

1 Thessalonians 2:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For ye are our glory and joy.

Analysis

For ye are our glory and joy—hymeis gar este hē doxa hēmōn kai hē chara (ὑμεῖς γάρ ἔστε ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρά, 'for you are our glory and our joy'). This emphatic declaration (note the Greek word order emphasizing 'you') summarizes Paul's pastoral affection. Doxa (glory) indicates honor, splendor, radiance—the Thessalonians' faithful perseverance brought honor to Paul's ministry. Chara (joy) reveals emotional delight, not merely professional satisfaction. True ministers find glory and joy not in personal accomplishment but in spiritual children's growth and perseverance.

The verse connects to v. 19—the Thessalonians are Paul's present joy and future crown. Their existence and endurance validate his ministry, prove the gospel's power, and anticipate eschatological reward. This parent-child relationship (vv. 7, 11) produces reciprocal joy: children honor parents who sacrificed for them; parents delight in children who walk in truth (3 John 4). The relational intensity throughout this chapter contrasts sharply with impersonal professionalism, modeling incarnational ministry where spiritual fathers invest themselves fully in spiritual children's welfare.

Historical Context

Paul's emphasis on the Thessalonians as his 'glory and joy' refuted opponents' accusations of mercenary motives or cowardly abandonment. Why would someone seeking profit or avoiding danger call a poor, persecuted church his 'glory'? Worldly glory came from prestigious converts, wealthy patrons, or large numbers;

Paul found glory in faithful believers, whatever their social status. This countercultural value system revealed kingdom priorities: character over credentials, faithfulness over fame, perseverance over prosperity. The Thessalonians' very existence as a thriving church despite persecution glorified both Paul's ministry and the God who sustained them.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Where do you find your 'glory and joy'—in personal achievements and recognition, or in others' spiritual growth and perseverance?
2. How does Paul's relational ministry model challenge contemporary emphases on large numbers, wealthy donors, or prestigious converts?
3. What specific people or communities represent your 'glory and joy' because of their faithful walk with Christ?

Interlinear Text

ὑμεῖς	γάρ	ἐστε	ἡ	δόξα	ἡμῶν	καὶ	ἡ	χαρά
ye	For	are	G3588	glory	our	and	G3588	joy
G5210	G1063	G2075		G1391	G2257	G2532		G5479

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 1:14 (Parallel theme): As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:7 (Glory): For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

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