



Prayer & Confidence
2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Introduction

■ Balance is important in life. Without physical balance, you will fall. Without mental balance, you will be crazy to some degree. Without emotional balance, people will start avoiding you. Without political balance, the ideological extremists on either wing will dominate. Without theological balance in preaching, you end up in either academic discussions that are disconnected from life or sermons about how to live life that are disconnected from what God actually says in His word. The apostle Paul was balanced. His letters follow a general pattern of addressing the issues he is writing about by presenting doctrine and making direct application of that doctrine to life. He does that in 2 Thessalonians which we have been studying the last couple of months.

■ Paul begins chapter 1 with thanksgiving to God for the maturity that quickly developed in that church demonstrated by their enlarged faith, love for one another, and perseverance and faith in the midst of persecution and affliction. He then explained that God's justice would be carried out in the future when He would *deal out retribution to those that do not know God and to those that do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus* (vs. 8). Those are direct references to the jealous Jews and unbelieving Gentiles that were the source of their persecution. When Jesus comes to be glorified in His saint, these evil people will *pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power* (vs. 9-10).

■ In chapter 2 Paul calms the turmoil that had come upon them due to false teachers claiming that they already were in the day of the Lord by contradicting their lies with the truth he had previously taught them. They could not be in the day of the Lord because two specific events that indicate that the day of the Lord is present had not occurred. Neither the apostasy nor the revelation of the man of lawlessness had taken place. The saints will be first gathered to the Lord which we refer to as the rapture from its description in 1 Thess. 4:17. Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed when he makes a firm covenant with Israel as foretold in Daniel 9:27. This is the son of perdition that would 3 ½ years later set up the abomination of desolation as described in Daniel's prophecies. In addition, the restrainer - the Holy Spirit - was still present carrying out that particular ministry among them. Paul then makes a contrast between the condemnation God will bring upon that man and those who follow him and God's salvation that had been brought to them, the beloved, by God's choosing and calling. ■ Those truths were the basis for Paul's command to them at the end of the chapter to *"stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught."* Remember that "traditions" there specifically refers to the word of God that Paul and his companions had taught them both in person and by letter. Doctrinal truth enables proper practical application.

Turn to 2 Thessalonians 3 as we begin our study of this final chapter in which Paul continues to make practical application of the theological truths he presented in the first two chapters. We will be examining verses 1-5 today.

■ 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5, ¹ *Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you;* ² *and that we will be delivered from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.* ³ *But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.* ⁴ *We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command.* ⁵ *And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.*

■ Paul's Prayer Requests - 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

Most translators begin chapter 3 with the word “finally,” but don't take that to mean Paul is concluding his letter here for he has several points he will make before he gets to his salutation at the end of the chapter. The word here, (λοιπόν / loipon), is a transition to additional subjects he will address before he concludes. Translating this as *beyond that* or *furthermore* captures the sense here.

■ Paul again refers to them as *brethren* indicating the familial relationship they all have as part of the family of God. He places this term in the emphatic position for the phrase here is literally, “*you pray, brothers, concerning us.*” The body of Christ is one family into which we are all adopted as brothers and sisters of Christ.

■ Paul's command to them is to be praying concerning “us” - a reference to Paul, Silas and Timothy. This is not an unusual request for Paul since he fully recognized he was absolutely dependent upon God for both his life and his ministry and he wanted others to continue to pray for him. We see that in some of his similar requests. ■ For example, in Ephesians 6:19–20 Paul wrote,¹⁹ “*and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,*”²⁰ *for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*” Even if Paul was either naturally bold or had been trained to be that way, he recognized that he would be inadequate for the task unless the Lord was at work in him. That should encourage you because the same God that enabled Paul to be bold can enable you to also be bold enough to accomplish anything He wants you to do.

■ Let me expand on that thought for a moment. It is easy to let fear and intimidation keep you from doing what you know you should do and that you might even want to do. It is natural to try and avoid both danger and rejection. We do evangelism training to help you overcome some natural fears by helping you to be confident in knowing the gospel and how to respond to common questions and situations. That can help remove a sense of inadequacy and give some skills to overcome opposition, but it cannot remove the dangers and rejection from those that currently hate God and do not recognize their need for the message you are proclaiming to them. If it was a matter of training, then the gospel would be presented in your own strength by your own wisdom and the result of that would be pride. Training should only help you be more faithful to what God calls you to do, but the gospel needs to be proclaimed in His power with His wisdom - and so we pray for God to make us bold and wise. As Paul states in Romans 1:16, the gospel *is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* We seek to persuade and we beg others to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:11, 20), but in the end we are simply vessels used by God to tell others the gospel, and we then watch God at work.

