

**Adult School of Ministry**  
**Summer 2025**  
**Lesson 14 – August 31, 2025**

**Live Wisely in Christ**

**God has provided everything we need through Christ to live in victory.**

**Scriptures:** (1) 2 Thessalonians 2:13–17; (2) 2 Thessalonians 3:1–5; (3) 2 Thessalonians 3:6–18

**The Lesson Overview:** This lesson concludes the Apostle Paul's second letter to the church at Thessalonica. Here, Paul encourages the Christians to hold fast to the Gospel and remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is always faithful to them. Only by obediently standing firm in the Gospel can believers remain faithful to God. Paul also addressed how to correct sinful church members and ended with a blessing on behalf of all in the church at Thessalonica. Paul's exhortations remain relevant and should motivate the church today to follow his instructions to encourage one another in the faith.

**Historical Background:** Some in the Thessalonian church had decided to stop working. Although Paul never addressed their motives for doing this, it is possible that some in the church believed the Day of the Lord was imminent, so working to meet one's needs or obligations was unnecessary. Another possibility, perhaps related to this, was that some were not employed because they endeavored to be like Paul and his team by engaging in evangelistic work full-time, unencumbered by secular labors. However, Paul reminded the church in Thessalonica that he and his team received no support from the church but worked to provide for their own needs (2 Thessalonians 3:7-8).

**Lesson Outline**

1. STAND FIRM IN THE GOSPEL - 2 Thessalonians 2:13–17
  - A. God's Acceptance of Believers (13–15)
  - B. Prayer for Comfort and Strength (16–17)
2. REMAIN FAITHFUL TO GOD - 2 Thessalonians 3:1–5
  - A. Request for Prayer (1–2)
  - B. Encouragement and Prayer for Steadfastness (3–5)
3. KEEP ON DOING GOOD - 2 Thessalonians 3:6–18
  - A. Correct Sinful Brethren (6–15)
  - B. Blessings To Experience God's Peace and Grace (16–18)

## Discussing The Lesson

### 1. STAND FIRM IN THE GOSPEL (2 Thessalonians 2:13–17)

#### A. God's Acceptance of Believers - 2 Thessalonians 2:13–15

- 1) Following Paul's description of the man of sin and God's judgment on those who follow him (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12), Paul shifted his focus to encouraging the Thessalonian church.
- 2) His encouragement is grounded in his certainty that God had "*chosen [them] to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*" (v. 13).
- 3) The Thessalonian church was not like those whom God would send a "*strong delusion*" that "*they all might be damned who believed not the truth*" because they "*had pleasure in unrighteousness*" (vv. 11-2).
- 4) Instead, the faithful Thessalonian Christians believed in "*the truth*" and experienced salvation and "*sanctification of the Spirit*" (v. 13).
- 5) God had filled them with the Holy Spirit, identifying them as "*beloved of the Lord.*"
- 6) Paul was confident in them because they had been "*called*" by God through the Gospel "*to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (v. 14).
- 7) Given the emphasis in this letter on events surrounding Christ's return, the mention of "*glory*" here may refer to the believer's glorified body that they would obtain when Christ returned.
- 8) As believers in Christ, we can be assured that part of God's purpose in salvation is to receive a glorified body like Christ's, which will dwell forever in the new heaven and new earth.
- 9) Therefore, despite persecution, combating false teaching, and addressing sinful members, Paul encouraged the church to "*stand fast, and hold the traditions which [they had] been taught*" (v. 15).
- 10) To experience all that God had in store for them, the Thessalonians must reject the teaching of false prophets and teachers and by faith hold firmly to the instruction of God's faithful servants.

#### B. Prayer for Comfort and Strength - 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17

- 1) Chapter 2 ends with a prayer for the Thessalonian church.
- 2) Paul's prayer was that God would "*comfort [their] hearts, and establish [them] in every good word and work*" (v. 17).
- 3) The church needed this comfort because it faced external persecution and internal conflict.
- 4) Paul wrote to offer comfort, but he knew if his letter were to have its intended effect, it would require the work of Father God and the Lord Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 5) Paul also desired to see the church in Thessalonica doing good works unto the Lord and on behalf of others.
- 6) The idea of speaking and doing what is good (that which honors Christ) is addressed further in the closing section of the letter (3:6-15).
- 7) Paul's prayer for the success of the Thessalonian church was not dependent on the church's efforts or the power of Paul's faith but on the God to whom he prayed.
- 8) Paul relied on "*our Lord Jesus Christ ... and God ... our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace*" (2:16).
- 9) The Lord Jesus and Father God had shown the greatest expression of love ever known.

