



10/20/26

2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

It's really interesting that last week's theme was "The War is On" and this week's is "Community of Love." The two topics seem so completely different from each other, and yet they're addressed side by side in the scriptures. Paul did that in 1 Thessalonians, and now I see he did that in 2 Thessalonians.

Right before he started vs. 13, he was speaking about spiritual warfare. And the next words on the page start with, "But we ought always to give thanks to God for YOU, brothers beloved by the Lord." It seems to me that the ability to stand firm in the Lord when we face spiritual warfare (which is always) is done most effectively when it's done among other believers in a community of love. It is God's love that unites us and gives us the strength to stand firm in Him.

As I look at this passage I see a very familiar pattern of encouragement, teaching, and prayer. Nothing is accomplished if the Lord is not in it. As Psalm 127:1 says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, the laborers labor in vain." I'm called to build, but I'm never called to do it in my own strength. With that, Lord, please teach me and change me so that my life reflects a heart that stands firm in You... and that encourages and prays for others as well.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 ~ "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."

Oh my goodness! There is so much here!!!

First, Paul thanked God for these believers... loved by the Lord... who did not get caught up in the lies of the enemy. It was obvious to Paul that they had been chosen by God from the beginning to be saved.

What Paul said next is such a great picture of how our salvation is both a one moment crossing

over from death to life AND it's a continual process of being sanctified to be like Jesus.

God chose me for salvation. I responded by believing the truth of the gospel. He saved me... The Holy Spirit sealed me for my eternity with Him (Ephesians 1:13-14), and now the Holy Spirit is sanctifying and transforming me to be holy like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18). It's like marriage. There's the wedding day when a husband and wife are united until death do they part. But then they build a life together where they intentionally learn over time what it means to live as one.

In my case with Jesus, He already knows how to live as one with me. He's already completely holy. He's so intentional! He's so patient with me as I learn to let the Spirit have full access to my heart. He gave me the gospel and called me through it so that I could possess God's glory for myself... God's glory, His honor... lavished on me. It's incredible. I deserve nothing. I did nothing to earn it. I do nothing to keep it. Salvation is mine because Jesus made me His own.

So what do I do with the fact that God has saved me and the Holy Spirit is sanctifying me? I cooperate! I stand firm and hold fast. I grab onto Him and don't let go!!! Don't let any opposition or feeling or circumstance distract me from holding to everything God teaches me through His word.

When Paul wrote this, his Holy Spirit inspired words WERE what became the word of God. So he said, "Hold to the traditions that we taught you by word or letter." That doesn't mean that I'm to follow manmade traditions. For me, that means I'm supposed to pay attention to the scriptures and hold fast and stand firm. It's God's job to save me and sanctify me because He loves me. It's my job to hold onto Him and not let go.

Vs. 16-17 ~ "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."

Let me not forget what God has done for me as I hold fast and stand firm. He's my motivation. The Father and the Son have loved me, and continue to love me. Through His grace, the generosity of His love, He gives me...

- *Eternal comfort... the comfort He gives is everlasting, forever. No circumstance can destroy His comfort when I stand firm and hold fast to Him and His word.*
- *Good hope... the benefit of confident expectation that if God says it, it is. No ifs, buts, or limits. I will have this confidence (not wishful thinking) when I stand firm and hold fast to Him and His word.*

I have this good hope and comfort because God Himself comes alongside me and encourages me and encourages my heart. He strengthens me to accomplish all that He calls me to do, whether in word or action. There is not one part of my life that God is not able to be my hope, courage,

and strength. He is able, He knows exactly what I need, and He cares for me. He proved that through the gospel. And He continues to prove it every day of my life.

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 ~ "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith."

Here again is that pairing of spiritual warfare and the community of love. Paul knew there was a lot of opposition to his ministry because of the gospel. He knew that he could not muscle his way through that opposition. He needed the prayers of his loving community. If Paul needed prayer, I absolutely need prayer!!! And I need to be lifting others in prayer... no matter how high or low their level of leadership stands. No one is able to stand on their own two feet. We ALL need Jesus.

I remember one of my first Biblical Counseling classes. The professor gave us an assignment to ask the people we counsel to pray for us. That was so hard for me to do!!! First, I felt like it was selfish because I'm here to help them. But what I actually found was, it was humbling. Paul is a great reminder to me that I'm never beyond the need of support from my community of love, and no one else is either. I pray Lord, please help me to pray for others. Help me not to pass judgment on them, but to love them and pray for them.

As I go to the next few verses, I see that Paul did not ask for prayer out of fear that God would not answer. He asked for prayer out of confidence that God WOULD answer. He was confident that through their prayers and the help of the Holy Spirit, as he also said in Philippians 1:19, they would be delivered from people who hate God and have no faith in Him. I pray, Lord, help me to have that confidence regardless of the circumstances!!!

Vs. 3-5 ~ "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ."

Why was Paul confident? Because his hope was not in man but in God. It's not man that I need to count on to be faithful. It's the Lord. And He IS. I pray these verses for my grandchildren... and one thing I know I never have to ask for is that God will be faithful. He absolutely IS faithful.

BECAUSE God is faithful, I can trust that He WILL strengthen us and guard us from the evil one. "God who is in me is greater than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

I pray that in God's faithfulness, He will not only strengthen me and guard from the evil one, but also help me to be faithful to His word... His truth... the whole truth, nothing but the truth... Please help me, God.

As I stand firm and hold fast to His sanctifying truth, I pray that He will direct my heart...

that place where my feelings, desires, and decisions are made... to the sacrificial, undying, eternal, unconditional, affectionate love of God... and to the steadfast, persevering, patient endurance of Jesus that led Him to the cross for my sake. O Father, I see that it is only as I stand firm and hold fast to You and Your word that I will have strength and courage to follow You wherever You lead.

I can see clearly that as these two things are spoken of side by side... Your love AND endurance... that being loved by You doesn't mean I won't face circumstances that call me to endure. And facing circumstances that call me to endure does not mean that You don't love me or that You're punishing me or that You're mad at me.

So I see here that Your role in my life is huge and awesome. You...

- *Chose me*
- *Saved me*
- *Are sanctifying me*
- *Called me*
- *Honored me*
- *Love me*
- *Comfort me*
- *Encourage me*
- *Establish me in Your work and word*
- *Faithfully protect me*
- *Guard me against the evil one*
- *Lead me to Your love*
- *Lead me to the patient endurance of Christ*

My job is to...

- *Pray for myself and others*
- *Stand firm in the Lord*
- *Hold fast to His word*
- *Do and continue to do what He calls me to do according to His word even in the midst of opposition*
- *Follow Him*

O Lord, You are worth it. Where else would I go? You have the words of life. Praise Your name.

*Have a Blessed Day!
Jonna*