

A. 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 rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith – Here is now Paul’s closing statements, as indicated by **“finally, brethren.”** He means to address those few issues which still remain necessary for the Thessalonians, after Timothy’s visit to them. Paul requests that they would **“pray for us,”** a frequent request of Paul (Rom 15:30, 2 Cor 1:11, Eph 6:19, Col 4:3). And his specific request is **“that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you.”** Learn here, that the Apostle believes that prayer is an effective *means* for bringing about God’s will in the world, even as we strive to carry out God’s will with our own hands. We don’t just pray and sit idly by awaiting God to somehow spread the Gospel, but rather we, like Paul, both **“pray”** to God and work diligently to carry out His will in the world. Here specifically, that the Gospel would **“spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you.”** Of course he refers to that amazing miracle of evangelical service that took place from the revival that broke out as a result of the Thessalonians obedience to the Great Commission, which Paul had mentioned in 1 Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8 - 6 You also **became imitators of us and of the Lord**, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 **For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth**, so that we have no need to say anything. NASB

Here the Apostle teaches that revival happens by the means of both prayer and obedience. Surely our hearts are stirred as we read about these young Thessalonians believers, wondering of God would be so gracious as to carry out such a great work among us, if we would simply look to God in prayer and then simply carry out what he has commanded. But Paul not only requests that the Gospel should go forth with power, but that he would be kept safe from the harm of those unbelieving heathens who would harm a Christian Missionary. Even though the Christian comes in peace, bearing the message of peace with no sword in hand, the sons of the devil would seek his life. Paul requests prayer, not only for himself, but also for the Thessalonians, as verse 3 indicates. His request, **“that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.”** Here he identifies the fact that the reason that perverse and evil men persecute Christians, is that they do not **“have faith.”** Some argue that Paul speaks here specifically of those Jews who are enraged to violence by the Gospel, who sought his harm in the Greco-Roman world. Regardless of whether this is true, we know that people of true saving faith actually propagate the Gospel, in contrast to **“perverse and evil men”** who do not **“have faith.”**

2 Thessalonians 3:3-5 - 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 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ. NASU

A. 3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one – Yet again, Paul will remind them of the fact that the security in the faith is in the hands of God, and reminds them that **“the Lord is faithful.”** And what is He faithful to do? **“To strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”** Notice how Paul shifts the emphasis from himself and his own persecution, to the Thessalonians and their security from the **“evil one,”** because of God’s **“strength”** and **“protection.”** Dear Christian, see here a powerful and magnificent promise from God, **“the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”** Learn here, that if a Christian sheep were to fall prey to the deception of the evil one to the point of perishing, it will be at the failure of God to **“strengthen and protect”** them, as this verse plainly describes Christ’s office of shepherd, as effective to **“protect”** us from the deception of that wolf.

And this we know is not possible, because God is faithful to both **“strengthen and protect”** us from his deception, and Paul clearly ascribes our perseverance to the keeping power of Christ and His faithfulness.

B. 4 We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command – In describing their perseverance in **“what we command,”** which he describes back in verse 2:15 as **“traditions,”** he yet again ascribes their obedience primarily to Christ when he says, **“We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command.”** Notice the emphasis on **“doing”** the things the **“we command.”** The Christian faith is one filled with high and holy commandments given by our Lord and His Apostles in the New Testament, which are to be fully obeyed. And this obedience is a sign of true saving faith that has been wrought in a person by God’s regenerating power. This is clearly seen as Paul assigns their perseverance in obedience to his **“commands,”** as Christ’s faithful work in them, and in contrast to falling prey to the **“evil one.”** And even though it be true that Christ work obedience in us by His faithfulness, nevertheless we are charged to carry out obedience to His commands with our own hands.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 - 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 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, that you may be able to endure it.** NASB

C. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ – See here yet another benediction from Paul seeking to encourage them to again that having their **“hearts”** directed **“into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ,”** is a work that God works in them, for it is **“the Lord”** who **“directs our hearts”** into these things. Even Christian obedience is ascribed to God, for He alone is to receive the glory for the work of salvation he has wrought in our hearts, because His love for Him which he has placed there, and it is obedience and **“steadfastness”** which is the proof and fruit of our love to Him, which He has placed in our hearts by the regenerating work of the Spirit. This is why Paul can elsewhere tell us to **“work out our own salvation,”** and yet describe that as being the very work of God within us, **“both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”**

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work** for His good pleasure. NASB

See here in these verses, 2:13-3:5, that a strong emphasis is placed on many aspects of God’s work in salvation. Not only has He **“chosen us from the beginning for salvation,”** (v-2:13), but He is working **“sanctification by the Spirit”** in us through the gift of **“faith in the truth”** (v-2:13). He also **“called us by His Gospel”** (v-2:14), so that we could ultimately **“gain the glory”** of Christ in glorification (v-2:14). He further **“comforts and strengthens”** us in such a way that it produces **“every good work and word”** (v-2:17) with His **“good hope by grace.”** Because He is **“faithful”** to **“strengthen and protect us from the evil one”** (v-3:3), we **“will continue to do what He commands”** (v-3:4), as He **“directs our hearts into His love and steadfastness.”** These expressions of God’s sovereign work not only in the election to salvation (His past work), but also in the many and varied aspects of sanctification (His present work), and also in our final glorification, all because of His sovereign love and grace, should cause us to clearly see what the Bible means by the expression that salvation belongs to the Lord (Psalm 3:8). It is all His work from first to last, and He is to get the glory for it, from us, who are the objects of His grace, for every aspect of it. It is of these glorious things that we will sing forever and ever, in the presence of the Lamb, and to His and the Father’s glory, world without end. May our lives reflect a constant gratitude for His amazing love to us, according to His eternal purpose in Christ.