

IV. THE **RIGHT** RESPONSE TO UNJUST SUFFERING (1:11-12)

Paul considered these sufferers his joy, boasts about them and promises them “relief with us”. Yes, judgment awaited their **persecutors** yet Paul was mindful that he was one, and how the Lord graciously called and showed him how much he must suffer for his **name** so that the Gospel goes to all **nations** (Acts 9:16). God purposefully calls people into his glorious kingdom. This prospect is **incentive** enough to live in a manner worthy of our calling by his **Spirit’s** power. So:

- A. Remember trials come to multiply and **mature** faith.
- B. If we endure like Christ, we are **identifying** with him.
- C. Jesus is coming again when all suffering will be **gone!**

NEVER GIVE UP...ENDURING SUFFERING!!

Now then: Why endure suffering; How must we now live?!

- Expect suffering and don’t be **surprised** by it!
- **Focus** on Jesus Christ his life and imminent return.
- Pray and thank God for his **grace** to endure suffering.
- Trust God recognizing he has a **purpose** for all trials.
- Suffering enhances **witness** especially to the unsaved.
- It humbles yet enables us to look forward to **heaven!**

NEVER GIVE UP Enduring Suffering Dr Chris Gnanakan

INTRODUCTION

- A. Today we continue a teaching series called Never Give Up, a verse by verse study of I & II Thessalonians.

“I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.”
I Thessalonians 5:27

“For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.”
I Thessalonians 3:8

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”
II Thessalonians 2:15

- B. In this series you will learn how to keep hope alive by focusing on the return of Christ and not the reality of circumstances. Every chapter in I and II Thessalonians mentions the return of Christ and how it should motivate us to never give up.

April 20	Keeping Hope Alive
April 27	Growing Church
May 4	Serving Others
May 11	Encouraging Faith
May 18	Maintaining Purity
May 25	Facing Death
June 1	Doing Good
TODAY	Enduring Suffering
June 15	Loving Truth
June 22	Working Hard

- C. **Text:** II Thessalonians 1:1-12 (Pew Bible/Pg.209/
New Test.)

NEVER GIVE UP...ENDURING SUFFERING

Key Verse: ... “So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure”
II Thessalonians 1:4

Introduction:

Suffering is considered as something bad (1Th.5:18) or non-productive (Rom.5:3-5), punishment for sin (Heb.10:12-14) and incompatible with God’s character of love and justice (Isa. 55:8-9). Facing pain and loss, even Christians can get easily disillusioned, filled with despair and... Give Up!

I. THE RIDDLE OF SUFFERING FOR THE CHRISTIAN (1:1-4)

These Thessalonians received Paul’s first letter giving hope for those who died ‘in Christ’ and were suffering for faith (4:13-18). But some were misguided that Christ’s Second Coming had already happened so their faith in tough times and hard work were in vain. Paul corrects this confusion, exhorts them to endure suffering for its eternal value and charges them: *Never Give Up* since the Best is yet to come!

Paul greets them with ‘grace and peace’ giving thanks for answered prayers regarding their faith and love (1Th 1:3; 3:10-12) that has multiplied, gone public and viral. He boasts ‘in the Lord’ and his gracious Spirit’s work evident in the way these converts patiently endured afflictions (1:4.)

II. THE REASONS CHRISTIANS ENDURE SUFFERING (1:5-8)

All believers are ‘called’ to endure unjust suffering, just like their Lord Jesus. They do this by not retaliating but rather entrusting the whole situation and themselves to God who will vindicate them in his perfect time. Paul considers the value of endurance as the proof or evidence of genuine faith in God’s sovereign grace in Christ. He considers steadfastness during trials, a badge that marks believers as worthy of his glorious kingdom to come. Moreover, God considers such stamina as a righteous thing since it reveals their sure hope in God’s vindication to bless believers and judge oppressors.

III. THE REVELATION OF THE SUFFERING SAVIOR AS JUDGE (1:9-10)

Paul points to Jesus who once suffered, but is yet to come in all his power and glory. This Revelation is of the Lord Jesus to whom God has given all judgment now returning with his mighty angels in flaming fire. This “Day of the Lord” will meet out vengeance on all who disobey the Gospel who now face eternal destruction (not annihilation)!

At this same time, Christ’s reappearing (*parousia*) will bring relief and reward to all who faithfully endured trails. The Church, ‘holy ones’ who share in his suffering now publicly share in his glory (Rom 8:17) and Christ is glorified in his church! God is holy, just and a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29)