

God's Own Faithfulness

Key Verse: *“The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.”*
—II Thessalonians 3:3

Selected Scripture: *II Thessalonians 3*
have free course.” (II Thess. 3:1) As the chosen apostle to the Gentiles, he realized that much work lay before him yet, and the fervent prayers of the brethren would be much needed.

The Key Verse of this lesson lays out for us three important features of God's supervision of our lives. First, he is faithful—he will never leave us nor forsake us. Second, he establishes us—firmly planting us upon the foundation of Christ. Third, he keeps us from evil—not necessarily according to the flesh, but he keeps us from all spiritual harm. Although these are all things God is doing on our behalf, we have responsibilities as well. Paul lays out some of these to the Thessalonian brethren and to us in the remaining verses of this chapter.

Having corrected their understanding of the times and seasons (see the previous lesson) related to Christ's Second Coming, Paul's first exhortation in this final chapter

IN THIS FINAL CHAPTER

of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, he leaves them numerous exhortations and admonitions to be used in their Christian walk. We, too, benefit from these same teachings even today. First, though, Paul asked the brethren to pray for him, “that the word of the Lord may

is appropriately in this regard, that they be directed “into the patient waiting for Christ.” (vs. 5) He knew it would require much in the way of patient endurance for them to maintain their walk in Christ, and we likewise today. ‘Patient waiting’ also includes the thought of continuance and constancy, two other necessary elements for the Lord’s people as they walk in the narrow way.

Paul further admonished the brethren that they withdraw from those who walk disorderly, remembering the example he had left when he was with them, “for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.” (vss. 6,7) He admonished them to work for their own food, also as he had done. (vss. 8-10) Evidently there had been some who were not following Paul’s example along these lines, but who were “disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies.” (vs. 11) He exhorted them to more properly work with “quietness,” and “eat their own bread.”—vs. 12

“Be not weary in well doing” was Paul’s next admonition. (vs. 13) The narrow way is long and difficult. Doing good in this present world of sin is not easy, and with our fallen flesh to contend with, it might be easy to become weary of doing that which is righteous. In another place, Paul says, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” (Gal. 6:9) The final admonition to the Thessalonian brethren was that they be watchful as to any of their fellowship who did not obey the words of this letter. Even in such cases, however, the proper spirit of love must be manifested, “Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”—II Thess. 3:15

Summarizing Paul’s second epistle to the Thessalonians, we find a mixture of encouragement, doctrinal correction and clarification, exhortation to faithfulness, and practical admonitions for the body of Christ. As these were helpful to the brethren of the Early Church, so let them be with us living during the harvest of the present Gospel Age. ■