

Introduction: Welcome, Teaching Practice.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17. (Note Underlined Words.) 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. ¹⁴ To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort (encouragement) and good hope through grace, ¹⁷ comfort (encourage) your hearts and establish (strengthen) them in every good work and word.

>>> A. Christian Life Is A Battle: 2 Battles In Particular.

- Battle Against Doubt And Discouragement Because Of Our Spiritual Failures.
- Battle Against Compromise On Biblical Truth Because Of World's Pressure.

Life Point: We Must Never Surrender In These Christian Battles By Compromising On Truth Or Becoming Discouraged By Failures.

>>> B. Discouragement Seems Like A Reasonable Response!

- Church Is Shrinking.
- Immorality Is Growing.
- Truth Is Diminishing.
- We Are Struggling And Sometimes Failing In Following Faithfully.
- It Doesn't Look Good!

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14. 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. 14 To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reason #1: God Has A Forever Settled Love For Us Despite Any Failures Or Struggles In Our Lives.

>>> **A. “We Ought Always To Give Thanks For You....” Not Fearing Their Future!**

- Previous Verses: Refused. Did Not Believe The Truth. Took Pleasure In Unrighteousness. Condemned!

>>> **B. All Christians Are In A Different Group. Received, Believed And Responded To The Truth. Repented Of Unrighteousness.**

>>> **C. Better Description = Vs. 13. “Beloved By The Lord.” Greek Grammar = Perfect Tense.**

- Ongoing, Settled Condition Brought About By A Finished Action In The Past.
- You Are Loved Today And Forever Because Of Jesus Finished Work On The Cross.

Mistaken Probationary Mindset III. Your Improved Situation Is Conditioned Upon Your Success Or Failure. Hard Way To Live. Uncertain. Despair. You're Not On Probation Or Parole.

Life Point: We Must Never Surrender In This Christian Battle By Compromising On Truth Or Becoming Discouraged By Failures.

Reason #1: God Has A Forever Settled Love For Us Despite Any Failures Or Struggles In Our Lives.

Reason #2: God Has A Special Calling Upon Every Christian To Represent Him In The World.

Voting Delegates Ill. No Right To Give In To Pressure Or Do What Seems Best To You. You Were Chosen To Represent Another.

>>> A. **“God Chose You As The Firstfruits....”**

- “Firstfruits” = More Than First Or Earliest Christians.
- Firstfruits Represented That Which Was Always Set Apart And Dedicated To God For His Special Purposes.

Ambassador Represents Another III. True For All Christians. Ambassadors, Firstfruits.

>>> B. Vital That Christian Not Give In To Pressure By Compromise.

- Silencing Or Softening Stance On Moral Truth (Pride, Sexuality, Abortion, Honesty.)
- Silencing Or Softening Stance On Doctrinal Truth (Exclusivity, Other Religions, Eternal Judgment.)

>>> C. We Must Not Measure Success By Popularity, Acceptance, Or Applause.

We Are Delegates. We Have One Job. Represent Jesus.

Life Point: We Must Never Surrender In This Christian Battle By Compromising On Truth Or Becoming Discouraged By Failures.

Reason #1: God Has A Forever Settled Love For Us Despite Any Failures Or Struggles In Our Lives. “Beloved....”

Reason #2: God Has A Special Calling Upon Every Christian To Represent Him In The World. “Firstfruits...”

Reason #3: God Has Already Decided To Save Every Christian.

>>> A. “God Chose You As The Firstfruits (Ministry) To Be Saved (Destiny.)”

- “You” = Those Who Received, Believed, Responded. Repented.

Me Being Chosen On School P.E. Sports Team Ill. Genuinely Wanted Me. They Didn't Know Me. Later Rejected Once They Found Out My Inabilities, Failures.

>>> B. God's Choice: Based On Grace Not Merit. Based On Knowledge Not Ignorance.

>>> C. Never Despair Thinking God Will Reject You Based On Your Repeated Failures.

- God Has Already Chosen Or Decided That All Christians Will Be Saved.

>>> D. Spiritual Anxiety Should Never Be Part Of The Christian Journey.

- Your Destiny Is Based On God's Gracious And All Knowing Choice!

Life Point: We Must Never Surrender In This Christian Battle By Compromising On Truth Or Becoming Discouraged By Failures.

Reason #3: God Has Already Decided To Save Every Christian.

>>> E. How Does God Save People? Two Aspects To Becoming A Christian.

>>> F. #1: The Work Of The Holy Spirit. Vs. 13. "Through Sanctification By The By The Spirit."

John 3:5-8. Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

>>> G. “Salvation Belongs To Our God.”

- God Provides For Salvation.
- God Initiates Salvation.
- God Draws To Salvation.
- God Enlightens To Salvation.
- God Enables Us To Respond To Salvation.
- God Keeps Us In Our Salvation.
- God Completes Salvation.

American Airlines Free Trip To Maui For All Pastors III. Trip Is Provided By Another. Plane Was Built By Another. Flown By Another. Whole Journey Depends On Another. All Undeserved. All Freely.