In his first letter Paul had simply directed the Thessalonians to pray for them (1 Thess. 5:25). In this letter he has two specific subjects for ongoing prayer. The first concerned their ministry. The second concerned their own personal safety.

■ Prayer Concerning the Word of the Lord - 2 Thess. 3:1

There were two things concerning the word of the Lord about which Paul wanted them to pray. First was that it would advance. Second was that it would be glorified. He then pointed to what it had done among the Thessalonians as an example of what he was talking about.

■ The word of the Lord certainly includes the gospel message since the usage of the phrase throughout Acts and Paul's statement in 1 Thessalonians 1:8 indicate that, but it encompasses more than just the good news that sinful man can be forgiven and made righteous before God by faith in the redemption purchased by Jesus, who is God in human flesh and lived a sinless life, when He died as a sacrifice at Calvary and then rose again to life three days later. Paul uses this same phrase in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 in reference to what he was teaching them concerning details about Jesus' appearing and the rapture of the church. 1 Peter 1:25 uses it in reference to all of the sacred Scriptures. The word of the Lord also encompasses everything God has revealed about Himself, what He has done, what He plans to do and His will for mankind.

■ The focus of the lives of Paul and his companions was to proclaim the word of the Lord to people that had not heard it. That is why they were making such extensive travels through Asia, Macedonia and Greece. They would proclaim the gospel to both Jews and pagans so that they might be saved, then they would teach those who responded more about God and His will so that they might know and serve Him. That is still the purpose of missions to this day whether it is local, distant or cross cultural.

■ Paul wanted to see the word of the Lord *τρέχει* / *trechā*, a word variously translated as “to spread rapidly” (NASB), “run” (Young’s), “swiftly” (NKJV), “speed ahead” (ESV), “progress” (LEB). The word is a metaphor taken from running in a race, and Paul often used references to sports and particularly running as illustrations in his writings. He also uses this word in Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians. Paul wants the Thessalonians to petition God on behalf of the missionaries that they would be successful in their endeavors resulting in the gospel and teachings of Jesus Christ going forth quickly.

■ Paul adds here that they also wanted the word of the Lord to be glorified. This is in the passive tense. The word of the Lord is to be honored, praised, magnified, celebrated, and that happens when it is believed and it changes the life of those who have come to faith. This ties directly to his reference to running. When a runner in a Greek athletic event won the race, the prize they would receive was a wreath to wear on their head showing them to be the victor - a crown of glory. When the word of the Lord goes forth and accomplishes its work and sinners are converted, it gains the victory and is honored by those who have come to faith. In short, Paul is asking that the Thessalonians to pray for the missionaries to be able to fulfill their mission of rapidly spreading the word of the Lord and that people would respond to it so that the word of the Lord would be honored.

■ Paul then points to what had happened among them as an example of what he wanted them to pray to God would happen. Acts 17:1-4 records the very quick response of the Thessalonians to the preaching of the missionaries. Paul had gone to the synagogue to reason from the Scriptures there resulting in some of the Jews being persuaded and joining with Paul and Silas along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. In just three weeks a new church was born. Opposition from the Jews who were jealous started soon after, yet as Paul remarks in 1 Thessalonians 1, the opposition did not block the word of the Lord from *sounding forth* from them. The church grew in faith and numbers and spread the message of Christ throughout Macedonia and Achaia. Paul is asking them to pray that this would continue to be repeated.

■ That is the prayer request of every true missionary of Jesus Christ. It should be the prayer request of every true Christian. Our desire should be to see the word of God go forward to do its work in bringing people to a knowledge of the gospel so that they might repent and place their faith in Jesus Christ and begin their walk with them. All glory, honor and praise is to go to Christ and not to ourselves. Paul, Silas and Timothy are the models for the rest of us to follow. Those who proclaim their own wisdom and seek glory for themselves have the marks of being false teachers or wolves as described by Paul in Acts 20:29-30 that would seek to draw away disciples after themselves.

