

**Worship Material**  
**Celebrating God at work**  
**Material from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 2nd November**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Together we will praise you,  
our wonderful God.  
Together we will rejoice  
that you have brought us here.  
Together we will affirm one another.  
Together we will be your people,  
drawn together by your love.

**Read 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4,11-12**

**Bible notes**

The letter begins with a typical greeting (cf 1 Thessalonians 1:1). The apostle identifies his co-authors and partners in the gospel and locates his audience not simply in their home city but in the very life of God. 'Grace' and 'peace' are favourite Pauline terms – the first a summary of the loving generosity of God, and the second of God's desire for harmony and reconciliation in creation. Both flow from the gospel that reveals 'God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ', mentioned twice in the opening verses. There is much to be thankful for in churches whose faith and love are flourishing in the face of (unspecified) opposition and suffering. Not only does Paul give thanks to God, he also shares his pride in the Thessalonians' faithfulness with other churches (v.4). Their example is good reason for celebrating the love of God at work through the gospel (see 2:16).

Such a positive opening puts the letter's audience in a good frame of mind, so that they can receive the challenges that are the main reason for writing. For now, Paul's prayer reminds them of their high calling to maintain their loyalty to God in the face of all that would undermine it (vv.11-12). This is not something they do in their own strength: notice the prayer's dependence on God's power and grace, which more than match the Thessalonians' resolve and faith. The consistent emphasis on Jesus as 'Lord' in this opening section is a consoling reminder of where ultimate power lies: not in Rome, with the

imperial pretenders to divine lordship, but in the exalted Lord Jesus as God's heavenly judge, whose coming will hold to account all who resist the work of God revealed in the gospel (see vv.5-10, omitted by the lectionary perhaps because their vindictive tone and detail are at odds with Paul's customary statements of divine judgement).

### Prayer

Holy God, we give you thanks and praise that, although we falter and fall and do not praise you as we ought, you love us and surround us with your shelter, care and protection.

**We give you thanks and praise.**

We are so often unworthy of your love and yet you forgive us and help us to turn our lives round to do what is right, just and worthy of your name.

We give you thanks and praise.

Fake news bombards us from all directions, but we are grateful that we can put our trust in you.

**We give you thanks and praise.**

For those who surround us, love and care for us, who guide us and sustain us in our faith journey, we give you thanks and praise.

With those of faith who have gone before, we pray: may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give us grace and peace.

**Amen.**

### A prayer to conclude

Grace to you from God our Father.

Peace to you from our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Go with everything you have been given by God.

Go with everything he will help you to be.

Go in peace.

**Amen.**