

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

II THESSALONIANS 2:13—3:5

LESSON: A GROWING RESOLVE —April 14, 2019

INTRODUCTION:

¹The coming of the lawless one is further described, whose coming will be according to the working of Satan. With all power, signs, and lying wonders, he will deceive those who do not have a love for the truth. Indeed, God will also send a strong delusion to those who do not love the truth, that they might believe the lie and be condemned for taking pleasure in unrighteousness instead of believing the truth (2:9-12).

I. THANKS FOR THE THESSALONIANS

LESSON:

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-14

2nd – 2:13a But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord,— Note the word *"but."* This passage is a sharp contrast between the followers of the antichrist and the followers of Christ. The followers of the antichrist are to be damned, that is judged, condemned, and punished. **But** the followers of the Lord are the beloved of the Lord. Why? - Because they follow Him. They believe Him, all that claim that He is truly the Son of God who has come to earth...

- To die for men
- to save men from death and judgment
- to give men eternal life
- To bring assurance, love, joy, and peace to men as they walk throughout life.

The followers of the Lord are the beloved of the Lord. Paul consistently taught that salvation begins and ends with God. Therefore, he lets the Thessalonians know that he continues to *"give thanks to God"* for them. He is bound, that is, he has a duty to them because of the Lord.

2nd – 2:13b Because God hath chosen you to salvation...— God hath from the beginning chosen them to salvation. The Greek word for *"chosen"* (*heilato*) is strong. The word's uniqueness is this: it is one of the words that is used when God chose Israel (Deut.26:18; 7:6-7). We can do nothing to be saved on our own merit—we must accept God's gift of salvation; no other way to be saved. This is why Paul was bound to give thanks.

Point 1: Chosen to be Saved! What security! Having been chosen by God to salvation—chosen from the beginning, from eternity past—before the earth was ever established. If God saw us as saved before the earth was made; if God saw us saved before we were ever born, then there is no way we can be lost and removed from His love and care.

If the pure logic of philosophy and theology is applied, then God's choice says that God chooses some for heaven and others for a terrible hell. But this is simply not what God means in the passages dealing with *His choice*, and this fact needs to be given close attention by all ministers. What God want believers to do is to take heart, for He has assured their salvation and given them the greatest security imaginable. Jesus meant it when He said: *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* Jh.10:28-29. However, we have to take into account that we also have to choose Him whole-heartedly without doubt or division in our heart! The next two points show how salvation

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takes place, both God's part and man's part.

2nd – 2:13c ...through sanctification of the Spirit –

Point 2: Chosen to be Sanctified by His Spirit! God has *chosen* believers *through sanctification* of the Spirit. The word "**sanctification**" means to set apart or be separated unto God. We must always remember this fact (too many forget it and thereby become inconsistent in their theology and teaching of the Word). A man is a dead spirit, that is, the natural man who prefers self and sin; therefore, he can do nothing spiritually just as a dead body can do nothing physically. Therefore, if a man with a dead spirit is to come to Christ, he has to be acted upon and drawn by God. Both God's Spirit and man have a part in salvation. The part of God's Spirit is to move upon the heart of a man and stir him to set apart his life unto God. How does the Spirit of God do this?

- a. The Holy Spirit quickens the gospel to a man's mind, so that he *sees it as never before*. He sees, understands, grasps as never before that "*the Father...hath sent*" Christ to feed and nourish man (to save and to give him life).
- b. The Holy Spirit convicts a man, of righteousness and of judgment, that is, of his need to be fed and nourished (saved and given life).
- c. The Holy Spirit attracts men to the cross of Christ through its glorious provisions.
- d. The Holy Spirit stirs a man to respond by coming to Christ.

2nd – 2:13d ...and belief of the truth,—

Point 3: Chosen to Believe the Truth! God has chosen believers through "*belief of the truth*", that is, through believing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- a. The Lord Jesus Christ has died for believers: taken their sins upon himself and suffered the penalty, judgment, condemnation, and punishment of their sins. He has sacrificed and substituted His life for them.
- b. The Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead for believers: conquered death and ascended into heaven for them.

