



Pastor Gary Clark
Sermon Guide Notes: May 17, 2026

“Would the REAL Christ Follower Please Stand Up?” – Pt. 2

1 Thessalonians 2:14–20

One Sentence Sermon

A true Christ follower remains faithful through suffering and lives with an eternal perspective centered on Christ and people.

Main Verse

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.”

Introduction

In the first part of this chapter, Paul showed us the marks of a genuine Christ follower:

- Courageous faith
- Pure motives
- Deep love for people
- Integrity
- Submission to God’s Word

Now Paul continues by showing us two more powerful evidences of authentic Christianity:

- Perseverance through suffering
- Living with an eternal perspective



The Christian life was never promised to be easy. Yet throughout history, genuine believers have continued standing firm because their faith was rooted deeply in Jesus Christ.

The question remains:

Would the REAL Christ follower please stand up?

Marks of a True Christ Follower

VI. A True Christ Follower Perseveres Through Suffering 1

Thessalonians 2:14–16

- The Thessalonian believers suffered persecution from their own people.
- Genuine faith does not collapse under pressure.
- Real faith clings even tighter to Christ during hardship.
- Following Jesus often comes with a personal cost.

Historical Insight

For believers in Thessalonica, becoming a Christian could cost:

- Family relationships
- Employment
- Social standing
- Personal safety

Yet they endured faithfully.

Key Thought:

“If your faith is fake, it will collapse under pressure. Real faith clings to Christ even tighter.”



Suffering Has a Purpose

C.S. Lewis once wrote:

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains.”

Sometimes suffering becomes God’s megaphone to awaken our hearts and deepen our dependence upon Him.

Cross References

- Epistle of James 1:2–4 — Trials produce endurance.
- First Epistle of Peter 1:6–7 — Faith refined like gold.

VII. A True Christ Follower Lives With an Eternal Perspective 1

Thessalonians 2:17–20

Paul’s greatest joy was not possessions, popularity, or success. His joy was seeing lives transformed by Jesus Christ.

Word Study

The word “**crown**” refers to the victor’s wreath awarded after athletic competition.

Paul viewed changed lives as eternal rewards.

Key Thought:

“At the end of life, earthly trophies stay behind. Only eternal investments go into eternity.”

Eternal Investments Matter Most

Paul longed to see believers standing faithfully before Christ at His return.



Cross References

- Epistle to the Philippians 4:1
“My joy and crown...”
- Second Epistle to the Corinthians 2:14
“Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ...”

Key Thought:

“People transformed by Christ are Heaven’s greatest trophies.”

What Does a True Christ Follower Look Like?

According to First Epistle to the Thessalonians chapter 2, a true Christ follower is marked by:

- Courageous faith
- Pure motives
- Deep love for people
- Integrity in daily living
- Submission to God’s Word
- Perseverance through suffering
- Eternal perspective

3 Action Steps This Week

1. Stand Firm During Trials

Do not allow hardship to weaken your faith. Let it deepen your trust in Christ.

2. Invest in People Eternally

Encourage, disciple, and love others with eternity in mind.

3. Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

Live daily with the awareness that earthly things fade, but eternal things last forever.



Read Ahead for Next Week

Please read ahead in **1 Thessalonians Chapter 3** as we continue our study together.

Church Reminders

Don't forget to scan the **QR Code** for upcoming church events and announcements, including:

- Spaghetti Dinner — May 29
- Civil War Battlefield Tour — June 5 & 6

Closing Blessing

**“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”
— 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24**

For questions, prayer, or to connect with us:

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