**The Lord is Faithful**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**2 Thessalonians 3:1-9**

**Wednesday Evening**

**December 8, 2021**

**2 Thessalonians 3:1-9**

1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. 5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. 6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

**1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,**

Saints, Paul prayed regularly for the believers in the various churches, and he did not hesitate to ask for their prayers in return. As he prepared to offer final words of advice, he first asked them to pray for him and his coworkers (the Greek word means “keep on praying”).

The focus of Paul’s desire was that the Lord’s message will spread rapidly and be honored wherever it goes. The preaching of the Good News would result in honor being given to the Lord because of the marvelous results in the lives of those who believe. The Thessalonians had been an exemplary congregation.

**1 Thessalonians 1:6-10**

6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Paul wanted them to pray for God’s power to intervene in other places so that many would be saved and God would be glorified through it.

**2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.**

Saints, in addition to praying for more converts, Paul asked the believers to also pray that they would be saved from wicked and evil people. As the gospel message advances, it always faces severe opposition.

The spiritual battle rages intensely for people’s souls, and Satan does not easily let go of his own. Thus, the apostles needed prayer. If Paul asked for it, how much more should believers today pray for one another as they seek to share the gospel message—whether across the street or across the world.

**Ephesians 6:10-18**

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

Saints, Paul’s enemies were those who did not believe in the gospel message and were actively working against it.

**3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.**

Saints, at the end of his first letter, Paul reminded the believers of God’s faithfulness—he can be depended upon to keep his promises because he is loyal, and he is constant. Because of that faithfulness, God would make them strong and guard them from the evil one.

**1 Corinthians 1:4-9**

4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, 5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,

7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

As the spiritual battle intensifies, the true enemy of all believers is really only one person—the “evil one,” Satan himself. Because the Lord is faithful, he will protect his gospel message, and it will continue to spread across the world and achieve results.

Because the Lord is faithful, he will strengthen and protect the believers. This does not mean that they will never face difficulties; it just means that God is faithful. The result for all believers will be to spend eternity with God. That promise will never change.Yet even so, prayer is a vital factor behind all of this activity. As the missionaries spread God’s message, they understand that spiritual forces were at work—the faithful Lord with them, the evil one against them.

They realized that they were not involved in a merely human endeavor. They were on the Lord’s battlefields under his command, with his authority, knowing they would win. Yet they needed his guidance and the constant prayers of believers every step of the way.

**4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.**

Saints, Christ is faithful, but his followers must do their part in being obedient. Paul has confidence that the Thessalonian believers were practicing the things he had commanded them.

**Acts 5:29**

But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.

**1 Peter 1:14**

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

**1 John 5:3**

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

**Isaiah 1:19**

If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;

**Luke 6:46**

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?

Saints, Paul’s confidence rested not in the Thessalonians themselves, but in God who had chosen them. They had more than shown their obedience to the teachings of the apostles, even as they had experienced persecution.

Believers at this time did not have the New Testament, so they had to listen carefully to the teachings of the apostles; therefore, Paul spoke of them doing what he and the other apostles “commanded” because their teaching came from God.

**5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.**

Saints, Paul’s prayer for these believers was that the Lord would bring them into an ever deeper understanding of the love of God and the endurance that comes from Christ.

Wanting the believers to move forward with commitment, Paul asked God to guide the believers as they meditated on God’s love for them and on Christ’s patient endurance. Such inner determination would enable them to face and overcome their difficulties.

**6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.**

Saints, Paul had already discussed the issue of idle Christians in the first letter, but apparently the problem had continued. Perhaps Paul’s instruction had not been strong enough, so this passage made it clear that his commands regarding idleness came with the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first letter tells Christians to

**“warn those who are lazy”**

that is, the believers were to firmly admonish those who were

**ataktos**

a word used for soldiers who would not stay in the ranks. While everyone else was working and serving, they would not. Some were probably using the excuse of waiting for Christ to return.

They may have considered working as too menial or as unspiritual, equivalent to laying up treasures on earth rather than in heaven. They may have been creating a problem by expecting wealthier people in the church to support them. But Paul was firm that these believers were not honoring their faith.

Paul’s command goes a step further: no longer are believers told to “warn” these lazy people; they are told to stay away from any Christian who lives in idleness and doesn’t follow the tradition of hard work we gave you.

This does not refer to excommunication from the church, but to withdrawing intimate fellowship from them.

By refusing to associate with these people, the Christians were rebuking them, hoping to get them to change their conduct. Basically, Paul was saying, “Cut off their support!”

**7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,**

Saints, Paul’s first letter describes how he and his companions had worked during their stay in Thessalonica. They were never lazy and had not taken food without paying for it. They did not want to be a burden to anyone but wanted to pay their own way.

Paul and his companions probably enjoyed hospitality at various times during their ministry; Paul’s point was that he did not expect hospitality or impose it on anyone. Trained as a tentmaker, Paul had worked at this job, and then took time to preach the gospel, teach, and build up a body of believers in this city.

Because the people who had brought the gospel to the Thessalonians had worked to not be a burden on anyone, so should the new believers in the city follow that example.

**9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.**

Saints, Paul and the other missionaries had the right to expect lodging and food in exchange for the message they had brought (Luke 10:7; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14).

**Luke 10:7**

“And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house”

Saints, though most traveling preachers did this, Paul did not want to be a burden on others. He did not want to appear to be preaching in order to be housed and fed. In some places he did accept such gifts, but in Thessalonica he did not.

So strong was his passion for spreading the gospel message that he would not allow anything to hinder its progress. If it seemed that to accept food and lodging would hinder his effectiveness as a minister of the gospel, then he would gladly waive his rights and work to pay his way.

In this way, the missionaries had made themselves an example to follow. Those who share the gospel message with others must not only speak the message but live it as well; they must be examples worthy of imitation.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**