THE BELIEVERS ARE TO BELIEVE THE GOSPEL WITH ALL THEIR HEARTS:

BELIEVE THEY WILL NEVER HAVE TO DIE BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR THEM;

BELIEVE THEY SHALL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN TO LIVE ETERNALLY WITH THE FATHER AND HIS SON, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

They believe and have entrusted their lives to this glorious truth. **The point is this:** when a person **really believes the truth of the gospel**, God saves him. This is man's part in salvation. No person has ever been saved who did not believe the truth of the gospel. And no person who has rejected the gospel is lost because God has not chosen him. The person is lost because he rejected Christ. God will choose any person who will accept Christ. This is His Word; it is the promise of His Word. God will not force us to believe nor will He keep us from believing. The choice is every person's choice. No person is forced to receive or to reject Christ. Every person is responsible for his own decision.

2nd – 2:14a Whereunto he called you by our gospel,—

Point 4: Called by His Gospel! The gospel is the means God has chosen for calling the world to be reconciled to Him. God worked through Paul with his companions to tell the Good News.

2nd – 2:14b ...to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Point 5: To Obtain the Glory! The purpose of salvation is to gain the glory of Christ. Remember: the Thessalonian believers were suffering severe persecution. They were bound for glory, which means they share in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The word "*glory*" (*doxes*) means to possess perfect light and to be full of perfect light; to dwell in the perfect light, brilliance, splendor, brightness, luster, and magnificence of God. Rather than hogging the glory as our fallen nature would, God loves to share. He calls, cleanses, and matures us so we can be with Christ in His glory (see Jh.17:5, 22-24 NIV).

II. EXORTATION TO THE THESSALONIANS 2 THESSALONIANS 2:15

2nd – 2:15 **Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.** The duty of the chosen brethren of salvation is to "*stand fast and hold to (cling) to the traditions.*" Let it be your resolve—your decision, determination, resolution, steadfastness. Note the word "traditions" (*paradoxeis*). It means "*to hand down by tradition; passed on*", all the Word of God whether it is taught or written. These traditions were the gospel itself which had been preached among the Thessalonians. Paul uses the word "*taught*" here for what was often called preaching. While actually teaching or preaching the Word of God we are to stand fast and cling to the Word; not buckle under to the world and its enticements; not to cave in, as the followers of the antichrist will do. But, we are to stand fast and cling to the Word of God, no matter the inducement and the opposition.

III. PRAYER FOR THE THESSALONIANS 2 THESSALONIANS 2:16-17

2nd – 2:16 **Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,—** As Paul continues, this is one of many benedictions Paul has given in his letters. Paul never goes for long without reminding Christians that we owe everything to the love of God and His free gift of grace through Jesus Christ, as the true source of encouragement and strength. God's promises are faithful regardless of our earthly situation. A faithful Christian always has hope. When under persecution there is always a temptation to turn away from Christ to avoid the cost of following Him. We need encouragement to be faithful. The resources of what we draw from through salvation are fivefold: The person who is saved receives...

1. "**God's love, even the Father Christ Himself.**"
2. "**Eternal consolation**" (*paraklesin aionian*) which is eternal encouragement, comfort, and strength that cannot be shaken by anything—no matter what it is—either now or in eternity.
3. A "**good hope.**" What greater hope could the believer have than to live in glory with the Lord forever and ever. Our hope is given to us through the grace of God alone.

2nd – 2:17 **Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.**

4. "**Comfort**" (*parakalesai*) which means console, encourage, and inspire. It is a quiet resolve in your heart to know that God adds **His** power to what we are doing. It's better than what we could have done alone. God and Christ consoles and inspire our hearts with courage.
5. "**Stablish**" (*sterixai*) means to strengthen, secure, make stable, set fast, and make firm. God gives strength as you hear and read His Word, and in the work you do. The one thing men long for is to be secure, strong, and firmly established in life. God is able to fulfill this longing.

