



A few weeks ago, we began a series called "Advent." As we celebrate the advent season of anticipating the birth of Jesus, our study in 2 Thessalonians draws our attention to look forward to the return of Christ. Chapter one addressed the return of Christ and the judgment that will ensue when He does. Last week, the end-times nature of this book continued by talking about the man of lawlessness, known as the antichrist. Today, our passage addresses God's work in your own life. If you're a follower of Christ, this explains what God has done for you, what's going to happen to you, and what you're supposed to do.

Key Passage: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Discussion Questions:

1. Looking back at your notes, what encouraged or challenged you the most from the sermon?
2. Today's passage paints a picture of the incredible change that occurs in the lives of those who are saved. What are the most significant changes that you've seen in your life since being saved? What was your life like before you were saved?

Salvation leads to change:

It's a change in what you believe. Perhaps you used to believe that your goodness would get you into Heaven, or your morality, or good works, but *now* you believe that you are only saved by what Christ has done for you on the cross.

It's a change in who you are. You used to be this way or that way...living in this sin, struggling with certain things, but *now* Jesus is bringing you freedom from something that you were once enslaved to. Salvation is an initial, immediate change, positionally, and an ongoing, progressive change (sanctification).

It's a change in where you'll spend eternity. At salvation, you went from eternity in hell to eternity in Heaven.

3. Read Ephesians 1:3-4. These verses from Ephesians echo 2 Thessalonians 2 and remind us that God chose us for salvation before He had even created the world! How does this knowledge shape the way you live? How does it impact the way you feel about God and yourself? How does this truth help sustain you as you face various trials?

He chose you to be in His family. Paul tells us that God chose you to be saved; He chose you to be a Christian. The word "chose" means to take for oneself. If you're a Christian, Ephesians 1 and 2

Thessalonians 2 teach us this powerful principle: God chose you to be His child before the world was even created. If you're struggling to feel loved today or wondering where God is in your life, don't forget that God has chosen you in love to be in His family.

4. In verse 15, Paul urges the believers to "stand firm." What things, apart from the Word of God, are you tempted to stand upon? Where are you most tempted to waver? What insights can be drawn from today's passage regarding the balance between God's work and our active participation to stand firm?

The early church was not absolved from temptations. They had to battle temptation against sin, they had to battle living in an ungodly culture, and they had the temptation to settle for less than what God wanted them to be and do. In a world that calls you to compromise, to leave the doctrine of Scripture, to not hold firm – WE MUST STAND FIRM.

When your beliefs are built on a firm foundation, you don't have to live on shaky ground. You don't have to be unsettled. You don't have to live in worry and anxiety.

Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to "stand firm" by holding to the traditions they were taught. Some people think of "traditions" as a negative context. Paul's use of this word refers to the teaching of the Apostles (sound doctrine). Paul says you must hold on to what you've been taught. Namely, to live a life pleasing to God (in purity, grieving with hope as you await the second coming of Christ, to be at peace, to give thanksgiving to God).

5. Where do you tend to draw your strength when facing trials or uncertainty? What practical things can you do to rely on Christ more fully as your strength and firm foundation? What role do other believers play in helping you rely on Christ more fully (See Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and Galatians 6:2)?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, "Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Galatians 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

6. Paul ends 2 Thessalonians 2 with a prayer. How might we use this prayer as a guide or launching pad to pray for and encourage one another this week?

Paul wraps it up with two prayers for these Thessalonian believers. He wants God to comfort and establish their hearts in every good work. Remember, they were discouraged because they had wrongly believed what someone else had said, that the day of the Lord had already occurred. Paul has now set them straight and desires that God would comfort them with the truth he's given them and help them to be established.

7. What's one personal takeaway from today's study you can focus on this week?