

Forerunners for Christ Los Angeles

January 31, 2024 – Praying the Apostolic Prayers – Erlinda Cruz

Understanding the Context of Paul's Prayer to be Counted Worthy, Part 2 **(Fasting Wednesday)**

Paul prayed for the saints to walk in the glory and benefits of wholeheartedness (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12). He prayed for believers to be inspired by the Spirit to respond to Jesus in a way worthy of Him—in wholeheartedness. He also connected this with the ability to fulfill all of God's will in their lives.

"Therefore, we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus... may be glorified in you, and you in Him..."

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

Evidence #1: God weans us from worldliness to make us worthy or fit to glorify Jesus. The word "worthy" here doesn't mean "deserving of," but rather "suited for," "prepared for," or "fitted for." To walk worthy of the Lord is to walk in agreement with His heart and ways. We give a worthy response to God by resisting compromise and embracing God's ways, thus, being prepared and in position by the grace of God to walk in the fullness of our calling.

"...which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment [leadership decision] of God, that you may be counted worthy of [suited for] the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer."

2 Thessalonians 1:5

1. This is how John the Baptist used this call to act in a way that is "worthy" when calling Israel to "bear fruit worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8).
 - a. He was not saying "deserving of repentance"—which would not have made sense—but "as fits" or "is according to" genuine repentance.
 - b. "When he [John the Baptist] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them... 'Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance...'"
Matthew 3:7
2. The first way in which persecution gives "manifest evidence" or proof of God's wise or righteous leadership is in how it leads us to align more with Jesus and His leadership. God appointed the saints to endure persecution so that they may be "counted worthy" or "transformed in a way befitting" of His kingdom. This is evidence of God's wise leadership.
3. Pressure changes the conversation that we have with God. We get connected more and more to the fact that we are living for something far more glorious and bigger than what we experience in this life.

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I believe we all have been in this place in our lives. When we are in difficulties or in trouble or our family member's sick, we draw closer to God. We are more likely to pray more in these circumstances than when everything is going well.

What Paul is showing us is that we be "exercised" now so when hardship comes, we have gained the muscles for the fight!

So many are not ready! But the good news is we can!

Today is Wednesday fasting and prayer. Let us pray and position ourselves to be gaining the necessary strength for the fight ahead!