

1 **Now that you're chosen,
STAND FIRM!**

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-17

2 **2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 (ESV)**

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

3 **Paul is grateful for the Thessalonian Christians**

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-14

4 **Love causes 2 parties to make a choice!**

**God chooses us
and
We choose Jesus**

5 **Two kinds of sanctification**

POSITIONAL

VS

PRACTICAL

6 **Two kinds of sanctification**

- ▶ Sanctification is the process of being made holy. There are two aspects of sanctification:
- ▶ Positional sanctification: This is the saint-status that all believers have when they believe in Jesus for everlasting life. It is an immediate, once-for-all act that cannot be repeated.
- ▶ Practical sanctification: This is the continual process that a disciple pursues on his journey toward becoming more holy. It involves the daily struggle against sin and the pursuit of holiness. Practical sanctification prepares us for every good work.

7 **Hebrews 10:10-14**

And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (ESV)

8 **The position of the priests**

- ▶ Old Testament priests and those at the time of Christ
 - ▶ Stand because their work is not done
 - ▶ They had to KEEP offering sacrifices
 - ▶ Their sacrifices could never take away sin
- ▶ Jesus, after offering Himself on the cross, sat down at the right hand of God the Father because His work was DONE. He took away our sin and its consequences.

9 **Next time....**

- ▶ We will try to finish this chapter next time
 - ▶ We are called to obtain Christ's glory (v. 14)
 - ▶ We are exhorted to stand firm (v. 15-17)
 - ▶ We must pray for God to comfort and establish other Christians (v. 16-17)

10 **To summarize...**

- ▶ In God's love, He chose us to have a relationship with Him. (2:13-14)
- ▶ But we also had to choose God because a loving relationship involves mutual choice

11 **Now Paul shares a new idea**

- ▶ God chose us to salvation (He summoned us to Him)
- ▶ God chose us to both positional and practical sanctification (and we obeyed the summons)
- ▶ God also chose us to share in the glory of Christ (the outcome of our salvation)
 - ▶ "You are known by the company that you keep!"

12 **Our "crown of glory" comes from others**

- ▶ Proverbs 4:9 -- *She will give a garland for your head; she shall bestow a crown of glory upon you*
 - ▶ The virtuous conduct of a wife (her godly influence on others) is a reflection upon her husband
- ▶ Proverbs 17:6 -- *The crown of the elderly are [grandchildren] and the glory of children is their fathers*
 - ▶ Godly grandchildren are both a joy to their grandparents and also a tribute to the grandparents

13 **Sharing in Christ's glory**

- ▶ Our association with Christ:
 - ▶ Brings glory to Him as He demonstrates His love and blessings in our lives
 - ▶ Brings glory to Him as others see how He transforms our lives
 - ▶ Brings honor to us as we follow His ways and receive His grace for every situation
 - ▶ We are made God's children which means we share in the inheritance

14 **The outcome of salvation is glorification**

- ▶ *We exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory* (1 Thessalonians 2:12, ESV)
- ▶ Justification + Sanctification + Glorification = Salvation

15 **Romans 8:17-21**

...and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (ESV)

16 **1 Peter 5:1, 4**

- ▶ *So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: (ESV)*
- ▶ *And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory (ESV)*

17 **Why does God tell us that we will be glorified?**

- ▶ It is NOT so that we can get a big head

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

- ▶ The Thessalonian Christians suffered dishonor, humiliation, ridicule, and hatred
- ▶ The expectation of sharing in Christ's glory becomes the counterpoint to the dishonor they endure
- ▶ Knowing we will be rewarded in the future encourages our faithfulness now

18 **So, stand firm! (2:15-17)**19 **Paul follows encouragement with exhortation**

- ▶ If you need to exhort someone to a certain lifestyle or behavior, follow Paul's example to first encourage them
 - ▶ We need the carrot on the end of the stick to move us
 - ▶ We need comfort before facing challenges
- ▶ ... *And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.* (Romans 14:4, ESV)

20 **The need for a reminder**

- ▶ Christians are in constant danger of being swept downstream by the currents of ungodly culture.
- ▶ We are prone to let the truths we know and the relationship we enjoy with God grow cold
- ▶ We can all slip backward in our Christian experience because of the pressures of our trials and the daily negative influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil

21 **The Thessalonian's disadvantage**

- ▶ The Thessalonians were in danger of loosening their grip on the apostles' teachings
 - ▶ They had to rely on their memory of apostolic teaching and from occasional letters from Paul
 - ▶ They did not have a complete Word of God
 - ▶ They had even heard from false teachers and read a fake letter (which was not in Paul's handwriting)

22 **A clear and present danger**

- ▶ Paul had told them about the future rebellion against the truth (2 Thes. 2:3), the great apostasy headed by the Antichrist.
- ▶ But he also warned in his letters that there was a clear and present danger, and that the church must guard God's truth and not turn from it.
- ▶ There are repeated warnings about this in the New Testament

23 **1 John 2:21-24**

I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. (ESV)

24 **1 John 4:1-3**

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already (ESV)



25 **Hold on to what we taught you (2:15)**

▶ Some important context:

- ▶ The Thessalonians were at something of a disadvantage because they did not possess a New Testament as we do and probably had limited access to Old Testament Scriptures
- ▶ So, God sent apostles ("sent ones" who had seen the resurrected Christ) who then taught them with apostolic authority (messages of Divine origin and authoritative)

26 **The role of apostles in the Gospel**27 **Who were the 17 apostles?**

- 1 ▶ Simon Peter
 - ▶ Andrew (Peter's brother)
 - ▶ James son of Zebedee
 - ▶ John, son of Zebedee
 - ▶ Philip
 - ▶ Bartholomew (Nathaniel)
 - ▶ Thomas
 - ▶ Matthew
- 2 ▶ James son of Alphaeus
 - ▶ Thaddaeus
 - ▶ Simon the Cananaean
 - ▶ Matthias (Acts 1:15-22)
 - ▶ Paul
 - ▶ Barnabas (Acts 14:14)
 - ▶ Andronicus (Romans 16:7)
 - ▶ Junias (Romans 16:7)
 - ▶ Jesus Christ
 - ▶
 - ▶

28 **Qualifications to be an apostle**

- ▶ Called and sent by God (*apostello* means sent one)
- ▶ Had to be a witness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22)
- ▶ Had to have heard the teachings of Christ firsthand (Acts 1:22) and would therefore have witnessed Christ's teaching and miracles
 - ▶ Paul spent 3 years in the wilderness

29 **Galatians 1:11-12**

For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (ESV)

▶

30 **Galatians 1:15-20**

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to

visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) (ESV)



31 **1 Corinthians 15:8**

▶ *Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.* (ESV)

▶ Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus who was on his way to kill and imprison Christians (Saul recognized Jesus as "Lord")

▶ The resurrected Christ appeared to Paul (Saul's new name) and taught him personally



32 **Jesus, the ultimate Apostle**

▶ *Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,* (Hebrews 3:1, ESV)

▶ He was SENT by His Father

▶ He was PRESENT at His own resurrection!

▶ He is the very Word of God!

33 **The qualifications matter!**

▶ Paul emphasized the fact that his teachings were not taught to him by other men, but that he had received direct revelation from Christ

▶ The 11 apostles that walked with Christ, in determining qualifications for a replacement apostle determined that this person must

▶ have been with them since Jesus' baptism by John

▶ be a first-hand witness to the resurrected Christ

34 **Why does this matter?**

▶ It affects the meaning of "traditions" -- *So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.* (2 Thessalonians 2:15, ESV)

▶ Many religious sects rely on sources outside Scripture for doctrine

35 **Example: Catholicism**

▶ The Roman Catholic church teachings

▶ When the pope speaks, he speaks *ex cathedra* and is therefore rendered "infallible"

▶ Teachings of the church are on an equal level of authority with the Bible

36 **Example: Problems with Catholicism**

▶ Different popes have contradicted one another – Mary was "assumed after she died"; Mary never died but was translated into heaven

▶ Numerous examples of differing standards on marriage

▶ If 2 people represent diametrically-opposed views, at least one is wrong

37 **Example: Problems with Catholicism**

▶ Catholics have taught that the first head of the church (Peter) was not married and therefore priests should not be married

1. Christ, not Peter, is the head of the church "upon THIS ROCK (Christ referring to Himself) I will build my church – do you really want a church built on Peter, the man of outrageous extremes?"

2. The New Testament shows Peter had a mother-in-law (it is a bad deal to get a mother-in-law without a wife!) – Matthew 8:14-15

38 **Greek Orthodox church**

- ▶ This denomination believes that the continuous teachings of their church ADD to God's revelation
- ▶ They believe in priestly succession meaning that their priests continue to teach with the same authority as the apostles

39 **Problems with Greek orthodoxy**

- ▶ Scripture is complete and God tells us that *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work* (2 Timothy 3:16–17, ESV)
- ▶ The teachings of man are not God-breathed like the words of Scripture were, and are prone to error
- ▶

40 **Mormons**

- ▶ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints maintains a leadership "quorum of 12 Apostles"
 - ▶ None of these people meet the biblical requirement of apostles
 - ▶ Inconsistent beliefs in this group – they claim the Book of Mormon is inspired but do not believe its own sayings...

41 **We must not add to Scripture**

- ▶ *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.* (Revelation 22:18–19, ESV)
- ▶

42 **We must not add to Scripture**

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2, ESV)

43 **So, when Paul says "hold the traditions"....**

- ▶ The Thessalonian Christians must hold on to the truths taught to them under Apostolic authority
 - ▶ Only 17 people have EVER held this authority
 - ▶ Paul specifically says they should NOT believe the false teachers that recently told them lies or believe a fake letter that contradicted his previous teachings
 - ▶ So, the only way to know who is a right teacher is to believe only legitimate apostles or have an unalterable Scripture!
- ▶

44 **Paul prays for them to stand firm**

- ▶ *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.* (2 Thessalonians 2:16–17, ESV)
- ▶ Where do we find the real truth on which we can stand firm for all time and through every trial – IN THE BIBLE ALONE!
- ▶ Reject all teaching that does not conform to Scripture
- ▶ Reject all claims to new inspiration or present-day apostolic authority

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