

TEXT: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4

TITLE: The Necessity of Thanksgiving

THEME: Paul expresses his thanksgiving to God for the spiritual growth of the Thessalonian believers and commends them to others as an example of perseverance and spiritual growth in the midst of persecution.

PROPOSITION: God commends spiritual growth and endurance in the midst of persecutions.
These qualities are fitting objects of thanksgiving to God.
These qualities should be growing in the life of the church and of the individual believer.
These qualities are proper basis for a correct kind of spiritual pride.

INTRODUCTION:

"An old city, rich in history, Thessaloníki was founded (c.315 B.C.) by Cassander, king of Macedon, on or near the site of the ancient town of Therma, and was named for his wife. The city was located on the Via Egnatia, an important Roman road that linked Byzantium to Durrës (Dyrrhachium) on the Adriatic. It flourished after 146 B.C. as the capital of the Roman province of Macedon. Thessaloníki had from early times a sizable Jewish colony, and it was an early Christian diocese."¹
To the infant church which he planted there on his second missionary journey, St. Paul addressed his two epistles to the Thessalonians.

So, we are starting our study of the second of those epistles, written around A.D. 51. If you will turn your Bibles to Acts 17, we will review the brief account of Paul's work there. <Read Acts 17:1-10>. Look at the location of the city wrt Paul's missionary journey. Comment on the makeup of the church, v. 4, as it had both Jews and Gentiles. This church planting work was going fine until it was interrupted only weeks after starting.

Note also v. 6 where persecution broke out against the Christians very early on in the lifetime of the church. The Jews were a large reason for this persecution against Christians. As an aside, ironically, centuries later, the Jews themselves became the object of great persecution:

"Thessaloníki suffered considerable damage in World War II, and its large (c.50,000) Jewish population, which had been greatly increased in the late 15th and early 16th cent. by an influx of Jews from Spain, was nearly liquidated by the Germans."² At that time, Bulgaria was a fascist ally of Hitler's Germany and it occupied almost all of Macedonia and collaborated with the Nazis for the departure of the Jews of Salonica to concentration camps.

¹ <http://www.bartleby.com/65/th/Thesslnk.html>

² Ibid.

Application/Illustration: What would have happened to Fellowship Bible Church 22 years ago if within the first month of it starting Pastor was taken from his home before the Ann Arbor officials and questioned? And the church was made to pay a large sum of money in promise that it would not continue the Christian work here? Would Fellowship still be here? Would it have shined as an example of patience and faith in the midst of persecution? Will it do so in the future when a stand against immorality may make it necessary to decide between comfort/freedom on the one hand and hardship/imprisonment on the other?

It was in this context of faith under fire that Paul wrote both the first and second letters to the church at Thessalonica. And he commended them for their fine response to persecution. But not only persecution troubled them: doctrinal matters also squeezed their faith, as we saw in 1 Thess 4-5, and will see again in 2 Thess 2-3.

<Read the text.>

Note first of all,

A. The Authors – v. 1a

1. Paul – Acts 9. Paul is the primary author.
2. Silas – Acts 15:27, 32, 33, 40
3. Timothy – Acts 16:1-3 from Lystra in South Central Turkey.

B. The Recipients – v. 1b

1. The Church – special assembly, a group of believers who are called to common fellowship in the gospel of the Lord (2 Thess 2:14).
2. At Thessalonica (see above)
3. They were "in" God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This statement is a clear affirmation of a) the deity of Christ, being paralleled with God the Father and titled "Lord" (why else would Paul call him Lord?!). Note John 10:27-28 for one idea of "in" which is very relevant to the believers at Thessalonica. Though they faced persecution, they were still assured of being "in Him." This and 1 Thessalonians are the only two of Paul's letters where he uses this particular phrase.

C. The Greeting – v. 2

1. The greeting combines the traditional Greek "grace" and a possibly Hebrew expression "peace" into one package. This became a fixed formula in the greetings

of Greek letters, but this combination was probably coined by Paul; certainly its theological implications are a part of Paul's stewardship of the gospel.

2. Grace is divine favor. Peace is a state of well being, health, welfare, etc.
3. Grace and peace make a good pair. In salvation, grace is prominent (Eph 2:8). Peace follows (Rom 5:1).

