

Thankful for the Salvation of Friends

2 Thessalonians 2: 13-17

Paul was certainly thankful for the opportunity to minister in Thessalonica and for the advancement of the Gospel there. Thessalonica was the capital city of Macedonia. It enjoyed a strategic location within the Roman Empire. The Roman Road, known as the Egnatian Way, served as Main Street for Thessalonica. This important roadway stretched from the Adriatic Sea all the way to the Middle East. Trade and commerce were abundant in Thessalonica, along with a steady stream of visitors and merchants. The area was ripe for the Gospel.

The prosperity of the city also brought certain challenges. With Thessalonica being such a large city, reaching a population of 200,000 during its height, anything and everything was available there. There were many unsaved people to reach, and yet there was great opposition and controversy concerning the Gospel. Paul was forced to confront the false doctrine being taught regarding the Lord's return. He also felt compelled to encourage believers concerning their persecution. Paul was thankful for every believer and wanted them to prosper spiritually.

In this passage Paul reveals his thankfulness for the church in Thessalonica. As we approach Thanksgiving, I too am thankful for those of like faith. I want to look at the [reflections](#) Paul offers concerning the church as we consider: [Being Thankful for the Salvation of Friends](#).

I. His Praise for Companionship (13a) – Paul offers praise unto the Lord for the companionship he enjoyed with fellow believers. We discover:

A. It was Compelling (13a) – [But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you](#). Paul felt compelled to thank the Lord continually for those of like faith. He sensed a pressing obligation to offer praise unto God for the salvation of others. He was not in the journey alone and God had been faithful to save those who looked to Him through faith.

- I am certainly thankful for those whom the Lord has allowed me to fellowship with in this life, fellow believers of like faith. I have never experienced the acceptance and love among the world that is present within the church. We all ought to be thankful for one another!

B. It was Convincing (13a) – [But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord](#). Paul wasn't referring to ordinary people; these were special. They were not unlike others in appearance or worth, but they were part of the beloved. These were family, part of the body of Christ. Paul rejoiced for those who had been saved as he had! He could relate to them. They shared a common bond in Christ.

- Aren't you thankful for the church? Isn't it good to have fellowship with those who know you and the Lord you serve? We share a common bond this world knows nothing of. All of the saved are placed within the body of Christ. We draw strength from one another. We find encouragement together. We share our burdens, our hurts, and our cares. We belong to the Lord!

II. His Praise for Conversion (13b-14) – Paul also rejoices in the salvation of others. He has experienced salvation and offers praise for the salvation of others. Apart from one's own salvation, there is no greater experience than to witness the salvation of another. Notice, Paul offers:

A. Praise for Sovereignty (13b) – *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation...* As he considered the salvation of his brethren, Paul was aware of the sovereignty of God. From the beginning God had chosen them for salvation. Long before man ever needed a Savior, and long before he ever realized his lost condition, God had a plan and means of salvation. Prior to the creation of man, God had ordained His Son to become the sacrifice for the sin and fall of man. The Lord made the way for humanity to be saved through Christ the Lord.

- Isn't that amazing? God knew we would all sin and need a Savior. He knew the only way of redemption was through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son. Somewhere in eternity past a sovereign God made provision for our salvation. He chose to make a way of reconciliation for us.

B. Praise for Sanctification (13b) – *because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth.* Paul knew the great difficulty the church in Thessalonica faced. There was much false doctrine being spread concerning the return of Christ. They faced great opposition for their faith. Many likely wondered how they would make it and if their faith would endure. Paul offered words of comfort as he praised the Lord for their sanctification. He knew the Lord would enable them to endure through the Spirit. He knew as the believers walked with the Lord, their faith would increase as they matured in Christ.

- We too need to be thankful for the growth of one another. We all benefit from the continued growth and strength of the body as a whole. Our world is filled with much to entice and distract those who seek to follow the Lord. Continued sanctification, becoming more like Christ, is essential for the church to prosper! As the world offers things that appeal to the flesh, we must continue to seek the Lord and a closer relationship with Him.

