



Series Introduction

Dear friends, welcome back to our summer audio devotion series! While summertime often gives us a refreshing change of pace, it also provides us with new and unique opportunities for growing in God’s Word, and I rejoice that you are taking advantage of this option! This year we will be producing an 11-part devotional series on Paul’s Second Letter to the Thessalonians entitled, “Hold On.” For your convenience all these devotions will be available on our website and Ascension app, with new content posted each Wednesday.

Last summer our series walked through Paul’s First Letter to the Thessalonians. It was themed, “Because Christ is coming...” Again and again we heard Paul remind his readers and us that because Jesus will soon return to judge the living and the dead and bring eternal salvation to all who believe, we can endure persecution, overflow with love, resist temptation, and live godly lives. This summer we will pick up where we left off. In these devotions we’ll see the Apostle expand upon many of the teachings and encouragements of his first letter. The main thought that will guide us is Paul’s directive to hold on.

Now when we tell someone to “hold on,” some assumptions are implied.

- For starters there has to be something to hold on to. “Hold onto my hand,” a mommy tells her toddler as they cross the street. We hold on to a precious family heirloom or a friend’s wise advice. In Second Thessalonians Paul will command his readers to hold on to the teachings handed on to them from the Lord through his apostle and seize on to the personal example set by Paul and his missionary companions.
- Holding on also requires exertion and careful attention. It means carrying that thing around and keeping it on the forefront of our minds. When we’re holding a grandbaby or the groceries in our hands, it’s unlikely that we will suddenly let go—yet if only our hearts and minds were as reliable! When it comes to the salvation that Jesus has won for us, there is nothing that the devil wants more than to rip it from our grasp. In striving towards this goal, he uses every tool at his disposal. At times he employs persecution and pain to try to pry at our trust in Jesus. Alternatively, he distracts us with cares and pleasures and worldly responsibilities that entice us to let go of Jesus so that we run after glitter rather than keep a firm grip on our greatest treasure.
- Oftentimes holding on also includes the promise of relief and something better in the end. We willingly endure the travails of surgery and recovery in anticipation of a better quality of life on the other side. In this sin-cursed world our hope of earthly relief is usually partial and always temporary, but God promises that holding onto his Word is different. Heavenly glory and the bliss of being with God await us.

So then join me this summer as we hold on to the Lord!

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, as this season begins, keep me mindful of what is most important. Do not let me get distracted or discouraged, but by your Holy Spirit work through your Word strengthen my hold on you and your promises. In your holy name I pray. Amen.