Good opportunity to give the gospel here in fuller form!

4. Sad is the false peace offered by all other religions and their false teachers. "Peace, peace" they cry, when there is no peace (Jer 6:14, 8:11). This will continue even until the great apostasy that moves the world toward the religion of the antichrist in 1 Thess 5:3, where the atmosphere is one of apparent "peace and safety" but then sudden destruction will occur. The only true peace is that based on the objective truth of the gospel.
5. But even after salvation, grace and peace are good wishes on someone who is beloved in the Lord. Combining OT period and NT period greetings, this phrase represents Paul's prayer for the Thessalonian's well being.
6. This greeting is "from" God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (we see them again!) Paul does not send greetings from the pagan pantheon which surrounds the Thessalonians, but from a different source—GOD and JESUS!

Transition from introduction to body: It is at this point that Paul gives his first thanksgiving prayer to God. In the two letters, there are a total of 5 such prayers (1 Thess 1:2, 2:13, 3:9, 2 Thess 1:3, 2:13). The theme of this particular prayer is (say above). There are three main aspects to his prayer. First of all,

Don't forget application and transitions between major points.

I. Paul expresses his thanksgiving to God in terms of an obligation – v 3a.

A. Paul expresses his thanks to God. God is the ultimate source of the things for which Paul is thankful.

B. Paul always expresses thanks in this manner. At every opportunity, Paul makes his thanksgiving known to God.

C. Paul expresses thanks God specifically for the believers. His prayer is about this group of people.

D. Paul's thanksgiving is a matter of "obligation."

1. The idea of obligation in Paul's thanksgiving is not one of a boring responsibility that he has to fulfill, nor an indication of aloofness nor of his disinterest, but is instead a recognition on Paul's part of his obligation to thank God for the work that He had done among the converts in Thessalonica (cf. 1:3).
2. Paul is obligated to give God the thanks, the glory, and the honor for a supernatural spiritual work done on the Thessalonians, a work that only God could do. This obligation is sincerely felt by Paul, and his thanksgiving is sincere as well. God gave Paul fruit for Paul's ministry among the Thessalonians, and instead of Paul thanking the new believers (the fruit), Paul thanks God (the giver of the fruit). See 1 Cor 3:6, 7, 9.
3. This serves to give Thessalonians a good example of being thankful in everything (cf. 1 Thess 5:18; Col 3:15) and of their dependence on God for everything they have. [From my 245GreekExegesis2ThessFinalExam.doc]. There is no other person to thank for this kind of thing.

E. Paul thanksgiving is "proper" or "fitting."

"Fitting" here indicates that it is proper for Paul to thank God in light of the results of God's work— their increasing faith and abounding love. Paul had prayed about their faith being perfected, but he himself was not able to go to see to it. God is to be thanked because God did it, even without Paul!

Application: Whenever you see a spiritual work (of God) amongst believers, it is fitting and obligatory to thank God for that. Only God can do that kind of thing. We cannot. 2 Cor 4:15 indicates that Paul's ministry desire was that, whatever happened to him, it all would result in the "thanksgiving of many" which would "redound to the glory of God." In thanking God, you are bringing glory to his name. See Ps 50:23 – the one offering praise glorifies God.

Application: On the other hand, if someone is thanking God for the spiritual progress that *you* are making (i.e. if you are the recipient of this letter), you would be encouraged at the evidence that others see as a ground for their thanksgiving. It should in turn also cause you to thank God for his work in *yourself!*

Application: On the third hand, if you are another church hearing about this report, you might wonder, is there any reason that someone would give thanks to God for the things happening in this ministry? For my part in them?