- I Still Have To Trust The Message, Leave My Home Behind, And Get On The Plane.

>>> H. Aspect #2: Vs. 13. “And Belief In The Truth. 14 To This He Called You Through Our Gospel...”

- Must Be A Human Response To The Divine Work Of The Spirit.

>>> I. True Faith Is Always Accompanied By Actions:

- A Doctor's Prescription = Taking The Pills.
- Fireman's Warning = Leaving The Building.
- Financial Advisor's Strategy = Investing Money And Staying Despite Downturns.

>>> L. Vs. 14. “To This He Called You Through Our Gospel.”

- Gospel: Jesus Is The Promised Christ Who Died In Our Place For Our Sins But Was Resurrected And Is Now Lord Or Ruler Of Heaven And Earth.
- Faith Response? I Trust Him Now As My Savior And I Obey Him As My Lord.

Life Point: We Must Never Surrender In This Christian Battle By Compromising On Truth Or Becoming Discouraged By Failures.

- Permanency (Beloved.) Ministry (Firstfruits.) Destiny (Saved.)

Reason #4. God Has Purposed That All Christians Will Experience Eternal Glory.

>>> **A. Verse 14. To This He Called You, Through Our Gospel, So That You May Obtain The Glory Of The Lord Jesus Christ.**

>>> **B. “Obtain Glory” Mean? Not Praise And Adulation.**

- Not Even Our Glory. “The Glory Of The Lord Jesus Christ.”

- We Obtain The Full Benefits Of Jesus' Greatness, Jesus' Achievements, Jesus' Success, Jesus' Blessings, Jesus' Rights.

Super Bowl Winners Benefits III. Cash. Ring. Trips. Even For Those Who Did Not Play Significant Part, Or Any Part In That Victory. They Obtained The Glory Of Another.

Reason #4. God Has Purposed That All Christians Will Experience Eternal Glory.

>>> C. We Will Forever Share In Jesus' Greatness And His Blessings: His Reign. His Victory Over Sin. Victory Over Death.

- We Will Experience A Perfect Life In A Perfect Body In A Perfect World.
- All The Consequences Of Sin Will Be Removed. "No More Curse!"

Life Point: We Must Never Surrender In This Christian Battle By Compromising On Truth Or Becoming Discouraged By Failures.

>>> D. I'm Broken. World Is Broken. Everyday Can Be A Struggle. I'm Am Not Quitting, Compromising, Or Doubting!

- Permanency (Beloved.) Ministry (Firstfruits.) Destiny (Saved.) Inevitability (Glory!)

2 Thessalonians 2:15. 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.

>>> A. Biblical Pattern: First - What God Is Done/Doing. Second - Your Response.

- Indicative: Statements Of Fact.
- Imperatives. Response To Facts. (Commands, Responses.)

>>> B. Verse 15. "So Then..."

>>> C. "Stand Firm." Don't Give In To The Pressure. Don't Compromise. Don't Give Into Doubt And Despair About Your Spiritual Standing.

>>> D. He Further Defines Standing Firm As "Holding To The Traditions."

- Refers To Biblical Teachings. Not Referring To “Church Tradition.”
- Clarifies: “Taught By Us (Apostles) Either By Spoken Word Or By Our Letter.”
- Standing Firm = Holding On To Biblical Truth!

>>> E. “Hold” Indicates Pressure Or Forces At Work To Get You And Me To Let Go Of That Truth.

- When Repeated Failures Make You Feel For Or Uncertain About Your Spiritual Acceptance - Hold To The Truth.
- When You Feel Pressured To Compromise Because The Culture Has Rejected Moral Standards Of The Bible - Hold To The Truth.
- When Friends And Family Are Offended By Uncomfortable Biblical Teaching About Hell, Judgment, Or Exclusivity Of Christ - Hold To The Truth.

Life Point: We Must Never Surrender In This Christian Battle By Compromising On Truth Or Becoming Discouraged By Failures.

- Indicatives (Vs 14-15.) Imperative (Vs. 15.) Intercession (Vs. 16-17.)

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

>>> A. Paul's Prayer For God To Encourage And Strengthen Christians.

>>> B. Vs. 16 Sums Up And Repeats God's Commitment To Us.

- God Love Us.
- God Has Given Us Eternal Comfort. Not Temporary Or Contingent.
- God Has Given Us Good Hope. (Not False, Uncertain.)

>>> C. Basis Of These Blessings? “Through Grace” Not Our Merit.

>>> D. Verse 17 = Expected Life Impact: Be Comforted (Encouraged.) Be Established (Stand Firm - Same Greek Word.)

Life Point: We Must Never Surrender In This Christian Battle By Compromising On Truth Or Becoming Discouraged By Failures.

Reason #1: God Has A Forever Settled Love For Us Despite Any Failures Or Struggles In Our Lives.

Reason #2: God Has A Special Calling Upon Every Christian To Represent Him In The World.

Reason #3: God Has Already Decided To Save Every Christian. (Probation Mentality?)

Reason #4. God Has Purposed That All Christians Will Experience Eternal Glory.