

Text: 2 Thessalonians 2

## SERMON NOTES

### A. Alarmed, shaken but not stirred: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

1. The issue in Thessalonica:
  - a. People have come to Christ, been baptized, paid the price in social ostracism and it isn't working out as they expected. People are dying and Christ hasn't yet returned.
  - b. Reports are circulating among them "by spirit, by word or by letter" (2:2) that Christ has already returned.
  - c. Paul fears they are being deceived (2:-2-3).
2. The issue for us:
  - a. In the last generation the focus on Christ's imminent return frightened Derrick as a boy so that he lived in fear he had been left behind. (*Left Behind* novel series fed that).
  - b. We can become alarmed because life isn't as secure as it once was. Events seem out of control and we fear Muslims, worldliness etc. We too need to heed Paul's advice to not be "shaken in mind or troubled" (2:2).
  - c. We need to be watchful of being deceived (via TV, internet, entertainment, books etc.) by a worldly agenda.
    - i. Over time spent absorbed in the above we become confused about what truth is.
    - ii. We get infected by a worldly attitude that asks: "Who am I to judge?"
    - iii. We question God's love, that He is in control, then take the reins of control into our own hands which leads to compromise in many areas. Our generation is especially focused on compromise in sexual ethics.
  - d. Rather, we need to watchfully hold fast to what we were taught (2:5,15). **Pastor Derrick:** "There is biblical truth to navigate through this world. Don't buy into compromise."

### B. The second coming of Christ is connected to the coming of the Antichrist: 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8

1. The Bible teaches and we believe in the second coming of Christ—though an outsider might not pick that up from observing our lives.
2. The second coming will not occur until the "man of lawlessness" or "sin"—the Antichrist—is revealed.
  - a. He is opposed to all that is good, godly, Christ-like.
  - b. Through the generations people have speculated about who this is: Hitler? Mikhail Gorbachev? ISIS?
  - c. We should be cautious in this area. We need to have faith that God will reveal him but not spend time in ongoing speculation.
  - d. Don't focus on fear of the Antichrist but what will become of him (2:8).
3. The power of "the mystery of lawlessness" (NKJV) is here but restrained.
  - a. Sin, degradation, destruction is already at work (2:5).
  - b. But it is restrained (2:7).
    - i. The church is an instrument of that restraint.
    - ii. The United Church in Canada is set to close hundreds of church buildings. We at CLA want to be instrumental in their replacement with the faith-giving message that Jesus Christ is greater than any darkness.

### C. What does the Antichrist look like: 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

1. He is Satan incarnate.
2. He will come with displays of power, counterfeit signs and wonders that serve the lie. (Example: Pastor told of an exorcism in Budapest, where the evil spirit in the man addressed the ministry team in English ["Leave me alone!"] though the possessed man could not speak and did not know English.)

### D. Remain in Him: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

1. The best defense against counterfeit is to be familiar with the real. To know what is false we need to be in the truth.
2. This is Pentecost Sunday when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit.
3. The great antidote against darkness and deception is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
4. When we're under attack, the Spirit provides us everything we need. He fills, defends, helps us in weakness.

## MINISTRY

1. How have your expectations about the Christian life via the promises in the Bible been challenged? How have you handled these challenges?
2. Pastor suggested that a stranger observing us might not pick up the fact that we expect Jesus to return. Do you agree? How might / should an expectation of the return of Christ affect our lifestyle?
3. How and with what messages were the Christians in Thessalonica being deceived? How are we deceived and what observable changes in Christian living does this deception lead to?
4. Who is the "man of lawlessness /sin"? Who does he mimic? What does he do? What needs to happen before he is revealed? What is his destiny?
5. How can we guard against being deceived?

## PRAYER

Dear Father, thank You for this teaching about Jesus' second coming that admonishes us to live prepared, truth-saturated lives. Help us to be filled, not with fear, apprehension, or speculation but by the Holy Spirit so that we can remain a healthy part of Your restraining and ministering force on Earth. Amen.