Transition: In the text, Paul shows us his obligation to give thanks to God for what God has done among his little flock in Thessalonica. We can see this means **that** we ought to give thanks like Paul...**that** we should be encouraged and exhorted if we have something thank-worthy happening in our assembly...and **that** we should see if we, like the example church before us, have

some ground for others to give thanks. But Paul goes on and explains the very basis of his thanksgiving at this point in the text:

II. Paul explains why he is so thankful – v. 3b.

- A. The Thessalonians have a super-growing faith.
 - 1. Paul ascribes to the Thessalonians a personal and corporate faith ("your faith"). There has to come a time, of course, when we personally appropriate "the faith."
 - 2. The Thessalonian's faith is ...
 - A. Not dead.
 - B. Not withering.
 - C. Not static.
 - D. Not showing lackluster growth.
 - E. Growing exceedingly!
 - 3. How can Paul discern this growing faith? From other places in the Scriptures, we know that the evidence of faith is good works. See James 2:17-18.
- B. The Thessalonians exhibit an abounding love among each other.
 - 1. What – their love. Care for one another. Helping one another. (1 John 3:11).
 - 2. Who – all of them. There is no one excluded from this, even the disobedient brothers of chapter 3! The general pattern of this church is love!
 - 3. To Whom – one another.
 - 4. How much? It abounds! Like their faith, it is not dead love, withering love, static love, or lackluster love. It is abounding love!
 - 5. How can Paul discern this abounding love? 1 Thess 4:10 indicates that the believers showed love one for another and even to farther distances—throughout Macedonia! There is some outward manifestation of love that enables love to be seen. **Application**: Do you have that?
- C. The Thessalonians responded to Paul's exhortations and are an answer to Paul's prayers.
 - 1. With regard to their faith – see 1 Thess 3:5, 10.
 - 2. With regard to their love – see 1 Thess 3:12, 4:9-10.

3. This had to be a great encouragement to the Thessalonians.

Application: When was the last time that you, like Paul does here, write out the reasons for your thanksgiving? Even if you are not going to send those reasons to someone else, it is a fruitful exercise to think, "I am thankful to God because ... a) ... b) ... c) ..."

Application: Are the qualities of faith and love supremely evident in your/our church life? That is ground for encouragement and more thanksgiving. Can we see evidence that our faith is growing? That our love is abounding, from each person to each other person? Or are things kind of "ho hum...status quo..."? Or even worse, is there evidence to support a negative report on these qualities? Is the congregation fragmented? Love grown cold? ...

Transition: God has commended, through Paul, the Thessalonian believers. Paul has **expressed** his thanks for them and **explained** his reasons: faith in God and love toward one another. Finally, the good spiritual progress of the Thessalonians is a cause for **exultation**. This boasting is mentioned as a result of their spiritual growth.

III. Paul **extols** the Thessalonians as an example to other churches – v. 4.

A. Paul emphasizes that "we ourselves" are doing this boasting.

1. Why would Paul make this emphasis? It seems to be a parallel to the idea in 1 Thess 1:7-10 where the example of the Thessalonians spread throughout their geographical region, so much so that Paul didn't need to say a thing about them—everyone already knew! All knew of their salvation, their service, and their patient hope for the coming of the Lord. In other words, everyone else was talking about the Thessalonians, and so was Paul! He himself added to the positive words about them.

2. In other words, not just "everyone" was saying something, but someone who really counted was saying something—an inspired apostle!

B. Paul implies that there is a good kind of boasting.

1. Typically, we know that boasting is not a good thing. But it can be done properly, as evidenced by Paul here. In 2 Cor 8:1-8, he uses a good report of other churches to help persuade the Corinthians to do the right thing. In other words, the boasting serves a teaching purpose.

2. The acid test of your boasting is whether it fits this scripture: "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:31). So go ahead and be proud! Just do it right!

C. Paul's boasting regards the example of the Thessalonians.

1. Their example includes patience. This is alternately translated "perseverance" because it is heroic endurance under trial. It's not "oh well, I can't do anything about this fate" kind of thing, but is endurance with a view toward God and the coming of Christ.

2. Their example also includes faith. Unwavering trust in the Lord marks them. Yes, there may be temporary "shakings" of their faith (2 Thess 2:1-2) but in the main, the Thessalonians were rock solid.

Application: You too may have the occasional up or down, but when you stop to think, is your faith like this? Patient? Enduring?

3. Their example is valid even while they endure great persecution and tribulation. These words basically mean hostile actions from the outside and the pressure that this creates. Many so-called trials are hardly that, but are simply normal life pressures. But these are really hard pressures due to the enmity of unbelievers against the Thessalonians.

D. Paul makes these claims about the Thessalonians among other churches like themselves.

This boasting has obviously found its way into the inspired record of the Word of God and is permanently remembered in this text. Whatever "church of God" (a true church) reads this section today qualifies as a destination of Paul's boasting.

