

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Second Coming Letters of Paul – Part 19

### II Thessalonians – Part 6

#### I. Exposition of Chapter Three.

A. Verse 1 – “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is with you*,” – As Paul begins to close his letter, he requests that they pray for him and his team. Why did Paul ask for prayer? He asked because he believed that there was power in believing prayer and he expected that God would answer.

1. “...that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified...” – The words “...run *swiftly*...” means; “a message which becomes widely and rapidly known—‘for a message to spread rapidly, to be known quickly.’”<sup>1</sup>
2. “...and be glorified...” – Paul’s desire was that the message of the Gospel would be honored as it went forth into the world. “glorified” means; “to attribute high status to someone by honoring—‘to honor, to respect’”<sup>2</sup> (cf. Acts 13:48).

“Furthermore, brethren, do pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may speed on (spread rapidly and run its course) and be glorified (extolled) and triumph, even as [it has done] with you,” - II Thessalonians 3:1 – Amplified Bible

B. Verse 2 – “...and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.”

1. Paul also asked the Thessalonians to pray that Paul and his team would be delivered from those who would oppose them.
2. The word “delivered” means; “to rescue from danger, with the implication that the danger in question is severe and acute”<sup>3</sup>
3. “...unreasonable and wicked men...” – It’s unreasonable to come against a message that will set people free. Grant Richison writes concerning this:

“Unreasonable’ literally means *out of place* but denotes *unbecoming, not befitting*. The idea in this passage is outrageous belief. They were perverse, belligerent scoundrels. They diverted people away from truth into absurd false doctrine. ‘Wicked’ means active wickedness. These malignant people had a serious flaw. They were degenerates theologically because they tended to corrupt others.”<sup>4</sup>

C. Verse 3 – “But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.”

1. “But the Lord is faithful...” – The word “faithful” means; “pertaining to being trusted—‘faithful, trustworthy, dependable, reliable’.”<sup>5</sup> Repeatedly, the Scriptures remind the believer that God can be trusted and depended upon to keep His promises.
  - a. “...who will establish you... - This is the second time in this letter that the word “establish” is found (2:17). The definition, again, is: “to cause someone to become stronger in the sense of more firm and unchanging in attitude or belief”<sup>6</sup> In the midst of opposition, we can trust God to strengthen us by His Holy Spirit. We also have a part to play in becoming rooted in the Word of God (cf. James 5:7-8).
  - b. “...guard you from the evil one.” – Regarding the word “guard” Richison writes ; “The idea is stand guard. God is our defender. He stands guard for us.”<sup>7</sup>
  - c. “...the evil one.” – Most scholars consider this to refer to Satan.

“In spite of the dangers, the evil men, and the difficult circumstances, Paul declared that ‘the Lord is faithful.’ He is worthy of trust. Believers can depend on Him and His promises. He will establish (support, confirm, and strengthen) believers. He will keep (guard, defend, protect, and preserve) them from evil (from the Evil One or from that which is evil). ‘Keep’ is really a military term used of one who stands guard. ‘Evil’ most likely means the Evil One, Satan, who instigates evil men to assault believers. What a picture this is God standing guard for us against the devil, at the same time strengthening us for the battle and putting us on firm footing.”<sup>8</sup>

D. Verse 4 – “And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.” – We see again that Paul had high regard for these believers and was confident that they would continue in the faith no matter what the opposition might bring their way.

E. Verse 5 – “Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.” – Paul continues expressing his prayer for them.

<sup>1</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 336.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 734.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 240.

<sup>4</sup>Grant Richison, *Verse by Verse through the Books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2006), 2 Th 3:2.

<sup>5</sup>Louw and Nida, 376.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 677.

<sup>7</sup>Grant Richison, *Verse by Verse through the Books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians*.

<sup>8</sup>*The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.) 871.

1. **“...the Lord direct your hearts...”** – First, we see that Paul prays that they would be directed by the Lord in their hearts. The word **“direct”** means; **“to so influence others as to cause them to follow a recommended course of action—‘to guide, to direct, to lead’”**<sup>9</sup> (cf. Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 8:14).
2. **“...into the love of God...”** – The love walk is the **“new commandment”** Jesus gives to every believer (John 13:34-35; I John 3:23; 4:21). Paul is praying that the Lord would influence them, more and more, to follow love. Another translation of this is:

**“Now may the Lord direct your entire person unto living in the love that comes from God and the endurance that comes from Christ.”**<sup>10</sup>

3. **“...and into the patience of Christ.”** – The word **“patience”** means: **“capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances—‘endurance, being able to endure.’”**<sup>11</sup> So it could have been better translated as **“perseverance”** or **“endurance.”** Some translations interpret this portion as praying for endurance while waiting for Christ’s return. (e.g. **“...and into the patient waiting for Christ.”** – King James Version).

**F. Verse 6 – “But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.”**

1. Here Paul gives the believers a command **“...in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”** which means by His authority. It seems Paul wants to emphasize the importance of this command by making sure they know this is not his command, but it’s the Lord’s command.
2. **“...withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly...”** – The word **“disorderly”** here means; **“pertaining to refusing to work—‘idle, lazy, lazily.’”**<sup>12</sup>

**G. Verses 7-15 – Paul continues to give instruction pertaining to those who won’t work. There are many Scriptures which warn against laziness – (e.g. Proverbs 6:9-11; 10:4-5; 12:24; 19:15; I Timothy 5:8)**

1. **Verses 7-8** – Paul refers to himself as an example of one who worked and was not lazy, so as to not be a burden to them.
2. **Verse 9** – **“...not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.”** – The idea that Paul expresses that it’s not because they did not have **“authority”** to receive support, means they had the right to, but chose not to, in order to set an example. (cf. I Corinthians 9:7-14; Galatians 6:6).

**“[It was] not because we do not have a right [to such support], but [we wished] to make ourselves an example for you to follow.”** – II Thessalonians 3:9 – Amplified Bible

3. **Verses 10-11** – **“For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.”** – Here we see the added problem of not just being lazy but also being **“busybodies”**. The meaning of this word is: **“to meddle in the affairs of someone else”**<sup>13</sup> There are many Scriptures which warn against being a busybody or gossip (e.g. Proverbs 11:13; 16:28; 17:9; 20:19; 26:20; II Corinthians 12:20)
4. **Verses 12–15 – More admonishment and instruction concerning the lazy.**

1. **Verse 14** – **“...note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.”** – This is the same command as in **verse 6** for them to **“withdraw”** from such a person. Grant Richison comments about **“...do not keep company...”**:

**“Keep company with”** literally means **to mix up with (1 Corinthians 5:9). Don’t do joint things together. Break close fellowship with this person. Do not show approval of their sin by your friendly fellowship with them.”**<sup>14</sup>

2. **Verse 15** – **“Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”** – This means that they aren’t to be regarded as unbelievers but to be warned as brothers in the Lord.

**H. Verses 16-18 – Closing Benediction.**

1. **“Now may the Lord of peace...give you peace always in every way...”** – cf. John 14:27; John 16:33; II Corinthians 13:11; Hebrews 13:20.
2. **“...with my own hand...”** – **“Paul dictated his letters to a scribe but he wrote the closing sentences in his own hand to verify his authorship”**<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Louw and Nida, 464.

<sup>10</sup>Gary Steven Shogren, *Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament: 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2012.)

<sup>11</sup>Louw and Nida, 307.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 768.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 767.

<sup>14</sup>Grant Richison, *Verse by Verse through the Books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2006), 2 Th 3:14.

<sup>15</sup>Robert James Utley, *Paul’s First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*, vol. Volume 11, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 1997), 146.