- 10) God gave His only Son, and His Son willingly laid down His life to secure our salvation.
- 11) Everyone who receives God's grace through faith in Christ can and will experience "everlasting" life with God (v. 16).

## 2. REMAIN FAITHFUL TO GOD (2 Thessalonians 3:1–5)

### A. Request for Prayer - 1 Thessalonians 3:1–2

- 1) As Paul closed the letter, he implored the church to "*pray for*" him and for those who labored in the Gospel with him (v. 1).
- 2) The first petition on behalf of Paul and others focuses on the advance of "*the word of the Lord,*" which is another way of referring to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (v. 1).
  - a. Paul desired that the Gospel go forth freely and be received by those who would hear it, even as it had been heard and received by faith among some in Thessalonica.
- 3) The second petition Paul desired for the church to pray was that he and his partners in ministry might be protected from "*unreasonable and wicked*" people who don't believe the Word of God (v. 2).
  - a. Paul (and the Thessalonian church) knew the proclamation of the Gospel caused opposition.
- 4) While some people would be receptive to the message of Christ, others whose hearts were hardened against it would actively and even violently oppose the Gospel.
- 5) Paul realized if the Gospel was to be heard and believed, God had to work through him and his fellow ministers.
- 6) He understood success in ministry was not primarily about the competency or skill of the minister but about the minister's dependence on the power of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit, who leads people to faith in Christ.

### B. Encouragement and Prayer for Steadfastness - 2 Thessalonians 3:3–5

- 1) After noting the lack of faith in God and the Gospel among some who heard or would hear his message, Paul turned his focus to "*the Lord*" who "*is faithful*" (v. 3).
- 2) Regardless of the response of some to the Gospel, whether positive or negative, God remains faithful.
- 3) His faithfulness was evident in the lives of the Thessalonian Christians whom He had called to Himself through the Gospel and by the work of the Spirit.
- 4) Paul trusted the Lord to "*establish*" them and "*guard [them] from the evil one*" (v. 3 NKJV).
- 5) The evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in establishing and guarding the Thessalonian church from the work of the evil one was revealed in their responsiveness to Paul's instructions during his time with them and through his first letter.
- 6) They were already at work doing the things Paul and his co-workers had instructed them to do (v. 4).
- 7) However, Paul also knew if the church was going to continue in the faith, it would be through the work of God in their lives.
- 8) He prayed, "*And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ*" (v. 5).
  - a. The first part of this prayer was a petition for the Lord Jesus to direct the Thessalonian church to experience a greater measure of God's love for themselves.

- b. The second part of this prayer was for Christ to empower the Thessalonian church and for them to follow Jesus' example of steadfastness until they reached their goal of being with Him.
3. KEEP ON DOING GOOD (2 Thessalonians 3:6–18)
  - A. Correct Sinful Brethren - 2 Thessalonians 3:6–15
    - 1) After praying for the believers to be established "*in every good word and work*" (2:17), Paul addressed the reason for this prayer (vv. 6-15).
    - 2) Some in the Thessalonian church had disrupted the church's fellowship by choosing not to work, even though they could work to support themselves and their families.
    - 3) It was bad enough that these individuals were not working; they had become "*busybodies*" who made it difficult for other disciples by meddling in their affairs (v. 11).
    - 4) The actions of these individuals had resulted in a bad word or reputation among some in the community who would accuse Christians of being lazy and unproductive in society.
    - 5) To correct this sinful behavior, Paul provided the following instructions:
      - a. First, the church was to separate itself from those who were idle and disruptive (v. 6).
        - i. This may have referred to the formal procedure of excommunication of unrepentant sinful brethren from the church's life, or a more informal disassociation from such individuals.
        - ii. Paul began and ended by instructing the church to separate themselves from the unrepentant (vv. 6, 14-15).
        - iii. This reveals the seriousness of this sinful behavior and the urgency with which it was to be addressed by the church.
        - iv. The shunning that Paul commanded was not merely to punish the offenders but was, more importantly, intended to correct a wayward brother or sister in Christ and, ultimately, to restore them to proper fellowship with the Lord and His church.
      - b. Second, the church was to follow what he and the other team members had taught them concerning the role of work in the Christian life.
        - i. The Thessalonian Christians were also to recall the example of Paul and his team, who had worked to meet their own daily needs so they would not be burdensome to others (vv. 6-9).
        - ii. Paul frequently reminded the Thessalonian church of his and his team's example, which included their willingness to work while ministering in the city.
      - c. Third, knowing what "*tradition*" (teaching) Paul and his co-workers had passed on to the Thessalonian Christians regarding work (vv. 6-9), they were to confront and instruct the idle among them to work "*with quietness*" and to "*eat their own bread*" (v. 12).
        - i. It is always necessary to address a wayward brother or sister in Christ.
        - ii. This is for the offending member's good and the church as a whole.
        - iii. If a brother or sister in Christ is not responsive to correction by seeking forgiveness and restoration, then and only then is the church to disassociate from them so they might "*be ashamed*" and repent (vv. 14-15).
    - 6) Paul knew what he was telling the Thessalonian church to do was not easy.
    - 7) Correcting a brother or sister in Christ who is engaged in sinful living is challenging but necessary.

