me. Do it my way, and you will be living worthy of my call.” Be gentle in your interaction with others, be patient with those who rub you the wrong way, and forgive them when they do you wrong. Be a peacemaker insofar as you have the opportunity.

To live a life worthy of God’s call is not an encouragement to redouble our efforts. This is not a message to try harder. It isn’t up to you. It’s up to God, and we trust him to be at work in us and through us. So, what do we do? We keep going in our journey of faith. We stay in God’s game. We don’t have to be brilliant or innovative or dazzling for God. We simply stay faithful and keep at it and God will grow us. Keep engaging others even when they don’t reciprocate. Keep loving your spouse and children and grandchildren even when they don’t say, “Thank you.” Keep believing even when those around you don’t. Then you will see what God can do because of your commitment to live a life worthy of his call.