■ **Prayer Concerning Rescue** - 2 Thess. 3:2

The second matter Paul directed them to pray about was more personal and yet also related to the word of the Lord going forward. *And that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men: for not all have faith.*” This is in recognition of both the dangers that they faced and had experienced many times including when they were in Thessalonica, and that such evil people hinder both the word of the Lord being proclaimed and people believing the message.

■ The word for rescued here (*ῥύομαι* / *hruomai*) is in the passive tense and means to be delivered from the danger of some force or person. The specific dangers that Paul points out here are those that are caused by perverse and evil men. ■ Perverse (*ἄτοπος* / *atopos*) means “*out of place*” and refers to those who are not “*in accordance with what is right, appropriate or fitting.*” ■ Evil (*πονηρός* / *ponāros*) refers to an active moral corruption. It is being wicked and opposing what is good. Paul then uses a

litotes, an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of the contrary, to explain the reason for such perversity and evil - not all have faith. ■ Some of those that do not believe the truth become active adversaries of those who do. Paul and his companions had plenty of experience with this and therefore wanted the Thessalonians to pray that God would rescue them in the future from such men including the current situation in Corinth. Acts 18:1-6 records that it did not take very long for some of the Jews there to resist and blaspheme, so Paul had a reason to be afraid there would be a repeat of what had happened in Thessalonica and Berea.

■ Acts 17:5-15 records that when Paul and his companions were in Thessalonica some of the Jews there had become jealous when they saw Gentiles being converted to Christ without having to become proselytes to Judaism first. Their jealousy made them perverse. They then took with them wicked men from the marketplace and formed a mob (vs. 5). It became so dangerous that the brethren sent Paul and Silas to Berea that night (vs. 10). It was not long before the same Jews come to Berea and stirred up the crowds there (vs. 13) resulting in the Brethren sending Paul to Athens for his safety. God had rescued Paul, Silas and Timothy in this case by intervening and having the Brethren send them away. A similar rescue would take place in Ephesus as recorded in Acts 19. But God had also rescued Paul in many other ways in the past.

■ When Paul and Silas were in jail in Philippi, God rescued them through an earthquake that unshackled them and broke open the prison doors, and then a scared jailer that needed to hear the gospel who then cared for them (Acts 16:22-33). The fact that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens rescued them from greater danger several times (Acts 16:37-39; 22:25-26; 25:16-21). Acts 14 records that when Paul had been in Lystra that jealous Jews from Antioch and Iconium came and stirred up a crowd resulting in Paul being stoned until they thought he was dead and then dragged out of the city. God rescued Paul by raising him back up so that he went back into the city.

Paul had seen God rescue him many times in many ways from both perverse jealous Jews who in anger forsook the Mosaic law they claimed to be defending and from wicked Gentiles. Paul was confident in God as we shall see in verses 3-4, yet he wants the Thessalonians to pray for him and his companions. ■ Why? Because Paul understood that it was wrong to presume upon God (Deut. 6:16), so he wanted to make sure that God would continue to be petitioned on his behalf in the future. Please keep that in mind as you pray. It is not one and done, but neither it is incessant repetition that Jesus warned about in the Sermon on the Mount. Prayer is to keep you in close communication with God by thanking Him for what He has done and petitioning Him to continue to grant those mercies and grace to you.

■ God would answer the prayers for Paul many times in the future. The first answer is in Acts 18:9-10, ⁹ *And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."* Paul would minister in Corinth for a year and a half. The Lord also protected him later when he got back to Jerusalem. Acts 21 records that a mob had formed and was about to kill Paul in the Temple's court of the Gentiles when the Roman military commander, Claudius Lysias, intervened and saved Paul's life by arresting him. He intervened in a similar manner the next day when Paul gave his defense before the Sanhedrin and a great dissension began to develop. The next day a plot to assassinate Paul was revealed by Paul's nephew and the Roman commander transferred Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea where he would be safe (Acts 23:12-35).

■ Confidence in the Lord - 2 Thessalonians 3:3-4

Paul directed the Thessalonians to pray for him and his missionary team, and now in verses 3-4 he turns the focus back to the Lord's work among them. He begins with a direct statement about the character of God that is the basis for all prayer and which would give them confidence in the persecution they were facing. ■ *"But the Lord is faithful."* That statement alone is so powerful that it would be easy to write many books upon it in which it is demonstrated in the Scriptures and in the stories of the lives of

believers. Faithful, πιστός / pistos, is the quality of being trustworthy. It is someone who is dependable, reliable, and can be counted on to keep their word.

