



The power of lawlessness in the last days

2 Thessalonians 2:1-8

[based on sermon preached 15.5.22 – may be available on the [church app](#) or at <https://lwac.org.au/sermons>]

KEY IDEAS

1. The Day of the Lord (of Christ's return) has not yet come, in spite of what some may teach.
2. The man of lawlessness (the anti-Christ) has not yet been revealed, but the secret power of lawlessness is already at work among us.
3. Lawlessness is not the same as law-breaking. Law-breaking is to violate or transgress the moral law which one acknowledges is real and true; lawlessness is to deny there even is a universal, objective moral law. We are free to affirm any moral law we please, or none at all.
4. The secret power of lawlessness is literally the mystery of the power of sin in all of us, by which we exalt ourselves over God. It is centered on ourselves, selfishness, self-righteousness, even using others for our own ends.
5. Lawlessness in us is overcome by acknowledging we are sinful and that Christ's death has triumphed over sin by giving himself for us, in love.
6. By giving his life for ours, Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the law; as our sacrifice he was able to take away the sins of the world, paying the penalty for our sins and reconciling us to God.

CONNECT

- Do you recall any declarations that a certain person was/is the anti-Christ? Of whom were these declarations made? If these declarations were current or recent, were you tempted to believe them? Why or why not?

STUDY

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

- What was being reported to the Thessalonian church in Paul's name?
- Why did Paul feel a need to combat this false report? How might our beliefs, attitude or behaviour change if we think the Day of the Lord has already come?

Read 2:3-4

- Some Bible translations use the word "sin" instead of "lawlessness" in v. 3. Why do you think the concepts of sin and lawlessness are virtually the same and interchangeable?

- Paul teaches that this “man of lawlessness” will have an emphasis upon himself: “exalting himself,” “setting himself up,” and “proclaiming himself to be God.” Why is this emphasis on self so contrary to God’s love and God’s plan?
- Some self-care and self-love is good and important; even Jesus instructed us to “love your neighbor *as yourself*.” Where is the line between appropriate self-love and selfishness, or “setting ourselves up against God”?

Read 2:5-8

- Do you see signs or indications of the secret power of lawlessness at work around you today? If so, does this increasingly concern you, or has this always been the way it is, so we shouldn’t get overly worked up about it?
- At some future point, the secret power of lawlessness will become embodied in a single person, the “man of lawlessness.” Do you think those who are alive at that time will know what is happening? Will they recognize this “man of lawlessness” for who he is?
- Why do you think this “man of lawlessness” will not be removed until he is overthrown and destroyed by Jesus at his second coming? How is Jesus the complete opposite of this “man of lawlessness” and this “secret power of lawlessness?”
- What do you think is the key to not giving in to or being controlled by the “secret power of lawlessness?” Is this easy? Why or why not? How is Jesus central to this?

APPLY

- Think of one way in which you display appropriate self-care or self-love.
- Think of one area of your life where you wrestle with selfishness, self-centeredness, or exalting of self.
- Identify three specific things you can do to allow Jesus Christ to overcome the selfishness in your life so that Christ will be exalted in and through you.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- Which aspect of this study has struck you the most and why? What are you going to do as a result ?

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH AND FOR ONE ANOTHER

- According to need.