C. Praise for Sufficiency (14) – [Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ](#). Although the believers may have felt alone in many circumstances, Paul knew the source of their strength. They had been saved by the grace of God, indwelt with the Spirit unto sanctification, and they would receive power to overcome in Christ. They would face nothing the Lord couldn't see them through.

- Many worried they had missed out on the return of the Lord. They were living in fear, but their fears were unfounded. They had not missed the Lord's return and all the saved would experience His coming in great power. He has ascended back to the Father, but He is coming again just as He said He would. There was no reason for fear then and there is no reason for fear now. We have a blessed hope and unwavering assurance through Christ our Lord. [Col.3:4 – When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory](#). [2 Cor.4:17 – For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory](#).

III. A Prayer for Commitment (15) – [Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle](#). In light of the difficulties and uncertainties they faced, Paul urged them to stand fast in their faith, walking in the ways of the Lord, and continuing in His Word. The trials would not cease, but they did not have to live in defeat and despair. If they would but remain committed to the Lord, He would enable them to endure.

- What a challenge that presents to us as well. We live in a world that is changing rapidly. Long held standards and traditions have been abandoned for the ways of the world and political correctness. We are continually urged to abandon our convictions in order to conform to the demands of society. There is a great need in our day for those who will stay true to the Lord and live according to His Word. We need those who will remain faithful to share the truth even though it is denied and rejected by most. Our world needs the light of the Gospel. If the church refuses to shine, the world will be consumed in darkness.

- I want to point out that Paul began his prayer for commitment with the word "therefore." That was not by chance. He had just spoken of the great salvation they had received through Christ. He reveals that commitment is not optional. This is not merely a recommendation for us, but rather a requirement. We must remain committed to the Lord and His Word! [1 Cor.15:58 – Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord](#). [Phil.1:27 – Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel](#).

IV. A Prayer for Confidence (16-17) – Finally Paul seeks their confidence in the Lord. Consider:

A. The Power Involved (16) – Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. He reminds the believers they are not alone in the journey. They enjoy the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and that of God the Father as well. As long as they are in Christ, what could possibly come their way that would result in defeat?

- We too face difficulties and adversity, but we enjoy a power working within us that is stronger than any the world possesses. We are more than conquerors through Christ our Lord. He has saved us and He will keep us throughout eternity!

B. The Peace Involved (16-17a) – Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,^[17] Comfort your hearts. As they faced adversity, they could rest in the consolation and good hope of grace. Surely this afforded them a great measure of comfort while dealing with difficulty.

- There has never been a promise that life would be easy and void of difficulty, but we have a source of strength and comfort through Christ. We must remember that our life on earth is but a temporary stay. There is hope and assurance in the Lord. We are recipients of the grace of God unto everlasting life!

C. The Preparation Involved (17b) – and stablish you in every good word and work. These were not asked to endure the trials of life alone or apart from any assistance. As they walked with the Lord, He would equip them for the journey ahead. While they may have been weak and frail, the Lord is strong and mighty. They would be able to accomplish the work they were called to do by the help of the Lord.

- Our failures often result from depending on our own strength and abilities. I am thankful we do not walk alone. Our Lord is an ever present help in our times of trouble. We have the Spirit to guide our steps and equip us for the task ahead. We must rely on the Lord and stand firm in the strength He gives.

Conclusion: Paul rejoiced for those of like faith. He was thankful for their fellowship and their work for the Lord. While the work was difficult, they were not alone. He sought to encourage them in their faith. If they were in Christ, they were secure.

We too face great difficulty at times and things will continue to get worse. Thankfully we have a source of strength for our trials. I am thankful for each of you as well and the comfort you

give. It is comforting to know we have others in the battle with us. However, one must know Christ to know real peace and security. I want to meet you all in heaven, but salvation is the only way. Do you know Christ as your Savior? If not, seek Him while there is time and opportunity.