- 8) It is good work, so Paul encouraged the church to *“be not weary in well doing”* (v. 13).

**B. Blessings To Experience God’s Peace and Grace - 2 Thessalonians 3:16-18**

- 1) After his concluding instructions to the church,
- 2) Paul ended the letter with a benediction and confirmation that he penned this letter and, therefore, it was not a forgery.
  - a. The blessing was first for the church to experience the Lord’s *“peace”* in every situation (v. 16).
    - i. A blessing of peace was especially appropriate given the church’s situation of suffering hardship from without (persecution and false teachers) and from within (sinful members).
    - ii. They could receive the Lord’s peace because He *“himself”* is *“the Lord of peace,”* and He would be *“with [them] all”* (v. 16).
  - b. Second, Paul prayed for *“the grace of ... [the] Lord Jesus Christ”* to be *“with”* the church (v. 18).
    - i. This blessing was not only for members who were busy serving the Lord and their neighbors by doing good but also for those who needed correction.
- 3) Referring to God’s grace was Paul’s way of summarizing everything God had done and would do for the Thessalonian church through Christ.
- 4) Sandwiched between the two blessings was Paul’s confirmation that this letter was authentically his.
- 5) Paul noted his letters contained his personal signature or mark.
- 6) This may indicate that Second Thessalonians was dictated by Paul but then signed by him, authorizing its content.
- 7) Paul’s signature would have also served as evidence that any previous letters claiming to have been written in his name were forgeries (2:2).
- 8) The church would only need to compare Paul’s signature in these two letters with the signatures in the forged letters to reveal which were authentic and which were not.

**Call To Discipleship**

God’s Word promises if we live for Christ, His peaceful presence will enable us to confront and walk through any situation. Let us walk in victory!

**Ministry In Action**

Take Paul’s prayer of blessing in 2 Thessalonians 3:16-18 and turn it into a prayer for brothers and sisters in Chris

# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

## Lesson 14

### THESSALONICA IN CHURCH HISTORY

**It is evident from the contents of First Thessalonians** that Paul was deeply concerned the Thessalonian believers in Christ would be discouraged by persecution and lose faith in Christ.

**There was a large Jewish population in Thessalonica** when Paul and Silas arrived there in AD 50. However, very few Jews in Thessalonica came to believe Jesus was the Messiah. The church there, from the beginning, was made up mainly of Gentile converts to faith in Christ. *“Some of them [the Jews] were persuaded; and a great multitude of devout Greeks [Gentiles who attended synagogue], and not a few of the leading women [influential pagan women], joined Paul and Silas”* (Acts 17:4 NKJV).

**Contrary to Paul’s concern regarding the Thessalonian believers**, from his time to the present, there has been no lack of Christians in Thessalonica. The city was a major center of Christian activity from the first century onwards. **In 1430, Thessalonica came under the rule of the Turkish Empire**, and remained so until 1912, when it was returned to the government of Greece and has remained so to the present.

**During the almost 500 years Thessalonica was ruled by the Muslims**, it was still a major center of Christianity. The Turks turned many of the beautiful churches in the city into mosques. Nevertheless, during that time there remained more than 30 Christian congregations in the city.

**Today, next only to Athens, the capital city of Greece** (with a population of 3,154,463), Thessalonica (Thessaloniki, with a population of 814,524) is the largest and most important city in Greece. The city has a vital Christian presence.

**Today, the total population of Greece is 10,497,595**, with 85 percent being nominally identified as Orthodox Christians and 2.5 percent as other Christians.

## ON MISSION FOR GOD

1. What is the ultimate purpose of being “called” to salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)?
2. What kind of “traditions” should the church hold on to (v. 15)? What kind of traditions should we let go of?
3. How does Paul pray for the Thessalonians in verse 17? Why should we pray similarly for our fellow believers?
4. Based on Paul’s prayer request (3:1-2), how should we pray for missionaries and evangelists?
5. Describe the “example” God gave the Thessalonians to “follow” (vv. 7-9).

Are you leaving a similar example for others to follow?