

2Thessalonians 2:13-3

13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. God predestined us to believe. Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:5,11 This is a very difficult concept. Scripture declares we have the freedom to choose. We come to Christ of our own free will, yet, none seeks God. Predestination and free will cannot be resolved with our limited understanding. We might get a bit of a break when we consider that God lives outside of time and can see who will choose to be chosen. Everyone is drawn to God by the Holy Spirit.

There are two types of salvation, though you cannot have one without the other. There is experiential salvation, which is the sanctifying work of the Spirit. That is our life conforming to the life of Christ in us on an increasing basis. Galatians 1:3-5; 2Corinthians 3:18 There is positional salvation, belief in the truth. That is being justified before God. One is in process. The other is done. Hebrews 10:13-14

He called the Thessalonians through the Good News that this team proclaimed. Why did He call us? That we might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! That requires an intermediary step of suffering. Romans 8:17 Glory is the outshining of the perfect attributes of God. We think of it as radiant light, but it is a quality of character expressed. Consider John 1:14

15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

Though they are predestined, they must stand firm and hold to the teachings. To fall back into a life of sin would not only bring reproach to the church but will also be a bad testimony of Christ and cause the destructive consequences of sin to enter their life. 1Corinthians 16:13 They are being warned to hang onto the pure Gospel delivered to them. 1Corinthians 11:2 There were false teachers then as there are now.

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Eternal encouragement: the promises in His word and the presence of His Spirit. Are you receiving the eternal encouragement?

Good hope: The hope of the resurrection and eternity in His presence, forever freed from sin.

This benediction asks for God's encouragement and strength for our actions and words. If we want to represent Christ in what we do and say we need that encouragement and strength.

3:1 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. 2 And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith.

This is the prayer request from the ministry team: That the Word will spread rapidly and be honored and deliverance from wicked and evil men. Everyone who is proclaiming the Word would desire the same thing.

3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. 4 We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

"Deliver us from the Evil One." The faithfulness of the Lord will protect us, but we need to pray. They encouraged them with their confidence that they would continue to do what they instructed them. Verse 5 is something we all need. Our hearts need to be directed into God's love, for one another and the lost. Our hearts need Christ's perseverance; that is enduring for the joy that is set before us. Hebrews 12:2-3

6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.

Some will take advantage of Christian generosity. The teaching is mentioned below. Christians are expected to work hard to provide for their own family and to have enough to share. If someone calls themselves a brother or sister but doesn't do this, we aren't to encourage their slothfulness, but separate ourselves from them. Ephesians 4:28

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.

Paul's team had a right to be supported, but they set an example of hard work so that no one could come behind them and expect to get away with just living off the generosity of the body. They teach during the day and work at night. Whatever is needed in each location must be discerned by the ministry team. They must surrender any rights for the future of that ministry.

10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." 11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not

busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

They made it very plain. People that aren't busy for the Lord become busybodies. Get a job! Earn your way.

14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

How should you treat the person who refuses to work, continually making excuses? Warn them! They are your brother, but you can refuse fellowship so that they feel ashamed.

16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

John 14:27 Peace! In all times and in every way.

17 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

This was the proof that the letter was authentic. Some think it was a large signature because of Paul's eye problems. Grace! The one thing we can't get enough of. May His grace be with you!