

Having Done All, Stand 1 Thessalonians 2: 14-16

It has been a few weeks since we began to study this powerful letter to the Thessalonian church. Our last encounter revealed Paul encouraging the church to be an imitator of Christ rather than a pretender of the faith. He exhorted them to a life of godliness before men. Clearly, we need those who are genuine and sincere in our day as well.

Actually, these verses are a continuation of that same line of thought. The church at Thessalonica faced intense persecution and opposition. They were oppressed on every hand. But, even in the face of such mounting opposition, they would not be deterred. They were confident in their faith and committed to serving the Lord.

The verses we have read deal with two types of people: the oppressed and the oppressors. We will look at both in detail. As I studied these verses, I was reminded of what Paul instructed the Ephesian believers. [Eph.6:13 – Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.](#) As we consider the [details](#) of these two groups, I want to preach on the thought: [Having Done All, Stand.](#)

I. The Consideration of the Oppressed (14) – [For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.](#) This is basically a reminder of those fundamental principles that Paul had already spoken of, but often repetition is the best teacher. Notice:

A. Their Association – This is the fourth time Paul has referred to them as [brethren](#). He is reminding them, yet again, of their association to him, the church, and the Lord. They were not in this in and of themselves. They were part of the church; they belonged to the Lord.

- The children of God are born again, redeemed and set free from sin. We have an Advocate with the Father, who stands and pleads our case. We have the comfort and guidance of the Spirit. Life often is hard to bear, but when we consider to whom we belong, it is much easier. Being part of the church brings comfort, and it also ought to challenge us. We are obligated to maintain our fellowship, walking with the Lord.

B. Their Imitation – This is the second time Paul speaks of the church being [followers](#). Clearly, he is emphasizing the importance of following the Lord and the teachings of His Word. Remember this literally means to be an “*imitator*.”

▪ Surely you would agree that we need to be followers, in fact imitators, of the Lord and His righteousness. We ought to be more like Jesus every day. We ought to continually be in a state of transformation into His likeness! [1 Pet.2:21 – For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:](#) [Rom.12:2 – And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.](#)

▪ It is interesting that Paul mentioned that they were [followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus](#). They followed the godly example of the Judean churches. This speaks volumes to me. I am convinced the cultures were much different. Judea had a different lifestyle than Thessalonica. They weren't prejudice or judgmental, following their example of godliness.

C. Their Affliction – [The church in Thessalonica had suffered much by their own countrymen.](#)

Those who knew them best had persecuted them the worst. Much of their opposition wasn't from those without, but from within. That is a sad reality, but it is true nonetheless. We often face hurtful and even damaging opposition from those whom we would never expect. Often those who know us best can hurt us the worst.

D. Their Confirmation – Paul revealed an interesting statement: [even as they have of the Jews](#). He is speaking of the adversity the Judean churches had faced by their own countrymen, the Jews. The church in Jerusalem was not immune to suffering and difficulty and they were not either. This was a reality they needed to accept. The enemy will not stand idly by while the church prospers.

▪ This maybe didn't appear to be an encouragement, but it confirmed some things in Paul's heart. They were doing enough to be noticed. They were fruitful for the Lord and the enemy had attacked. I certainly don't welcome or look forward to adversity, but I would hope we are accomplishing enough for the Lord to be noticed of the enemy. [2 Tim.3:12 – Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.](#)

II. The Character of the Oppressors (15) – [Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:](#) Paul is speaking specifically of the Jews who sought to hinder the gospel and oppress the church. Much of what he spoke of had happened prior to the founding of the Thessalonian church, but it reveals the true character of those who seek to hinder the gospel. This gives us valuable insight to our day as well. Whether they be Jew or Gentile, those who seek to oppress the church are much the same. Consider:

A. Their Focus (15a) – *Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets.* Paul speaks of the deviant character of those who oppose the Lord and His truth. They were committed to preventing the message of the gospel. They hated the Lord, consenting to the death of an innocent Man. They were even willing to kill their own prophets if their message was not what they wanted to hear. Being a prophet of God in the majority of Old Testament life was not easy or welcomed.

- This reminds me of the lengths that Satan and those who follow him will go to accomplish their purpose, opposing the church. The world will stop at nothing to silence the voice of the gospel. It is evident many today have made that their life goal, to hinder and oppose the church.

B. Their Fortitude – *and have persecuted us.* The opposition didn't stop with the crucifixion of Jesus. In fact, these hateful Jews actively pursued Paul wherever he went, stirring up trouble and opposing the church.

- This determination continues today, around the world and even here in America. The gospel is under more intense attack today than it has been in generations. The rise of Islam is a key player in that attack. Our own government is careful not to offend the Muslim, but quick to oppress the Christian! This will not get any better; in fact, it will continue to get worse.

C. Their Folly – *and they please not God, and are contrary to all men.* The religious Jews actually thought they pleased God with their rejection of Jesus and opposition to the church. They were blinded to the truth. They are *contrary* or *hostile* toward all who preach truth.

- Many today think they are doing the world a favor, and some even believe they are right with God in opposing the church. Many are no longer willing to stand and proclaim truth because they want to please men. Some here at home would rather compromise doctrine for the sake of cooperation than confront people with the truth of God's Word! They believe that those who stand for truth are the problem and that they are the ones truly pleasing the Lord.

III. The Corruption of the Oppressors (16) – *Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.* Those who oppressed the church were filled with corruption and contempt. Notice the enormity of corruption.

A. Their Resistance – These actually sought to forbid Paul to share the gospel with the Gentiles, *that they might be saved.* They had no concern for them or their need for salvation. These heard-hearted Jews could have cared less if all the Gentile race remained in their sin. (That is quite

ironic when you think about it; they hadn't received the gospel themselves.) The word forbidding actually carries the idea of "*hindering*." They did everything they could to hinder Paul and his work.

- The rebellious Jews were unable to prevent the gospel from spreading and man is inadequate to prevent it today. There will always be those who seek to hinder the church and the gospel, but we serve One who is more than able to overcome the will of man and accomplish His divine will! We must trust the Lord by faithfully proclaiming the gospel and leave the results up to Him. His Word will not return void!

B. Their Rebellion – [Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.](#) These had one priority and that was to please the flesh. They carried religion upon their sleeves, but their hearts were far from God. They were determined to satisfy the flesh while pretending to serve the Lord. Their hearts were filled with sin continually.

- Things have not changed in our generation. As long as men live upon this earth, there will be those whose sole desire is to please the flesh. That should come as no surprise; the flesh presents the greatest battle to most anyway. That is why it is so important that we deny the flesh and seek the Lord. [Rom.13:14 – But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.](#)

C. Their Ruin – These would create difficulty for a time, but God had not overlooked their wicked ways. He will ultimately judge those who deny His tender mercies and seek to hinder others from the faith. We are in the midst of difficult days, but the church will prevail. We may face more adversity than we could imagine, but God will prevail. The church is not going down; she is going up. [Rom.2:6 – Who will render to every man according to his deeds:](#) [Rom.2:9-10 – Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;](#) ^[10] [But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.](#)

Conclusion: By many outward appearances, it may have appeared that the oppressors had an upper hand on the oppressed, but one day the tables will be turned. We are more than conquerors through Christ our Lord. We must not allow the difficulties of life to hinder our labor or our faith. When we have done all we can, we just need to stand!

Where are you with Christ today? Have you received Him as your personal Savior? Are you willing to embrace the gospel and receive Christ or do you stand in opposition to all that is godly? Christ came to save sinners. There is hope for you if you are unsaved.