

2 Thessalonians Chapter 3

2 Thessalonians 3:1 "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have [free] course, and be glorified, even as [it is] with you:"

“Pray for us”: Paul frequently enlisted prayer support from the churches for his ministry (Rom. 15:30-32; Eph. 6:18-19; Col. 4:2-3; 1 Thess. 5:25; Philemon 22). In particular, he asked them to pray that the word of God would continue to spread rapidly as it had been already (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 13:44-49), and be received with the honor it deserved.

Paul had given them instruction in the last lesson to stay steadfast in the Word of God. He knew they had been taught the Truth of the gospel, and he was reminding them to stay close to what they had learned from him.

Paul is very pleased with this church, and the way they had conducted themselves. Now he feels that he should praise them for their steadfastness on the course he had set them. He was pleased with the results he had seen from them.

His request for them to pray for the Word of God to be spoken freely from him, was not just a statement, but showed that he had great confidence in them. We have said so many times, the power in this world is the Word of God. It matters not whether it is spoken or written.

Paul wants to be able to continue to bring the same Truth that he had brought here at Thessalonica, to all the places God would send him. His prayer was that the Word of God would be freely given by him everywhere he went, and that the people hearing would accept it.

The unselfishness of Paul is seen in that Paul includes them in the success of his mission by asking them to pray for the success of the mission.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in this world to some extent restrains evil. Often this is accomplished through the presence of Christians who are the “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13). At the rapture, when the Christians are removed and the age of the Holy Spirit ceases, this restraining ministry will be “taken out of the way” during the Great Tribulation. Until that time, God will use the godly examples of Christians to restrain evil in the world.

Verses 2-3: “For all men have not faith. But the Lord is faithful”: The unfaithfulness of men provides a contrast to the faithfulness of God, a favorite topic of Paul’s (1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Tim. 2:13). “Keep” means “guard.” “Evil” or “evil one”: The reference is to Satan.

2 Thessalonians 3:2 "And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all [men] have not faith."

“Unreasonable and wicked men”: These were Paul’s enemies at Corinth, where he ministered when he wrote (Acts 18:9-17). Who were perverse and aggressively unrighteous in their opposition of him and the gospel.

Paul had certainly met with his share of unreasonable men. This is a gross understatement, to say that all men have not the faith. Even today, many men do not have the faith. It was even more so in Paul's day. Christianity was new. Many of the people where Paul had gone worshipped idols. His greatest persecution came from the Jews, however.

Paul had been persecuted from every side. He was weary of the persecution, and prayed that he would be delivered from that in the future. This would not be for Paul, however. He had a high calling of God. Look what Jesus said in the next Scripture.

Acts 9:16 "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my Name's sake."

Paul was called to a ministry of suffering. These unreasonable and wicked men are men who will not listen to, or accept the Truth. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Those who reject faith in Jesus are doomed. Paul is not afraid for himself, but for the others with him, and for these in Thessalonica.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep [you] from evil."

“The Lord is faithful”: Lam. 3:23. God is faithful regarding creation (Psalm 119:90), His promises (Deut. 7:9; 1 Cor. 1:18; Heb. 10:23), salvation (1 Thess. 5:4), temptation (1 Cor. 10:13); suffering (1 Peter 4:19), and here faithful to strengthen and protect from Satan (John 17:15; Eph. 6:16; 1 Thess. 3:5).

We see a sudden change from his welfare to that of these Thessalonians. He is saying, put your faith in God, and He will protect you. Even in the Lord's Prayer, it says deliver us from evil.

Temptation comes through the flesh of man. As long as man is in the flesh, there will be temptation to sin. You must allow the spirit within you to overcome your flesh. If we allow the Spirit of Christ within us to be our Lord and guide us in everything, that Spirit will overcome the flesh and keep us from evil.

2 Thessalonians 3:4 "And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you."

Paul was confident that they had turned their will over to the will of God. If Jesus Christ is Lord of your life, He makes your decisions, and you will do the will of God instead of your own will.

To make Jesus your Lord, means that He is in total control of your life.

2 Thessalonians 3:5 "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

Another of Paul's benedictions (verse 16; 2:16-17), so common in his letters.

