



2 Thessalonians

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Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 2 Thessalonians 2:16

In these words, Paul presents a prayer which is connected to the exhortation he just made. He asked those in Thessalonica (and thus us!) to “stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” In response to these words, he issues a prayer to confirm this in them. In a rather unusual construction, he says, “Now may the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father...” In this, he begins with Jesus, and only then does he move to the Father. This is the opposite of 1 Thessalonians 3:11 –

“Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.”

The reason for placing the Lord Jesus first is because of words which follow, and which describe the work of the Father. However, in doing this, there is the implicit hint, as is seen so many times elsewhere, of the equality of the Persons within the Godhead. The word “and” between the two shows that they are separate and distinct (a Godhead is thus identified), and that they are equal within this Godhead. As this is a prayer made directly to Jesus, as well as to the Father, it recognizes the equality of the two.

With that understood, it says that it is God the Father “who has loved us.” God the Father is the Source of the love which is being expressed in the thought. His love for us is what then leads to Paul’s next thought, that He has “given us everlasting consolation.” These words describe a type of comfort which is enduring, and which cannot be robbed from us. No matter what happens, our comfort will endure. How untypical of all other faiths where adherents place their lost loved ones in the grave, and who then mourn their eternal loss. But this is completely untrue with the Christian faith. As Paul noted in verse 13, God chose us “for salvation in (as the Greek reads) sanctification by the Spirit.”

This is the everlasting consolation now being referred to. Those in Christ are saved, and they have been sanctified. Every terrifying thing described earlier in the chapter (and elsewhere in Scripture) concerning those who fail to come to Christ has no bearing on us. Instead, we have the everlasting consolation “and good hope by grace.” The words in Greek read “in grace.” This denotes the mode of the everlasting consolation and good hope which we have been given. Grace is the element in which it occurs and is experienced. The words here then correspond to verse 13 –

“God from the beginning chose you for salvation in sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”

“God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope in grace.”

We are chosen for salvation in sanctification, and we are given everlasting consolation and good hope in grace. This shows us the extent of the Father’s love for us. He sent Christ Jesus to accomplish these things for us in order to reconcile us to Him, and it is this Gift of Christ Jesus which is a reflection of His unlimited grace. Praise be to God.

Life application: If you struggle with the concept of the Trinity, that’s OK. It is a difficult concept for us to grasp. Not fully understanding something, however, does not mean that we cannot accept it as true. The word of God clearly teaches this doctrine, and so we are expected to accept it by faith, even if we do not fully understand it. Have faith in God’s word, and do not let others bring you into error because they are unwilling to take God at His word.

...comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work. 2 Thessalonians 2:17

The verse here is divided in a way where it cannot be taken alone. The word “comfort” is based on Paul’s previous words – “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ, and our God and Father ... comfort your hearts.” The word “comfort” here is tied into the intervening words of that same verse which said, “who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace.” There, the word “consolation” is a noun form of the closely corresponding verb “comfort” here.

As those in Thessalonica were facing trials and troubles, Paul is praying that they will be comforted by the comfort which exists in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in God the Father. He then adds in, “and establish you in every good word and work.” To be established is to be firm and fixed. It is to be unyielding when difficulties or confrontations come. The word in Greek means to stand against vacillation. And Paul applies it to “every good word and work.”

The word is the word of God, and the doctrine which flows from it. The work is applying that doctrine properly and in accord with the word. It then is a thought more fully fleshed out by Paul in Ephesians 4:13, 14 –

“...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”

The words of the word, combined with a right application of them, will lead to good works which are suitable and pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to God the Father. And this is exactly what is implied here in Paul’s choice of words in the Greek. The verbs are in the singular, but the corresponding pronouns are “the Lord Jesus Christ” and “God the Father” of verse 16. Both are united in the use of the singular verbs. Thus, once again, there is the implication of the divine unity between these two Persons. It is another reference to the nature of the Godhead.

Life application: These words were written to those in Thessalonica, but they are a part of the word of God. And so Paul’s words to them are still a prayer of Paul to us today. They are a hope which endures through the ages of the church age, and they are words which we can rely on in our own times of trial and trouble, knowing that eons before we existed, the faithful apostle was making this petition to God on our behalf as well.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is with you*, 2 Thessalonians 3:1

Chapter 3 begins with the word, “Finally.” Though there were no chapter and verse divisions in the original books of the Bible, this is a logical place to begin the chapter. He has finished the main purpose of the book with its theological discourse on the timing of the end times. As was seen, those in Thessalonica had been disturbed by input from someone telling them that the day of the Lord had already come. Paul ensured them (and thus us!) that such was not the case, and that we could know how this was true. He gave a concise and precise detailing of the sequence of end-time events so that we wouldn’t be duped by others, and so that we wouldn’t waste our time speculating on who the Antichrist would be.

After opening the final section, he immediately again says, “brethren.” This is the fifth of seven times that he will say this in this short book. Thus, he is ensuring they don’t forget that they are “beloved by the Lord” (verse 2:13). Despite the things which may come against them and afflict them, they are united in Christ as brethren. With that understanding, he then petitions them for prayer.

As brethren, this is right for him to ask, and for them to respond. Paul was known for keeping his beloved brethren and their churches in prayer (such as in verse 1:11), and he anticipated that they would likewise be in prayer for him and those with him. And so with specificity, he names the type of prayer they seek. It is “that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly*.” His request is reflected in the 147th Psalm –

“He sends out His command *to the* earth;
His word runs very swiftly.” Psalm 147:15

The request of Paul and his companions is that their work of spreading the word would be swift, that it would not be in any way hindered, and that it would be without any type of anxiety or stress which could slow down its progress. And in addition to this, he asks that they pray that the message conveyed will “be glorified.” This is not asking for Paul and his associates to receive distinction or honor, but that the message itself would be honored. The desire is for the exaltation of the gospel message, and thus for the honor of the Lord upon whom it is based. The thought is reflected in Acts 12 where it says that “the word of God grew and multiplied” (verse 24). This was the continued hope of Paul and his company. Finally he notes, “just as *it is* with you.” If they wanted to know exactly what to pray for, all they needed to do was to look at how the word had taken hold in their own church. It had been presented, received, and brought honor to the Lord. This was the hoped-for condition of each place to be encountered by Paul’s group.

Life application: There are churches in towns and villages around the world, but there are still places where the word has not been conveyed. Churches are set groups that generally don’t go far beyond their own places of meeting. But then there are missionaries who are there specifically for that purpose. Even though churches don’t head out from their home areas, they can, and should, support those who do. This is one of the major purposes of the church. We are to ensure that we don’t stagnate behind walls, but that we continue to refresh ourselves and the gospel through the support of missionaries.