

Study 16 – Book of Second Thessalonians

Topic: Stand Firm

Study text: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Outline

Encouragement and blessings for the Thessalonians. Stand firm. (13-17)

Discussion Questions from the passage.

- How did Paul feel about them?
- The previous verses tell us something about Satan's plan. What do we learn in verse 13 about God's plan for the Thessalonians? When did He form this plan?
- What did He call the Thessalonians for?
- What does it mean that they may "gain the glory" of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Stand firm. What does this mean to us as Believers? How do we do this?

- What kind of traditions (teachings) was Paul referring to? **Read different translations for better understanding**
- What has our Father done for us? Vs 16

Verse by Verse study

1. We should always give thanks – Do you give thanks for the things you should give thanks for? What is something you should give thanks for but don't? When should we always give thanks? Once in a while? Only when things are good?

2. Beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you – Paul has given the Thessalonians a preview of the single darkest time the world will ever face. It is a bleak picture. And yet he reassures them. They will not experience this judgment because they have a relationship with God. Simply put, the Lord loves them. Why? Why would God stoop to love them?

The answer is found in verse 13. God loves them, not because they are good. It is not because they deserve it. In fact, it is not for any reason within themselves. It is because God chose them. It is that simple. God chose them, and because He chose them, He chose to love them. Here is the ultimate proof that love is not a feeling but a choice. How will you respond to God's choice to love you?

Application: Do you make this same choice to love others around you, even when they don't deserve it?

3. For what? – What did God choose them and us for? He chose us for salvation. Because His choice ultimately determined our salvation, we cannot hence afford to lose our salvation. He also chose us for sanctification. These two concepts are connected at the hip. There is no sanctification without salvation and vice-versa. His Spirit brings about this sanctification, but we are also involved as we must respond with faith in the truth. Are you being sanctified? Are you more like Christ than last year?

4. Verse 14 – Why did He call you? He called them (and us) so that we may gain the glory of Christ. What does that mean? It means to be raised up like Christ was, so that we may become like Him. Glory is similar to the meaning of exalted or raised up. Christ was never as low as we are. Yet we, too, will be raised up like He was. We are raised to a high position of becoming a child of God (and a brother/sister of Christ).

Romans 8:17 – Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

We have been chosen and called for a reason. God doesn't want us to wallow in our sin like a dog returning to his vomit (Proverbs 26:11.) Imagine if a king adopted a boy who was the village thief as his own son. Wouldn't he expect that this boy would stop stealing? How would the king feel if the boy refused to live in his new home, wear his new clothes, respond to his new education, or fulfil his new duties, and instead repeatedly ran away from the palace to steal? The king would obviously be very disappointed. The boy would also be the laughingstock of that whole country. He would rightly be called a fool. What fool would give up his position as the king's son to steal half-eaten apples? And yet this is exactly the choice we are making when we disregard God's laws and return to the same sinful habits we engaged in before turning to Christ.

5. Stand firm and hold to the traditions you were taught – When we think of traditions, we may think of candles, special days of the year, festivals, etc. The Jews likely thought of hand washing and the like. But these are all man-made traditions. Man-made traditions are fine to follow as long as they are biblical, and we realize that not everyone has to adhere to the same traditions we do. Nevertheless, this is not the kind of tradition that Paul is talking about. Paul is referring to the key doctrines which they taught to the Thessalonians. These "traditions" would have included things like Jesus' divinity and humanity, His bodily resurrection, His second coming, Character of Jesus to take on, sanctification, etc.

Remember that Satan is the father of lies. He tries to work against whatever God is doing. This means when the gospel enters an area, Satan won't be far behind, distorting the truth and spreading false teaching. Believers everywhere must be aware of this. We must practice discernment and stand firm against compromising the Word of God, even one iota. Little compromises lead to big compromises. Little lies lead to big lies. So don't start down the slippery slope, but stand firm on the solid rock.

6. Verses 16-17 – Here we see more about the relationship we have with Christ. He loves us. As a side note, next time you are feeling depressed, remember that Christ loves you unconditionally. He wants to comfort you in the middle of whatever trials you face. When you feel down, come to God's Word and pray to Him for comfort, and He will answer.

We, likewise, can be encouraged in the middle of the good works which we are doing. God is with you. He sees what you are doing. He will be pleased by it and strengthen you to finish what He has called you to do.