

SURPRISED BY JESUS

Part 10 of Foundations 260. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. March 30, 2025.

FALSE IDENTITIES AND DATING APPS

Apparently, lying is common on dating app profiles.

- 24% of men have lied about their age. 59% of women have lied about their weight. 25% of US users have been scammed on a dating app.

(Hancock, J. T., Toma, C., & Ellison, N. (2007). The truth about lying in online dating profiles. Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1240624.1240697>)

(<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1389677/romance-scam-encounter-worldwide-by-country/>)

Many people have inaccurate views of Jesus.

- And what we don't know can hurt us. Conversely, it's beneficial to know the truth about Jesus.
- There are three surprising insights related to Jesus in 2 Thessalonians 1:

2 THESSALONIANS 1:3-12 (CSB)

3 We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, since your faith is flourishing and the love each one of you has for one another is increasing. 4 Therefore, we ourselves boast about you among God's churches — about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions that you are enduring. 5 It is clear evidence of God's righteous judgment that you will be counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also are suffering, 6 since it is just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted, along with us.

This will take place at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels, 8 when he takes vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will pay the

penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from his glorious strength
10 on that day when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at by
all those who have believed, because our testimony among you was believed.

11 In view of this, we always pray for you that our God will make you worthy of his
calling, and by his power fulfill your every desire to do good and your work produced
by faith, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified by you, and you by
him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

THREE SURPRISES

1. Jesus allows his people to go through hard times - verses 4-5.

- Christians have been persecuted since the beginning. The devil and demons test, tempt, and attack us relentlessly. The Thessalonian Christians were persecuted (Acts 17:5-9).
- Jesus taught us to carry our cross (Matthew 16:24-26) which means being willing to die for our faith. Paul taught the churches that hardships will come (Acts 14:22-23).
- Why does Jesus allow this? 1) To grow us to Christlike maturity:

1 Thessalonians 1:6 (CSB) ... you yourselves became imitators of us and of the Lord when, in spite of severe persecution, you welcomed the message with joy from the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Persevering through hardships and affliction is also a powerful testimony to the value of Jesus Christ in our lives.

1 Thessalonians 1:7 (CSB) As a result, you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

2. Jesus will return to save his people - verses 5 & 10.

- It's been 2,000 years. Some days, I wonder if he will ever return.

- The people of the world don't expect Jesus to return because they see no signs. But his return will be sudden and unexpected.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-4 (CSB) You yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "Peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in the dark, for this day to surprise you like a thief.

- Jesus is coming to save his people from sin and judgment.

... how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead — Jesus, **who rescues us from the coming wrath** (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, CSB).

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him (1 Thessalonians 5:8-10, CSB).

"... you will be counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also are suffering ..." (2 Corinthians 1:5, CSB).

2. Jesus will return to avenge his people - verses 6-10.

- When Jesus returns, he will execute justice against everyone who has rejected him or persecuted his people. The Bible describes them as:

2 Thessalonians 1:8 (CSB) ... those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

- That's why the Bible says:

Verse 6: ... it is just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you ...

Verses 7-10: This will take place at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels, 8 when he takes vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from his glorious strength 10 on that day when he comes ...

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's March 30th teaching and study guide.
- What were the highlights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
 - S: Sins to confess
 - P: Promises to claim
 - E: Examples to follow
 - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
 - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

Discuss

- What does 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 reveal about the relationship between faith and perseverance in the face of persecution? How does this passage encourage believers to view their current hardships?
- Why does Jesus allow his followers to go through difficult times? How does this align with biblical teachings on spiritual growth? Share a personal experience where enduring hardship led to spiritual growth.
- How does the promise of Jesus' return offer hope and encouragement in times of struggle?
- How should the reality of judgment influence our interactions with those who do not know God?

Prayer

- Pray that Peter's sermon and the content of 2 Thessalonians 1 would have a profound impact on believers and unbelievers, leading to faith, perseverance, and godly living.