Transition from body to conclusion: So Paul has **expressed** his thanksgiving and **explained** his reasons, adding that he **exults** in the Thessalonians, giving an example to other churches. The Thessalonians truly are exercising their faith "under fire." God commends that.

CONCLUSION: We can learn from this text from three different vantage points: the author, the readers, and the "other churches" and the application that is evident from each of those perspectives.

1. From the author's side: Review the necessity of thanksgiving, expressing those explicitly; the proper ground for boasting.

2. From the reader's side: The encouragement in this text for the Thessalonians, and for those like them. That they are an answer to Paul's prayers and have followed his earlier exhortations. That someone who counts is giving them a commendation.

3. From the "other churches" side: This text can be seen as a huge exhortation to "get with it" regarding our faith and love in the midst of trials.

Indeed, using Paul's thanksgiving in this text, God commends spiritual growth and endurance in the midst of persecutions. This is kind of like the commendation received by the church at Smyrna in Rev 2:9-10:

"I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the congregation of Satan. **Fear none of those things which you will suffer:** behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, **that you may be tried;** and **you shall have tribulation** ten days; **be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.** He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches; **he that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.**"

<pause><prayer>

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Exegetical Notes

Abbreviated Outline for Chapter 1, which will cover both of the sermons that I'm writing for vv. 1-10 (and then some).

I. Introduction.....	1:1-12
A. Salutation.....	1:1-2
1. Authors.....	1:1a
2. Recipients.....	1:1b
3. Greeting.....	1:2
B. Thanksgiving.....	1:3-4
1. Expression of Thanksgiving.....	1:3a
2. Explanation of Thanksgiving.....	1:3b
3. Example of Thanksgiving.....	1:4
C. Certainty of Divine Judgment.....	1:5-10
1. Righteousness of the Judgment.....	1:5-7a
2. Destructive Result of the Judgment.....	1:7b-9
3. Beneficial Result of the Judgment.....	1:10
D. Prayer for the Readers.....	1:11-12
1. Content of the Prayer.....	1:11
2. Purpose of the Prayer.....	1:12a
3. The Source of Answer for the Prayer.....	1:12b

Background

MacDonald (2047) gives three reasons for the letter: encouragement in persecution, correction about doctrine of Day of the Lord, and correction about practice of idleness. Points out key item in the book is to understand the difference between the Second coming of the Lord and the rapture.

McGee 103 suggests a thematic idea in 1 Thess is the rapture; in 2 Thess, the 2nd coming! That's neat.

Verse 1

Morris, 91. God is "our" Father. Sometimes listed as the father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

McGee 108 mentions John 10:27-29 as the "in" relationship of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father.

MacArthur 224 indicates that the "in," grace, and peace indicate the true salvation of the readers. I never questioned this or even thought about it-just assumed so.

Martin 196 suggests it was important to identify the **Christian** assembly in Thessalonica, as opposed to the probably many other assemblies of various sorts. The grace and peace "formula" never became perfunctory or routine that it had no meaning.

Verse 2

Deity of Christ clearly confirmed by this verse. There is apparently no question about it in author's mind (or readers). Morris, p. 192.

McGee 108-9. Grace is related to salvation; peace to post-salvation.

Verse 3

MacDonald (2048) points out that the faith and love were answers to apostle's prayer of 1 Thess 3:10, 12. Paul's thanksgiving was a continual duty to God, appropriately so. He does not explain much how this is.

Morris 192. Not a perfunctory thanksgiving. 194. Vigorous growth to their faith! And the love is of all toward all others, no exceptions.

MacArthur, 225. Work of God is recognized by Paul as causing his obligation for thanksgiving. That their faith was growing was an obvious evidence of their salvation. 227. Love is sacrificial service.

Wanamaker's rhetorical analysis colors his whole commentary and his basis assumptions make the rest very questionable. He also assumes 2 Thessalonians came first. Seems *very* far-fetched!

The obligation to thanks mentioned by Paul, Martin 201 affirms, may tend to deflect critics' who said he was full of flattery and false words. Paul says instead that his thanksgivings were an obligation to give them their due. But he misses totally the point that Paul is thanking God and not man. He is thanking God for the work that God has done. True, he is not "buttering up" the readers, but Martin has the wrong reason.