■ There are two qualities needed to be faithful. The first is integrity. You must be someone who is honest and keeps your promises. My favorite description of this is in Psalm 15:4 - *“he swears to his own hurt and does not change.”* You fulfill your promise even if circumstances change and keeping your word will be detrimental to yourself. Every Christian should be developing this quality so that it is a part of their character. God has perfect integrity for He is always true, never lies (John 3:33; Titus 1:2), He does not change (Malachi 3:6) and fulfills every one of His promises (Numbers 23:19).

■ The second quality needed to be faithful is ability. This limits the faithfulness of humans because there are times it does not matter how much you want to fulfill your promise, it can become humanly impossible. You also may have good intentions, but a lack of wisdom can result in consequences that are opposite of what was desired. We are finite creatures so we are limited in what we can actually do despite our best efforts. That is not true of God. He is infinite in every respect so nothing can thwart Him carrying out His will. You can trust God to be true to His own character which includes always fulfilling His promises. You can also trust that following His commands and directions for life will accomplish what is best in fulfilling His purpose for your life. He does cause all things to work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

■ Because the Lord is faithful Paul could assure the Thessalonians that He would strengthen them and protect them from the evil. Strengthen here, (στηρίζω / stārizō), is the same word we saw last week in 2 Thess. 2:17. It means to fix something so that it is held fast and is unmoveable. In this context it refers to not being moved out of place by the evil they would encounter in this life. ■ Protect (φυλάσσω / phulassō) arises from the word for watchman and so refers to the activities of protecting those under his watch from any danger that might arise. For that reason it is variously translated as guard, observe, watch, keep and protect. In this case it is the Lord that is the watchman that protects His people from what is evil.

■ The word evil here is the same as in the previous verse referring to active moral corruption, of being wicked and opposing what is good. The term here is actually *“the evil,”* and there is a question as whether this is referring to the evil one, Satan, or a broader principle of evil in the world, and so translations vary. While there are some strong reasons to take this as a reference to Satan, I take it as a broader reference for a couple of reasons. First, Paul had just directed them to pray for God to rescue them from perverse and evil men, so it is hard to imagine his words of encouragement to them is limited to God protecting them from just Satan. Second, God’s faithfulness in the commands and directions He gives for life and to His promises of protection encompass much more than just Satan and any demonic influence that may arise from him. I will quickly mention a few of them. Some of these are promises. Some of them are directions for how to live or conditional statements.

■ James 4:7 - *“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

Ephesians 6:11–12 - ¹¹ *“Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

■ 1 Thessalonians 5:21 - *“But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good”*

1 John 4:1 - *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”*

Matthew 7:15–16 - ¹⁵ “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ “You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?”

■ 1 Corinthians 10:13 - “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

2 Peter 2:9 - “then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.”

■ 1 John 2:15–17 - ¹⁵ “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

Galatians 5:16–17 - ¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”

I think you get the idea. God will be faithful to do His part so that you can unmoveable in living for Him and protected from evil. However, you need to do your part by learning God’s commands and directions for life as well as His promises. Paul ties together trust in the Lord and human responsibility in verse 4.

“And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will [continue to] do what we command.” This confidence has two sources. ■ The primary source is the Lord because He is faithful. Paul knew that from both his knowledge of God’s word and through his own experience of seeing God at work throughout his life. This is in the perfect tense signifying that he had been persuaded of this a long time before and was still convinced of it.

■ The secondary source was in the Thessalonians themselves because he had seen first hand how they had responded to the Lord and what the missionaries had taught them, and the report from Timothy about them after delivering the first letter to them confirmed it. They were doing according the instructions Paul had given them from the word of the Lord and he was therefore confident that they would respond in the same manner to what he was telling them in this letter. They were doing and would continue to do in the future what Paul and his companions had commanded.

This would include not only the commands they had given when they were there and what was in the first letter to them, but also the ones that they would receive in this letter. That would include praying for the missionaries and the commands in the rest of the chapter.