There is nothing that has been left out by God! It is a privilege to be chosen by God unto Salvation, sanctified by His Spirit to believe the Truth whereby we are called by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to obtain the glory! We can stand fast and hold on to what has been taught, for we have God's love, everlasting consolation, good hope, comfort, and strength in every good word and work we move in.

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SUMMARY:

Paul assures the Thessalonians that they have been both chosen (2:13) and called (2:14) for service. How did God choose to save the Thessalonians? -Through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only God, through their belief in Christ, can save them. Paul's declaration that they were chosen from the beginning can be seen as referring to the beginning of his ministry to the Thessalonians or more broadly to the very beginning of time. What is clear is that salvation is the purpose of their selection. Paul is reiterating that the Thessalonians cannot accomplish their own salvation. Similarly, their Christlike growth can only be accomplished through the working of the Spirit, and knowing the truth of the gospel to the obtain (gain) the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2:13-14).

Having reassured the Thessalonian saints of their sure and certain calling, and the ultimate glory of God, Paul offers them a final word of encouragement. Knowing that their trials and tribulations are not over, Paul urges them to "*stand fast, and hold to the traditions (in) which (they) have been taught*" (2:15). The "*traditions*" Paul mentions here should be understood as those godly teachings that have been given to the church (Paul's letters that expounded upon the Word). It is to these teachings that Paul is urging the Thessalonian believers to cling to what they have been taught in spite of the perils facing them. In verses 16-17, Paul gives a prayer of blessing for divine encouragement and strength for the Thessalonian believers. Paul mentions that Christ and the Father who has loved them, and given them everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace will also comfort their hearts and establish them in every good word and work (2:15-17).

IV. REQUEST OF THE THESSALONIANS 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-2

2nd - 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:— Paul was writing to the church: to comfort and encourage them to continue on for Christ, but Paul was in Corinth and he too was suffering all kinds of trouble, including persecution. And Paul says "**finally.**" He gets to the end of his letter to let them know that he needed prayer and he needed believers everywhere praying for him and his companions. Paul's focus was not selfish.

1. There was the need for the Word to "have free course" and to be glorified. Often the Word can have no power or influence among a people because of...
 - opposition • unprepared hearts • sleepy-eyed listeners • daydreaming minds
 - unprepared and carnal preachers and teachers.

The list could go on and on. "**Free course**" means to run. It is a picture of an Olympian athlete running in a race; it is the picture of the Word of God spreading all over because it is...

- focused • active • strong • urgent • unflinching • vigorous • powerful

When the Word of God has free course, it will be glorified, that is, souls would be saved and lives changed as it was with the Thessalonians. This is exactly what had happened to the Thessalonian believers. The Word of God had freely spread among them, and many had been converted by the Word of God. People are freed...

- from sin and its enslavement • from guilty consciences • from immoral and evil behavior
- from unjust treatment • from ignorance • from worldliness

They no longer experience emptiness, loneliness, purposelessness, or lostness. They are free to know the Lord and to commit their lives to reaching and meeting the needs of a world full of desperate people. The Word of God had free course!

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Believers should always be praying for the ministers and teachers of the gospel—that the Word of God might have a free course as it is preached and taught. Think for a moment: what would happen if the believers of a single church prayed often every day for their minister and teachers? One thing is known: God could not sit still, for He would know that those believers were as sincere and genuine as they could be. He would know that they desperately wanted to reach their community for Christ.