Martin 202. Faith is God-ward, love man-ward.

Verse 4

Morris 194. Boasting done by "we ourselves" indicates strangeness of boasting about your own church plant! MacArthur says that "ourselves" contrasts them with the Thessalonians, who would never boast in such a way (bashful about Paul's statements of them).

Morris 195. Idea that Patience and faith feed off of one another. This faith is not faithfulness (Morris emphatic about this) but is just faith, trust.

McGee 110. Trouble produces patience. He is taking verse 5 as present judgment. He bases this primarily on other passages. The teaching that trouble produces patience is true, but in this very text?

My Exegesis

Note especially structure, observations, textual issues, grammatical issues, key terms, word study results, theological import, context.

There are no important textual issues in this text.

Background

Mention some of the ideas in the letter. Date, etc. This can fit in with some of the introductory words of the letter.

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy,

Paul is the author (see end of letter). Bio in Acts 9, etc.

The issue of inspiration comes up here. Paul often lists his helpers with him. He is obviously the team "leader" however and is the only one of these three who have seen the Lord.

Silas and Timothy are introduced in Acts 15, 16.

Mention of others indicates Paul's humility and attitude toward co-workers.

Paul is not listed as an apostle here; some question as to why. I take it that there was no question in the Thessalonian's mind, particularly after 1 Thess 2 where Paul reminded them of his ministry.

unto the church of the Thessalonians

Acts 17 gives the background information, including location of church, its composition in terms of Jews and Gentiles, and the persecution that broke out against them.

in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

A true Christian assembly. God has done a work here.

Single preposition and mention of God in parallel with the Lord affirms deity of Christ.

John 10:27-29 gives us an idea of what it means to be "in" them both.

Interesting item that this and 1 Thess are the only two letters where Paul uses this "in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ" greeting to the saints of a church. May indicate something of a note of security to them because of the persecution they are undergoing.

2 Grace to you, and peace,

Here is a standard Pauline letter opening. Paul did not use it in an empty way, though.

It is a wish or prayer request. Like "Hope everything is going well."

Grace and peace can be related to salvation – Eph 2:8-10, Rom 5:1. Some commentators stick with this only. Others say grace=salvation, peace=result of salvation. I think it can refer to both salvation and post-salvation benefits from God since there are continuing aspects of these two things.

Grace as divine favor. Standard Greek greeting.

Peace as a state of well being, welfare, health. Perhaps the standard Hebraic greeting from Shalom Lakem.

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul immediately shades off into the background as he says that salvation and all spiritual benefits are from God and Christ.

The Lord is used in parallel again here.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting

See commentaries on idea of "bound" (notes above) and my little study of that in the final exam for 2 Thessalonians Greek Exegesis. "As it is fitting" only strengthens this idea.

This is one of five of Paul's thanksgivings in the Thessalonian epistles (1 Th 1:2, 2:13, 3:4; 2 Th 1:3, 2:13).

Paul here **expresses** his thanksgiving.

Why would Paul mention his obligation to thank God?

a. 1 Th 3:10 he desired to get back to perfect what was lacking in their faith, but he had not had a chance to do so. Any growth in them must be attributed directly to God. Paul was thankful that though he couldn't continue a direct ministry there, God did continue his work.

b. Because it was evident that GOD was doing a work in Thessalonica. Only God could produce the fruit and Paul recognized that. Ref. 1 Cor 3.

c. This mention of obligation would serve to remind the Thessalonians of their debt to God. If Paul is thanking God, how much more they should be! It serves as a good example of being thankful in everything (1 Thess 5:18, Col 3:15).

d. It may reflect something like Paul's burden to preach (Rom 1:14, 1 Cor 9:16). Just like he has a divinely placed burden on his heart to preach the Word, so he is manifesting a Godward indebtedness in thanksgiving.

e. As Martin suggested, may deflect critics who say Paul just says things like this to be flattering and get on the Thess better side. He points out the theological debt that he has toward God.

f. This note of obligation also serves to point out that Paul is not thanking the Thessalonians, but GOD, for from him, and through him, and to him are all things.