■ Paul’s Prayer for Them - 2 Thessalonians 3:5

Paul concludes this section with his own prayer for them in verse 5, “And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.” ■ We see Paul’s balance one again in this. Though he is confident in both the Lord and what they will do in response, yet he prays because all of it is still dependent upon God being at work in them.

Paul’s petition is for the Lord to direct their hearts into two specific truths. The love of God and the steadfastness of Christ.

■ The word for direct here (κατευθύνω / kateuthunō) is a compound word which literally means “according to making straight,” and therefore in a context such as this, it is to guide, direct, lead, influence them so that they would follow the recommended course of action. That is what Paul wants God to do in their hearts. Remember that when “heart” is used metaphorically in both Greek and

Hebrew thought, it referred to the seat of human will and understanding and not emotion. Paul wanted God to direct their understanding so that their wills would be set properly.

■ The first area he wanted this to happen was *“into the love of God.”* It is important to understand that according to 1 John 4:19, *We love, because He first loved us.* Any love we have toward God is a response to our understanding of God’s love for us. I have consistently found in counseling that the foundational issue for whatever problem is being presented is a wrong view and understanding of God. God’s love arises from within Himself as part of His nature. Too many people think God’s love is conditional upon something outside Himself. The result is that some try to earn it which leads to all sorts of theological, social and emotional problems. Others go the opposite direction and think they deserve it demonstrating the spiritual blindness of pride. Still others fail to recognize how it should affect their lives and in their selfishness they trample on the sacrifice Jesus made which demonstrates God’s love. He did that while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8).

■ Paul wanted them to continually develop a deeper understanding of the nature and source of God’s love. That is what would enable them to withstand the evil that was around them, to flourish in the midst of persecution, and to live lives that would glorify God. The same is true for us. The greater your understanding of God’s love, the better able you will be to love both Him and other people.

■ The second area was for the Lord to guide them into the steadfastness of Christ. Steadfastness is *“the ability to bear up under difficult circumstances.”* It is the characteristic of being firm in purpose and loyalty regardless of trials and suffering. Jesus is the perfect example of this and therefore the model of how they could also endure. Hebrews 12:1-2 uses this same word in calling us to *“lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* Jesus was steadfast, so follow His example.

■Conclusions

Paul demonstrated to and taught the Thessalonians to be confident in God because the Lord is faithful. That is what enabled him to overcome fear and be at peace so that he could move forward boldly in serving the Lord despite the opposition, persecution and tribulation that he experienced so often. At the same time, he was quick to pray and solicit prayer so that he might be humbly dependent on God to do the things he was confident God wanted him to do.

You do not have to understand how God’s sovereignty and human responsibility interact with each other. You only have to live according to both. ■By faith you can be bold to move forward in obeying God’s commands and serving Him even in the midst of adversity while humbly petitioning Him to enable you to do what you are stepping out in faith to do. Prayer is the means to submit your human efforts and endeavors to His sovereignty by trusting Him to be true to His word. The Lord is faithful and He will strengthen and protect His own from evil just as He did for the Thessalonians.

■ May the Lord direct your hearts just as He did theirs into the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ.

Sermon Notes - July 18, 2021
PRAYER & CONFIDENCE - 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Introduction

_____ is important in life

2 Thess. 1 - Paul commends the Thessalonians while encouraging them about God's _____ justice

2 Thess 2 - Paul removes the cause of their being disturbed by explaining again _____ of the day of the Lord
Stand firm & hold to the traditions (word of God) that you were taught. _____ enables proper application

Paul's Prayer Requests - 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

Finally / furthermore - a transition to _____ subjects Paul will address

Brethren - The body of Christ is _____ family in which we are all adopted brothers and sisters of Christ
Paul's command is for them to be praying concerning "_____" - a reference to Paul, Silas and Timothy
Ephesians 6:19-20. Boldness in evangelism comes from relying on _____ to do His work through you

Prayer Concerning the Word of the Lord - 2 Thessalonians 3:1

The word of the Lord includes the gospel - but also encompasses _____ God has revealed in Scripture

The missionaries were striving to _____ the word of the Lord to those that had not heard it

"spread rapidly," τρέχει / trechē, metaphor arising from the word for _____ a race

The word of the Lord is glorified / honored when it is _____ & changes lives - has the victory

The Thessalonians were an _____ of the word of the Lord spreading rapidly and being glorified

