

# Thessalonians Chapter 4 GOD

by A.B. Simpson

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## Transcript

"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." (2 Thes. 1: 11.) There is a good, a better, and a best. It is a good thing to be saved; it is a better thing to be sanctified and consecrated unto the Lord; but there is a best and highest life into which we may enter, even all the good pleasure of His goodness and the highest possibilities of faith and love.

There is such a thing as graduating from college after passing the required subjects and receiving your diploma; but there is also an honor class, and a prize awaiting the successful competitors and the men who reach the highest proficiency.

St. Paul wanted to be the best. "All run," he says, in this great conflict, "but one receives the prize. . . . I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" -- not lost or cast away from the presence of God, but deprived of the incorruptible crown when the reward is given, and the eternal prize. And in another place he tells us, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The day came when the prize was won, and even he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

This was the prize to which James and John aspired, and Jesus did not discourage them or tell them that it was unattainable. He told them it was dependent upon their willingness and ability to be baptized with His baptism and to drink of His cup. It was not His to give, except to those for whom it was prepared -- the heroes, the conquerors, the highest and the best.

This principle of hope is an element of human nature, and God appeals to it in the promises of His Word and the recompenses of His kingdom. God is not looking for great quantities today, but for high qualities.

We are in the closing days of the New Testament dispensation, and we may expect the same things that marked the last days of the old economy. Then God had to turn from communities to individuals for the accomplishment of His great purposes. The kingdom of Judah failed to fulfill His expectation and stand as His witness against an evil world; and so He had to reject Israel and Judah and let them go into captivity, and even allow His own glorious temple to fall because His people would not be true to Him.

Then He picked out a little woman named Esther, and a young man called Daniel, and three Hebrews in Babylon; and through these weak instruments He compelled the proud Babylonians to acknowledge His power and bow to His glory, and He wrought in a single generation more for His great name than all the dynasties of Israel had accomplished in centuries.

So again the day is approaching when even His own Church may fail Him. The pure apostolic church of John and Polycarp became the apostasy of Rome, and we need not wonder if the church of the Reformation should have begun already to resemble the picture of Laodicea, "rich and increased with goods" and saying, "I have need of nothing," and about to be rejected with disgust because of its lukewarmness.

God forbid that we should utter aught against its true spirit, but every earnest and true Christian knows that, at best, we have today a small minority for fidelity to the truth, and no sort of approximation of Christian living up to the standard of His Word and the power of His Spirit. It is the old story of Gideon once more, not only the thirty thousand picked out of Israel, but the three hundred picked out of the thirty thousand.

God is looking today for pattern men; and when He gets a true sample, it is very easy to reproduce it in a thousand editions, and multiply it in other lives without limitation.

All the experiences of life come to us as tests; and as we meet them, our loving Father is watching, with intense and jealous love, to see us overcome; and if we fail, He is deeply disappointed, and our great adversary is filled with joy and triumph. We are a gazing stock continually for angels and principalities, and every step we take is critical and decisive for something in our eternal future.

When Abraham went forth that morning to Mount Moriah, it was an hour of solemn probation; and when he came back, he was one of God\

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