

2 Thessalonians: Return of the King

Lesson 3: Practical Wisdom for Everyday Life

I. Introduction - Paul wrote the 2 Thessalonians in 51-52 A.D. shortly after writing the first letter to the church in Thessalonica.

A. The main reason Paul wrote this letter is to clear up confusion because of erroneous teaching and flat out lies that had been spoken in the name of Paul particularly around the return of Jesus. It has a harsher tone than the first letter.

1. The erroneous teaching was Jesus had already returned. Some took things Paul taught in the first letter about the day of the Lord and said this event had already happened. This left many in the church hopeless.
2. Many theologians believe that a letter had been forged in Paul's name and was being circulated in Thessalonica. This helps explain **2 Thessalonians 3:17**.

B. Tonight we are going to close the letter, by looking at practical wisdom Paul give for everyday life (while we wait for the return of Jesus).

II. Practical Wisdom for Everyday Life

A. **2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 Paul's Request for Prayer**

1. **Verses 1-2** One of the the areas we can't emphasize enough is the importance of prayer. After James was martyred in **Acts 12**, Peter was arrested. When this happened the church began to pray without ceasing for his release. There is an implication if they would have done this for James, he may have been released.
 - a. Paul prayed the word of God would run swiftly (this is what changes people). It builds us up and gives us an inheritance.
 - b. Paul prayed for deliverance from those who did not have faith.
3. **Verse 3** Paul again reminds this church about the faithfulness of God in the midst of persecution. God will protect, but we must pray - **Psalm 91**.
4. **Verse 4** Paul makes a prophetic declaration over this church. He calls out "the God" in them. We need to do this for each other and not just focus on the bad.
5. **Verse 5** God directs our hearts into his love and patience, but we must follow the leading. **Proverbs 23:19** says to *hear and be wise and guide our heart in the way*. The direction of God for our heart is linked to our hearing. Directing our heart isn't automatic, it comes through relationship and obedience.

B. **2 Thessalonians 3:6 -15 Living an Orderly Lifestyle**

1. **Verse 6** Paul says to withdraw (have no fellowship) with those who walk disorderly and not according to the tradition and of the apostles.

- a. atakto- disorderly, out of ranks (often so of soldiers), irregular, inordinate, immoderate pleasures, deviating from the prescribed order.
 - b. The context is talking about those who don't work and are busybodies.
 - c. This doesn't mean we withdraw from people who make mistakes. We are to go to them, then take 2 or 3 witnesses, and then bring it before the whole church, but if they won't repent we are to withdraw (a little leaven leavens the whole lump and losing godly fellowship can motivate people to change).
2. **Verses 7-12** When we were in *1 Thessalonians 2* we saw how Paul provided for himself and didn't take an offering so he wasn't a burden on anyone.
 - a. Paul dealt with this issue in the first letter and this issue wasn't corrected as the issue on sexual immorality so he had to readdress.
 - b. Many stopped working because of the belief Jesus was about to return and/or had already returned - importance of sound doctrine.
 3. **Verse 13** The reason this verse is in the Bible is because it is natural to grow weary when doing good and we aren't seeing the promise. This is where we aren't to be natural, we are to be supernatural and believe God's word.
 4. **Verses 14-15** Paul says to note the brother who won't obey the word of this letter. The specific context is being disorderly. The other time, this idea is used in scripture is **Romans 16:17** with divisiveness.
 - a. Why does God tell us to withdraw from people? When they are unrepentant, it hurts the body (a little leaven leavens the lump) and they misrepresent Christ to the world.
 - b. **Matthew 18:15-17**

C. **2 Thessalonians 3:16-18**

1. **Verse 16** God's nature is peace, which is what God provides (wholeness in every of our lives/peace in the midst of the storm not just in the absence of it).
2. **Verse 17** Paul emphasizes he wrote the letter (not a forgery)
3. **Verse 18** Paul commends them to the grace (unmerited favor and ability of God. We need this favor to make it in a challenging world.

III. Conclusion - There are many ways to manifest the kingdom of God. Sometimes we do this through preaching, sometimes we do it through miracles, and other times we do it through demonstrating personal responsibility. All our necessary in helping reach the world with the reality of God's kingdom.

A. Call Up Prayer Team

B. Receive Offering and Closing Prayer - **Proverbs 3:9-10**