This is a prayer request fitting for every true _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ

Prayer Concerning Rescue - 2 Thessalonians 3:2

Rescue (ρύομαι / hruomai) - to be delivered the _____ of some force or person

Perverse (ἄτοπος / atopos) means "out of place" referring to those who are inappropriate, _____ / fitting

Evil (πονηρός / ponāros) - _____ moral corruption - wicked and opposing what is good

Those that do not believe the truth can become active _____ of those who do

Acts 17: 5-15 - The active _____ of jealous Jews and wicked men against the missionaries

Acts 16:22-33 - Paul & Silas were rescued from jail in Philippi by an _____ and a scared jailer

Paul is confident God will rescue them - but wants _____ prayer for it is wrong to presume on God

God _____ this prayer while Paul was in Corinth (1 Cor. 18:9-10) and in Jerusalem (Acts 21)

Confidence in the Lord - 2 Thessalonians 3:3-4

The Lord is faithful - dependable, reliable, _____

_____ - honesty and keeping your promises. God never lies, does not change & always keeps His word

_____ - The Lord is infinite in all respects and His commands are perfect & He can do what He says

The Lord will strengthen - fix them so they are _____ - able to resist the evil in life

The Lord will protect - a _____ that guards them from dangers that arise

The evil - not just Satan & the demonic, but every _____ of evil: false teachers; temptation; the world, flesh
Jam. 4:7; Eph. 6:11-12; 1 Thess 5:21; 1 Jn 2:15-17; 4:1; Matt 7:15-16; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Pet. 2:9; Gal. 5:16-17

The primary source of confidence is Lord's _____ - known by God's word & experience

The secondary source was the Thessalonian _____ to what they had been taught in person & by letter

Paul's Prayer for Them - 2 Thessalonians 3:5

Though confident in the Lord & the Thessalonians, Paul prays because all of it is still _____ on God

Paul wants the Lord to direct / guide / lead their understanding & will (_____)

1 John 4:19 - "*We love, because He _____ loved us,*" and He loved us while we were sinners (Romans 5:8)

A better understanding of God's love enables both _____ in persecution and living for His glory

Steadfastness is "*the ability to bear up under difficult circumstances.*" _____ is the example - Heb. 12:1-2

Conclusions

You can be confident because the Lord is faithful & you pray so that you remain _____ upon God

By faith be _____ to obey God's commands & in humility petition Him to enable you to do it

May the Lord strengthen, protect and direct you as He did the _____

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – count how many times Paul is mentioned. Talk to your parents about why Paul was so confident in God and why he wanted others to pray for him.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. Outline the major themes in 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2. What does Paul discuss in the last chapter? Why does Paul keep using the term *brethren*? Who is the "us" in 2 Thess. 3:1? What are some of Paul's other requests for prayer? Why is it important to pray for God to make you wise and bold when sharing the gospel? How can He accomplish that in you? What does the "word of the Lord" refer to? Why did Paul want that to "spread rapidly" and be glorified through them. How did that happen among the Thessalonians? What should be the focus of the life of every missionary? Why did Paul want them to pray for their "rescue" - what were they to be rescued from? Describe the character of those who are "perverse" and "evil." How had God rescued Paul during his first missionary journey? His second missionary journey? How did Paul answer this prayer while he was in Corinth? In Jerusalem? What is the basis for having confidence in the Lord? What is faithfulness? What qualities are needed in order to be faithful? Why is the Lord the only one that can be truly faithful? Why did Paul want the Lord to strengthen them against evil? How would that be done? What evils does the Lord protect believers from? How does He accomplish that protection? List some verses that give either God's promises or directions that would protect someone from evil? How have you seen the truth of these verses applied in your own life? Why Paul be confident about that the Thessalonians would do? What would they do? What is the meaning of "direct" in 2 Thess. 3:5? What is the meaning of "heart" in that verse and how does God direct the hearts of Christians? What is the basis of God's love for people? How did God demonstrate that love? What is the basis for a human's love for God? How does a proper understanding of God's love enable Christians to endure persecution? To live a life that glorifies God? What is the steadfastness of Christ? How should that affect the life of a believer? How can you live according to the sovereignty of God and according to human responsibility even if you do not understand how they interact? How bold are you in serving Christ? How should you pray so that you either become bold or remain bold?