

High Peaks Bible Fellowship

Confidence in God's Faithfulness (2 Thessalonians 3:1-5)

Paul asks for prayer (2 Thess. 3:1-2)

His command to pray:

- Pray concerning us = a present tense imperative, "Keep on praying continually!" (see 1 Th 5:25)

The content of Paul's two-fold request:

1. First Paul requests prayer for the progress of the Word of the Lord

- Spread rapidly = literally, "run" or have swift progress throughout the world.
 - This idea was found in the Old Testament (see Ps 147:15).
 - It was also drawn from the culture of Paul's own day (see Rom 9:16; 1 Cor 9:24; Gal 2:2; Phil 2:16; 2 Tim 4:7).
- Be glorified = be honored; have its importance and power acknowledged.
- Just as with you = "as it did in your case" (see 1 Th 1:6).

2. Now Paul requests prayer for the safety of the messengers of the Word

- We may be rescued (*ruomai*) = to be dragged out of harm's way; to be delivered (see 1 Th 1:10).
- Perverse (*atopos*) = literally, "out of place" = improper, unreasonable, unrighteous.
- Evil (*poneros*) = wicked; also contains the idea of being full of labor, toil, annoyances, hardships, and peril.

Paul is confident that God will help the Thessalonians do what is right (2 Thess. 3:3-4)

- But... = "enough about me -- now, about you!"
- Faithful is the Lord = this is a direct contrast to the previous phrase "not all have faith." Even though not everyone *believes* the truth, the Lord is still to be *believed in* as being faithful to His promises!
- He will strengthen = to set in a fixed position, establish, confirm one's mind (same verb as in 1 Th 3:13 and 2 Th 2:17).
- Protect (*phulasso*) = to guard, watch over, keep safe. God will not establish or strengthen them and then leave them alone -- He will guard and protect them afterwards.
- From the evil one = the context indicates that this refers to Satan (see 2 Th 2:9). The evil one always seeks to destroy "every good work and word."
- Confidence in the Lord (*peitho*) = persuasion, assurance, a state of trust. This is the perfect tense: "We became persuaded concerning you and that persuasion is still with us now." Paul's confidence was not in the Thessalonians, but in the Lord -- in the faithfulness of God on their behalf.
- You are doing and will do = the present and future tenses of *poieo* (to do or make). This word also means to act rightly or to do well.
- What we command = to give an order or a commission to a task.

Paul [again] prays for them (2 Thess. 3:5)

- May the Lord = the optative mood expresses a wish for the future (see 2 Th 2:16-17). Paul is praying for them again!
- Direct your hearts = to make straight; to lay out a smooth and direct route.
- Into the love (agape) of God = Paul prays that their hearts would be directed into the sphere or realm of the unselfish, sacrificial love that is characteristic of God Himself. This would provide increasing appreciation for God's own love for them, as well as the ability to express this kind of love to others (see 1 Th 1:3; 3:6, 12; 5:13; 2 Th 1:3).
- Into the steadfastness (hupomone) of Christ = literally, "abiding under." This is the kind of patience that grows only under trial and affliction. The Thessalonians (and we) need this kind of steadfastness in order to endure affliction in a godly manner.

Points of Application:

- We, too, should pray for those who minister to us. Christian leaders are men "*subject to like passions as we are*" (James 5:17), and they need our prayer support.
- We need to be reminded that the Lord is faithful. He will strengthen and protect us.
- We should ask ourselves, "Will God find me doing what I know to be right? Am I doing (present) and will I do (future) what He commands?" With God's help, I will.
- We, too, should pray that God would provide a direct way for us to increase in *agape* love and to exhibit the kind of endurance in our circumstances that Christ demonstrated for us.

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Our primary purpose is to uphold the truths of the Word of God.

I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)

Our primary responsibility is to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-12)