Let Jesus Christ your Lord fill you so full of His love that you will know you are His. You are what your heart is. If Jesus has filled your heart, you are a Christian, Christ-like. It is difficult to wait patiently for the coming of Christ. These Thessalonians had expected Jesus back immediately. Paul is telling them to not be anxious, but to wait patiently for His return.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

"Command", used above (in verse 4), is a very strong, authoritative term. Since it is buttressed by an appeal to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, one cannot miss the seriousness of the apostle here.

Paul's directions were not mere suggestions but rather they carried the weight and authority of a judge's court order which the apostle delivered and enforced (verses 4, 6, 10, 12). Here, he required separation so that obedient Christians were not to fellowship with habitually disobedient believers. This is further explained (in verse 14).

"Withdraw" literally means "dissociate." This is the only time this term is used in the New Testament to mean church censure.

"Walketh disorderly" indicates a pattern of life not in conformity to the Word of God.

"The tradition": There were false traditions (Mark 7:2-3; Col. 2:8), and true (2:15). Paul's traditions were the inspired teachings he had given.

Paul had taught of the second coming of Christ. Their error had come in expecting His return to be immediately. Paul is not asking them, but commanding them to not fall into false doctrine. Brethren indicate that this was for all the believers in the church, not just the officials.

The "disorderly" here, would be those who do not follow the teachings Paul established there. Traditional teachings are those that were originally established in the church by Paul. One person walking disorderly can cause a great confusion in the church. It is best to remove yourself from any influence of the disorderly, so that you will not become disorderly yourself.

2 Thessalonians 3:7 "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;"

"Follow us": Paul called for them to imitate him (verse 9, 1 Thess. 1:6), because he imitated Christ's example (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Eph. 5:1).

Paul had lived uprightly before them, and his life had been as much a testimony as his words to them. He had set an example for them to follow. He says, you already know the example we set without us telling you. The "us" here, probably includes Timothy and Silas.

Verses 8-10: The specific issue related to working diligently to earn one's living. Though Paul had the "right" as an apostle to receive support, he chose rather to earn his own living to stay an example (1 Cor. 9:3-14; Gal. 6:4; 1 Thess. 5:17-18).

2 Thessalonians 3:8 "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:"

It seems many of these people were expecting the Lord back so quickly, that they had quit their jobs and were just sitting around waiting for the return of the Lord. We are instructed in the Word of God over and over to be doing the work of the Lord even up until the hour that he comes. Paul reminds them that he worked and made his own living while he ministered to them.

Paul did not want to be obligated to any of them, so he made a living making tents. Paul did this not so that he could brag about it, but so that he could stay away from the influence of obligation. The job of ministering is a full-time job by itself, and is very hard labor. It is a labor of love, but it is still very tiring.

Paul went even further for this congregation, in that he required nothing in return for his labor. He wanted to show them the love that he had for them.

2 Thessalonians 3:9 "Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us."

Paul is saying here, that it was within his power to expect them to pay him for his work. He did not require it, because he wanted to set a good example for them. He was teaching that we should never be weary in well doing. Paul worked for them to see that it is important to be working for God. He set the example.

2 Thessalonians Chapter 3

1. Why did Paul ask them to pray for them?
2. Paul gave them instruction to be steadfast in the _____ of _____.
3. What could Paul praise them for?
4. What is the power in this world?

5. When Paul includes them by asking them to pray, this shows Paul has great _____ in them.
6. Who did Paul pray to be delivered from?
7. Many of the places that Paul had gone, the people worshipped _____.
8. What was Paul's high calling?
9. Without _____, it is impossible to please God.
10. Who is Paul afraid of?
11. Paul says, put your faith in God and He will _____ you.
12. Temptation comes through the _____ of man.
13. You must allow the _____ within you to overcome the _____.
14. What were these Thessalonians to do?
15. What does it mean to make Jesus Lord of your life?
16. In verse 5, the Lord directs them into _____ waiting for the Lord.
17. Paul commanded them in whose name?
18. Who were they to withdraw themselves from?
19. Who are the "disorderly" in verse 6?
20. Who was this message for?
21. Why must you remove yourself from the disorderly?
22. Why should they pattern their life after Paul's life?
23. Who is the "us" in verse 7?
24. What drastic thing had these people done, because they felt the Lord was coming any minute?
25. How did Paul make a living?
26. Why did he not accept a salary from them?
27. Could Paul have required them to pay him, if he had desired?