

“The Hope of Being Chosen for Salvation”

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Theme: Believers display God’s saving grace through faithfulness to the Lord.

I. OUR RESPONSE TO GOD FOR SALVATION - 2:13-14

A. Thanksgiving for God’s Choice for Salvation - v. 13

1. In contrast to those who will be judged in the Tribulation by God for their having rejected “the love of the truth so as to be saved,” are those who do believe.
2. In light of this distinction from the damned, Paul says *“But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord ...”*
3. What has made the difference is that instead of receiving a deluding influence so that they would believe what is false, these “beloved by the Lord” are the objects of God grace - *“... because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”*
4. All glory goes to God for He *“has chosen you from the beginning for salvation”* - cp. **Ephesians 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9.**
5. Such realization provides the saints with enormous spiritual effect:
 - a) It eliminates our boasting - **Psalm 115:1.**
 - b) It evokes our joy - **1 Peter 1:1-2.**
 - c) It enriches our blessing - **Ephesians 1:3.**
 - d) It elevates our holiness - **Colossians 3:12.**
 - e) It establishes our security - **Philippians 1:6.**
6. Here we see that the marvelous interaction of God’s sovereign purposes and the saints’ engagement in the Gospel.
 - a) First, it is *“through the sanctification by the Spirit”* - the miraculous power of God exercised to the glory of God - **1 Corinthians 6:11.**
 - b) Second, it is *“through ... faith in the truth”* - the means by which salvation is provided - cp. **Ephesians 2:8.**

B. Thanksgiving for God’s Call to Salvation - v. 14

1. The other things for which we are eternally grateful is that all of this is activated or realized due to yet another work of God - *“It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

2. This is a reference to what is known as “the effectual call” – that moment when the eternal purposes of God intersect in time with the object of His redeeming love, and they are saved – cp. **Jude 1; Romans 8:30**.
3. This is the end toward which God’s eternal purpose drives – God loves, chooses, calls, transforms believers in order that they might throughout eternity reflect the glory of Christ to them and through them to show the eternal worthiness of Jesus – **Ephesians 2:7**.

II. **OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD FOR SANCTIFICATION** - **2:15**

A. **Steadiness in the Truth**

1. The result of this divine work in us through the Holy Spirit stirring us to faith in our cooperation with His grace to produce steadiness in the truth.
2. Paul continues: ***“So then, brethren, stand firm ...”*** [στήκω] – refers to being firmly committed in conviction or belief.
3. This is a present imperative that sets forth a continuing duty:
 - a) We are told to ***“stand firm ... [in] the traditions”***
 - b) We are told to ***“stand firm”*** in the faith – cp. **1 Corinthians 16:13**.
 - c) We are told to ***“stand firm”*** in the Lord – cp. **Philippians 4:1**.
 - d) We are told to ***“stand firm”*** in unity – cp. **Philippians 1:27**.
 - e) We are told to ***“stand firm”*** in freedom – cp. **Galatians 5:1**.

B. **Submission to the Truth**

1. Additionally, we are to ***“... hold to the traditions which you were taught ...”***
2. To ***“hold to”*** [κρατέω] – refers to taking into personal custody; to adhere to strongly; or to occupy oneself with something.
3. Clearly, it refers to enabling what you ***“were taught”*** to direct or control you moving forward.
4. In this context, “the traditions which you were taught” do not refer to legalistic customs, but rather to instructions received through divine authority – ***“... whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.”***
5. This contrasts with the false teaching that they had encountered causing their confusion in the beginning of this chapter – cp. **vv. 1-2**.
6. This ***“tradition”*** is what Paul had received from the Lord Himself and that he was now passing along to them – cp. **1 Corinthians 15:1-3**.

7. The obligation of saints is to submit to the truth received from the Apostles through God's Word.

III. OUR RELIANCE UPON GOD FOR SERVICE - 2:16-17

A. The Disposition of God toward Saints - v. 16

1. These two verses essentially provide a benediction of sorts expressed in the form of a prayer for blessing - *“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace ...”*
2. Both *“Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father ... had loved us”* from eternity past.
3. This is yet another example of the equal honor and reverence that Paul possesses for Jesus and the Father.
4. There is an absolute unity asserted here in the sentiments toward us in the two members of the Godhead.
5. “Loving” and “giving” are essentially cause and effect - He gives to us because He loves us - referring to the *“eternal comfort and good hope by grace”* that is provided at salvation.
6. Having loved us while we were sinners so as to save us, how much more does His goodwill toward us exist now that we are His children.

B. The Disbursement of God within Saints - v. 17

1. The outcome of His generous love that saved us is a perpetual *“comfort”* that *“strengthens your hearts in every good work and word.”*
2. Engaging *“in every good work and word”* describes the mature Christian life where what we do and what we say are driven by the grace of God operating in our lives.
3. This sets us up for the very confrontational exhortations that are contained in chapter 3.

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