2nd —3:2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

2. There was the need for believers to "be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." Paul knew what it was like to be opposed by wicked people who would not listen to reason. People opposed and attacked Paul when he preached or taught God's Word, even brought before the magistrate saying they trouble the city. Ministers, teachers, and believers alike are sometimes opposed and attacked by unreasonable and wicked people. People even now oppose you when you tell them that God loves the world; that He has provided the way for man to escape death and to live forever, because they want to live like they want to, without any interference from God. They deny and ignore God's existence because they oppose anything that reminds them of eternity; of a coming day of judgment. When people lack reason and morality, goodness, and honesty, conscience and decency, they are dangerous. They can hinder both the messenger and the message of the gospel. Therefore, believers need to be constantly praying for God to deliver His people from unreasonable and wicked persons, for all men don't believe—have faith—

- When we stand in the greatest need
- when people oppose and persecute us
- when the most terrible trials confront us. And they will fail to pray
- encourage
- support
- speak kindly
- or help.

V. CONFIDENCE IN THE THESSALONIANS 2 THESSALONIANS 3:3-4

2nd —3:3a **But the Lord is faithful, ...who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.** This is saying the Lord acts and reacts differently.

1. "But the Lord is faithful..." God will go all the way for the believer. He went all the way to the cross.
2. The Lord "will establish the believer and keep him from evil." The word "**stablish**" (*sterixe*) means to strengthen, secure, make stable or firm, and set fast. The word "**keep**" (*phulaxe*) means to guard. The word "**evil**" can refer both to evil behavior and to the evil one, that is, Satan. **The point is this:** the Lord is faithful, even if we fail to help one another. God still strengthens and guard us against Satan and his evil followers. In fact, the Lord will strengthen and guard us against all evil no matter what.
 - God will deliver us by working all things out for good.
 - God will deliver us by overcoming our failures and completing His work of salvation in us.
 - God will deliver us by delivering us from death.

2nd —3:4 **And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.**

3. The Lord will motivate the believer "to have confidence in keeping His commandments." The Lord actually works within and energizes the believer to will and do God's pleasure, that is, to keep His commandments. When we sense a stirring, an unexpected knowing being aroused within our hearts to do good, that is the Spirit of God working within us. The Lord will continue to work within us. This is the reason Paul had confidence in the Thessalonian believers— The Lord has His way of touching us to do. Paul knew the Thessalonians would both do and would do the things commanded of them; the things

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given to and taught them by Paul and the others. The Lord will never leave the believer, not completely; so long as the believer is on the earth.

VI. PRAYER FOR THE THESSALONIANS 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5

2nd – 3:5a And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God,—

4. The Lord "directs the believer's heart" into the love of God. This means both God's love for us and our love for God. The word "**direct**" (*kateuthunai*) means to make straight or to be straight. It means to remove obstacles out of the way or to open up. The Lord Jesus Christ takes the genuine believer and opens up his heart; He straightens, directs, and focuses the believer's heart upon the love of God. The result is that the believer learns to love God more and more. His attention and focus becomes more and more set upon God's love. Therefore, when trials, trouble, temptation, and evil attack the believer, he is able to stand in the love of God and overcome the attack.

2nd – 3:5b ...and into the patient waiting for Christ.

5. The Lord directs the believer "to patiently wait for Christ's return." The Lord Jesus Christ stirs the genuine believer to keep his eyes upon His return. Therefore, when evil strikes, the believer endures and perseveres; stands in strength and patience; keeping his eyes and heart focused upon the glorious hope of Christ—the hope of conquering death and of living forever and ever in perfection with God—the hope of ruling and reigning throughout the whole universe with Christ. Time and time again scripture reminds us that God is faithful to protect and strengthen us from the attacks of Satan.

SUMMARY:

²Paul's letter of his final words is soliciting prayer for he and his companions; that the Word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified, and that he might be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men (3:1-2). He was confident in the Lord to establish and guard the Thessalonians from the evil one; also confident that they will do the things he commands them (3:3-4). He follows with a prayer that the Lord directs their hearts into the love of God and into patiently waiting for Christ (3:5). (3:1-5).

APPLICATION:

When a believer received salvation there is a belief and hope in God who can love us in spite of, who can console everlastingly, who can comfort our hearts, and who can establish to give us a strong life. Thanks be to God who can give hope! So, standing firm takes a prepared heart to trust Christ all the way and that He will empower your spirit to hold on.

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