Tonight as we resume our series of messages from I and II Thessalonians, let’s turn in our Bibles to II Thessalonians chapter two.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 (NKJV)

13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,

17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

PRAYER

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Introduction

For the second time in about four months, the Thessalonians had gathered to hear a public reading of a letter sent to them by the apostle Paul.

They had just heard about some dreadful time in the future when there is going to be “a great apostasy” or “a great falling away” from the truth. And they had just learned that some diabolical human being called “the man of sin” or “the son of perdition” is going to rise up and deceive masses of people all across the world with his lies and deceptive miracles.

Upon hearing this deeply disturbing news, the Thessalonians are wondering how soon these dreadful things will come to pass; and if it should happen in their lifetime, will their faith be strong enough to endure.

As the reader continues with the verses we are looking at in tonight’s message, Paul suddenly brings the Thessalonians back from the future into the present. The tone now changes from the unsettling news of what lies in store for the unbelievers, to the comforting news of what lies in store for the believers.

TRANSITION

Now let’s come into our present. We are now almost 2,000 years closer to “the great apostasy” Paul talked about. The seduction of false teachers and false teachings is all around us. People are abandoning the truth of God’s word for lies in droves. And we are closer to the revelation of “the man of sin” than ever before.

In VERSES 13-17 the apostle Paul reminds the Thessalonians of three wonderful truths that will help them “Stand Firm Till Jesus Comes.” These three truths will help you and me do the same.
Truth #1:  We Are SAVED By The GRACE of GOD (v.13)

13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

1. Way back before you and I were ever born GOD LOVED US! In fact, God loved us so much He already had a plan in place to save our souls, and that plan was to send Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son here to die on the cross to save us from our sins.

2. We know the definition of “grace” and that is “it is God’s UNMERITED or UNDESERVED favor towards us.”

And we know that we have been saved by God’s grace. Ephesians 2:8,9 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

3. But I’m not sure many of us fully understand or appreciate how the grace of God helps us in our every day lives.

Look at verse 13 again very carefully………..

13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,
4. God’s grace didn’t just save us on the day we gave our lives to Christ, God’s grace continues to work in our lives every day through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

That word “sanctification” means to be “set APART as holy.” Remember we learned in one of our earlier messages in this series that sanctification is not a one-time event, it is a life-long process.

In other words, God continues His sanctifying work of grace through His Holy Spirit throughout the remainder of our earthly lives.

5. One way God’s grace continues to work in you and me is that the Holy Spirit gives us the POWER to overcome SIN in our lives.

You and I cannot overcome sin by our own strength and will-power, but we can overcome sin by the power of the Holy Spirit. That is sanctification! That is God’s grace at work in our lives every single day.

6. Another way God’s grace continues to work in our lives is that it STRENGTHENS us in our times of trial!

Remember in II Corinthians 12 when the apostle Paul asked the Lord to “remove his thorn-in-the-flesh” and the Lord said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Brothers and sisters, God’s grace isn’t just sufficient to help you and me endure our sufferings in this life, His grace is sufficient to help us rise above our sufferings so that God’s strength is revealed in our weakness.
“Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come. Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home!”

6. Oh brothers and sisters don’t miss this powerful truth:

If God’s grace is sufficient to save our souls—and God’s grace is sufficient to sanctify us by His Holy Spirit—and God’s grace is sufficient enough to give us the victory over sin—and God’s grace is sufficient enough to help us endure life’s trials—then we must believe GOD’S GRACE IS SUFFICIENT ENOUGH TO HELP US STAND FIRM TILL JESUS COMES!

Now here’s........

**Truth #2: We Are SUSTAINED By The GOSPEL of GOD** (vs. 13b-15)

13b God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

1. The same God who **SAVED US BY HIS GRACE, SUSTAINS US BY HIS GOSPEL**!

2. I want you to pay particular attention to those two admonitions in verse 15, “stand fast” and “hold.”

Let’s consider what these two admonitions meant to the Thessalonians and what they mean to us today.
(A) “STAND FAST!”

Paul admonished the Thessalonians to…….

- **STAND FAST** because of the current persecution they were going through. (II Thess. 1:4)

- **STAND FAST** because of the coming judgment upon this world. (II Thess. 1:8)

- **STAND FAST** because of the coming apostasy. (II Thess. 2:9)

- **STAND FAST** because of your glorious destiny. (II Thess. 2:14)

Likewise, you and I must…….

- **STAND FAST** because the “days are evil.”

- **STAND FAST** because many are falling away from the truth.

- **STAND FAST** because the love of many has turned cold.

- **STAND FAST** because there are more false teachers and false teachings than ever before in the 2,000 year history of the Church!

**STAND FAST! DON’T MOVE! DON’T BE SHAKEN!**

How do we do that? Notice Paul’s second admonition in verse 15……

(B) “HOLD THE TRADITIONS WHICH YOU WERE TAUGHT.”

Brothers and sisters, this is not the time for us to “get itching ears” and “forsake the truth of God’s word………this is the time for us to HOLD ON TO THE WORD OF GOD MORE TIGHTLY THAN EVER!”
This is NOT the time for us to stop studying the word of God, this is the time for us to study the word of God more diligently than we ever have before!

This is NOT the time for us to be “ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ,” this is the time for us to boldly stand up and declare the gospel of Christ as the only hope of man’s salvation!

The late A.B. Simpson once said....... 

“The gospel tells rebellious man that God is reconciled......that justice is satisfied......that sin has been atoned for......that the judgment of the guilty may be revoked......that the condemnation of the sinner has been cancelled......the curse of the Law has been blotted out......the gates of hell have been closed......the portals of heaven have been opened......the power of sin has been subdued.........Satan has been defeated.......death has been conquered.........and the curse of the fall has been lifted!

How can you and I “STAND FIRM TILL JESUS COMES?”

We must believe with all our heart that **WE ARE SAVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD**......and that **WE ARE SUSTAINED BY THE**

**Truth #3: We Are STRENGTHENED By The GLORY of GOD (vs.16-17)**

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,

17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

1. Its not enough for us to just read and study the word of God, we must **OBEY** it and **PRACTICE** it in our daily lives.
2. The difference between the Wise and Foolish builders in Matthew 7 was that the Wise man HEARD the word and OBEYED, while the Foolish Man HEARD but did not OBEY.

3. Also in Matthew 7 Jesus says, “Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord” shall enter the kingdom of heaven, **but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”**

4. When we obey God’s word and practice God’s word, God’s **GLORY** is upon our lives. That means God is **WELL** - **PLEASER** with our lives. It means God **APPROVES** of our lives........His divine **BLESSING**s are upon our lives.

5. How does God’s glory help us to “stand firm till Jesus comes?” It gives us the confident **ASSURANCE** that we are walking in the **LIGHT** as He is in the light and therefore everyday we enjoy sweet **FELLOWSHIP** with God.

CONCLUSION

When we see how our faith is being attacked on all sides and we witness the moral decay of our country that is happening right before our very eyes, it is easy to grow discouraged and start believing that all is lost.

We must realize the Lord said these things must come to pass as the time of His return draws near. We must STAND FIRM realizing that we are one day closer to the return of Christ than we’ve ever been before........we are one day closer to home than we have ever been before!

Knowing that........**WE ARE SAVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD! AND WE ARE SUSTAINED BY THE GOSPEL OF GOD! AND WE ARE STRENGTHENED BY THE GLORY OF GOD! LET US “STAND FIRM TILL JESUS COMES!”**