The idea of indebtedness (opheilomen) occurs in several contexts:

a. Financial debt.

b. Moral obligation or social expectatio. For example, in following a good example, in thinking a certain way based on truth, in following a law, in a fair trade, in marriage, in living appropriately.

c. See texts like John 13:14, 1 Jn 3:16, 4:11, Acts 17:29, 2 Cor 12:11, John 19:7, Rom 15:27, 1 Cor 9:10, 3 Jn 8, 1 Cor 5:10, Heb 2:17, 1 Cor 7:3, Eph 5:28, 1 Cor 11:7, 2 Th 2:13, 1 Jn 2:6.

because your faith is growing exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all toward each other abounds.

Paul here **explains** 2 reasons for his thanksgiving – faith and love growing.

Their faith and love and growing and increasing in a very notable way. The words here are not frequently used in the Scriptures (growing exceedingly is only here).

Faith is faith in God, their Christian faith. The Thess are the subject of this faith, God the object.

Note also that both of these (faith and love) were topics of Paul's exhortation and prayer in 1 Thess (3:5, 8, 10, 4:9-10, 3:12).

The universal love they have is evident in the phrase "every one of you all toward each other." Not one person is left out in this pleonastic construction. As Morris comments, even though some problems are evident in the church, ALL get the commendation here.

Paul can tell these things about their faith and love because of reports brought back by Timothy and perhaps others.

How can one tell about a living/growing faith? James 2:18 answers: faith works!

How about increasing love? Similarly, it will be worked out in obvious ways.

Note that faith is toward God, and love is toward the brethren. The latter flows from the former.

No manipulative/rhetorical purpose going on in this text. Paul is encouraging them, sincerely thankful for them.

4 so that we ourselves glory in you

Paul **extols** the Thessalonian church before other churches as an example.

This is the *result* of remarkable their faith and love. Without that, Paul wouldn't have said much about them to other churches.

Perhaps this gives us some idea of the centrality of these aspects of Christianity! Note it.

Debate in the literature about "we ourselves", whether it contrasts Paul vs. the bashful Thessalonians, or Paul vs. his normal modest behavior regarding his own church plants, or, as I take it, Paul compared to other people in 1 Thess 1:8-9. The others were telling all about the Thessalonians throughout their geographical region; Paul adds that he himself is doing so. The church gets an apostolic commendation from this emphatic pronoun.

in the churches of God

Seems evident here that Paul brings in a third group of people—besides the authors and recipients, we now have other churches. Viewing this section from those three perspectives is helpful.

Helpful to see that it is OK to boast of a good example. In this case, it is a good example of God's work (recall Paul's obligation to give thanks above) in a new church plant.

It seems Paul was not shy about this boasting as he gave it to many churches.

for your patience and faith

This is what Paul is boasting about.

Somewhat of a reiteration of the reasons for Paul's thanksgiving above.

This is an interesting word for patience – *hupomone*. Most commentators note its 'literal' meaning as "standing under." It is holding out, bearing up under difficulty, perseverance.

Some commentators note that patience and faith feed off of one another (Morris, above). This is interesting. Faith breeds patience and endurance. But patience, as a response to tribulation is involved in building faith (1 Peter 1:7, etc.)

in all your persecutions and tribulations

But patience and faith go together and describe the Thess response to persecutions and tribulations.

These essentially mean the same thing; some commentators try to make a big difference out of them. They are seemingly synonymous. These are pressures, troubles, oppressions, tribu-

lations. Hiebert differentiates: persecutions are hostile actions by opponents of the gospel, and tribulations are various pressures and pains experienced by the believers.

Connecting this with verse 5, they are suffering "for" the kingdom of God. So, it is particularly for their faith that they are suffering.

All - This is not a few trials, but a lot!

which you are enduring.

It seems obvious to me that the persecutions and sandwiched between patience/faith on the one hand and endurance on the other. Textually we cannot separate them (this is particularly relevant to verse 5 and the antecedent of the "manifest token" (endeigma)).

This is a present tense verb—the Thess are presently undergoing continued persecution.

This is a great word—they are enduring their persecutions, not running or wilting! What a faith! This, like verse 3, would be a great encouragement. Strengthen resolve, stimulate hope. (Green).