**LIVING IN LIGHT OF HIS RETURN**

**Stand Firm, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17**

Sunday, November 28, 2021

**WE Slide 1 Is everyone ready for some good news? I know I am.** We learned earlier this week of another good friend who passed away which makes 4 in 5 weeks. **We also know Christians who are struggling with the issues of life, struggling to do life God’s way in the face of push back from family/friends for wanting to do life His way.** It’s time to be reminded of some incredible truth this morning.

**That’s what Paul continues to do in his 2nd letter to the Thessalonian Christians.** These new believers were doing life right- sacrificially loving each other, sharing the gospel with their friends/family, and were being arrested, jailed, harassed, losi ng their jobs, and being rejected by their family/friends. **Paul knew they needed to be reminded of some incredible truth so after praising them, telling them that God will deal with those who were persecuting them, and when that will ultimately happen he lays down these encouraging verses.** If you’re a Christian listen closely to what God has done for you. **If you’re not a Christian/unsure listen even closer to what God wants to do for you.** Follow along as I read. **Slide 2-5**

**No matter what you’re going through Christian remember that you are “beloved by the Lord”.**

**GOD**

1. **A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT**
2. **You Are Beloved, 2:13a-** agapao; to have a warm regard for/interest in another, cherish, affection
3. No matter what you’re going through the Lord, Jesus, has a warm regard for you! **Why important?**
4. He doesn’t do anything to hurt you but in all things to grow you and your dependence on Him- He cherishes you; **God** cherishes you!
5. We’ve bought into the lie that life is to be easy- we are overly protective of our children not wanting them to experience difficult situations, not making them face challenges in order to grow through them.
6. God allows us to go through them so we’ll turn to Him to learn how to face them; He cherishes us that much so TRUST HIS WAY OF RESPONDING TO YOUR CHALLENGES.

**He cherishes us and has shown that by CHOOSING US FOR SALVATION. Slide 6**

1. **You Were Chosen for Salvation, 2:13b-14**
2. From the Beginning.
3. From the beginning of time God had you on His heart/mind to do what He had to, to save you.
4. Great paradox of Scripture- **God chooses or man’s free will?**
5. **Yes!** Scripture teaches both so we teach both.
6. We can’t fully understand or explain but that’s OK because if we understood God/explain Him we’d be God- GOD IS INFINITELY GREATER THAN US- can’t be arrogant and think otherwise.

**The key thing is that it’s…**

1. His choosing isn’t based on how good/talented we are. **Slide 7-11** **Look how Paul puts it in** 1 Corinthians 1:26-31
2. He chose us specifically because our messed-up lives would give Him the greatest amount of glory.

**He chose to save us because our messed-up lives would demonstrate His power the best, but we AREN’T to stay messed up which is what Paul means by “chosen for salvation through sanctification”. Slide 12** He TRANSFORMS us into people who look like Jesus- others will be shocked by His change!

1. Through Sanctification- agiasmos; dedication to the interests of the deity, holiness, set apart for God’s use/purpose.
2. 2 Aspects of sanctification depending on context.
3. **A one-time experience** at salvation where we are set apart by God for His use/purpose that is true for all eternity; our eternal position is set apart for God’s use.
4. **An ongoing process** here on earth where we put aside the flesh/sin and put on the spirit/Christ’s righteousness.
5. Here Paul is referring to the one-time experience since he connects it to God choosing us for salvation.
6. If you’ve accept Christ as your salvation GOD expects you to be committed to responding to your circumstances His way, not yours, and will do what it takes to get you to that point.
7. We don’t add to/ensure/help secure our salvation through living life God’s way; we live life God’s way because He saved us.

**He makes this clear by saying our salvation is “through sanctification BY the Holy Spirit and faith in the truth.”**

1. By the Holy Spirit- a work of the Holy Spirit who cleanses our sin, indwells us, adopts us into God’s family, and guarantees our entrance into heaven, **Slide 13-14 remember these verses?** Titus 3:4-7

**But we have to believe that/entrust ourselves to God for salvation which means it has to also be “by faith in the truth”. Slide 15**

1. By faith in the truth- our willingness to humbly admit what we think brings salvation is wrong and what God says about salvation is true and obey Him by placing our faith in Christ.

**The TRUTH of salvation is found in the gospel message. Slide 16**

1. Called through the gospel
2. God is INFINITELY holy, just- He can’t have sin in His presence and must judge those who break His laws; He’s a good Judge.
3. We are sin-filled, and our debt of sin infinite since we’ve sinned against an infinite God and therefore need to be judged for our sin.
4. God is also INFINITELY loving, merciful and gracious.
5. Loving- God the Son became man, Jesus Christ, to sacrifice Himself and take our infinite/eternal judgment for us.
6. Merciful- through believing Jesus did that for us, entrusting our spiritual wellbeing on this fact, God doesn’t give us what we deserve- eternal judgment in hell.
7. Gracious- through believing Jesus did that for us God gives us what we don’t deserve- eternal reward in heaven with Him.

**That’s what Paul means with his next statement. Slide 17**

1. To gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ- who **rose** from the dead with a **glorified body** and went to be with God in **heaven** completing His mission on earth. **We** who place our faith in Christ (1 Thess. 3:15-18) will also receive **glorified** bodies after completing God’s mission on earth and be with Christ in heaven. We just celebrated my dad’s completed mission this past week.

**As we close I want to use Paul’s last two verses as our TAKEAWAYS this morning. Slide 18** Knowing this, living and experiencing it, should first motivate us to “stand firm and hold to” what we’ve been taught.

**YOU TAKEAWAYS**

1. **Stand firm and hold to God’s teaching-** trust God’s heart and do life His way for His glory and your growth, 2:15
2. “stand firm”- stako; to be firmly committed in conviction/belief
3. “hold to the traditions”- krateo; to adhere to strongly/paradosis; the content of instruction handed down; that which Paul and the Apostles taught, not the traditions of religions built by men.
4. I know what my head/heart are telling me about my situation, but I’m going to trust and take steps of faith based on what God says- HE IS WHAT IS TRUE; HIS WORD IS TRUTH not what I think/feel.
5. He cherishes me, He saved me and set me apart for His purposes.
6. **Be comforted and strengthened-** God will give you what you need through His Spirit, His Word and His People to respond to life’s challenges, 2:16-17

**As the band comes up let me give one more challenge.**

1. **Accept Christ as your savior and know what it’s like to be cherished and chosen by God.** It’s simply having a conversation with God.

**PODCAST- Need some encouragement today?** Take a listen. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Titus 3:4-7