

Virtual Communities - Life Group Guide

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Eternal Comfort, Wonderful Hope, Strength

Read

Read the entire letter of 2 Thessalonians so that the context can be grasped.

Background

Evidently Paul received word that some of the Thessalonians had the impression that the return of Christ had already come. To reassure them that that wasn't the case, Paul reminds them of those things that he had told them when he was with them. The summary of Paul's teaching is:

- Christ will not come until the falling away occurs, and the man of sin is revealed (1-3).
- Paul describes this man and says that God is currently hindering this man from being revealed. When the Restrainer is removed, the man of sin will become apparent, whom the Lord will destroy with His coming (4-8).
- The coming of the lawless one is further described as one coming with Satan's power able to even deceive those who do not have a love for the truth (9-12).
- As for the Thessalonian church, Paul is thankful for them that God has implanted the truth in them for their sanctification by the Spirit (13-14).
- He concludes by encouraging them to stand fast and hold to the traditions taught to them.
- The benediction closes the chapter (this is the text from Sunday). He repeats that God has provided eternal comfort, wonderful hope, and prays that they would know comfort and be strengthened in every good word and work (15-17).

Weekly Questions For One Another

- What is God saying to you in His Word, in the sermon, or in your walk with Him this week?
- Is there **one** challenge that you sense the Lord giving you at the moment?
- How can we as a group be part of giving you courage today?
- Is there **one** thing you would like prayer for?
- Is there **one** community issue that you know needs prayer?

Discuss

1. What are the main points of this chapter? How do you know?
 - a. **Encouragement** about the **timing** of the coming of the Lord (1-3)
 - i. "Now concerning"
 - ii. "The coming of the Lord"
 - iii. "Our being gathered together with Him"
 - iv. "Not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed"
 - v. "Let no one deceive you"
 - vi. "The day will not come unless ..."
 - b. **Steadfastness** whilst **waiting** (13-17)
 - i. Stand firm
 - ii. Hold to the traditions
 - iii. Eternal comfort
 - iv. Wonderful hope
 - v. Grant you comfort

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- vi. strengthen you in good works
- 2. For what purpose did God call the Thessalonians?
 - a. *Whilst there is teaching here about the coming of the anti-Christ it is only in relation to being encouraged and remaining steadfast (i.e. the main point is not knowledge about the antiChrist but how to remain Christ-like when it looks like evil is prevailing).*
 - b. Salvation through sanctification (v13) - which is later explained in verse 14
 - i. Two aspects of the concept of holiness are presented
 - 1. Salvation - initial holiness - positional in Christ
 - 2. Sanctification - progressive holiness - growth toward Christlikeness
 - a. Rom. 8:28-29; Gal. 4:19
 - c. For the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (v14)
 - i. Paul states that God is sovereign and reminds them that He is the one who chooses the "end", not the AntiChrist. Evil does not prevail over God.
 - ii. This, of course, is not a statement about election, rather a statement about what we are **being saved to ("obtaining")**
 - 1. Glory - In this context, it reflects the believers' call from the Father to be sanctified by the Spirit through the work of Christ
 - a. Eph. 1:4
 - 2. Of Jesus - Believers are to be like Christ and at the Second Coming they will share His glory
 - a. 1 John 3:2
 - d. In summary: the emphasis on the text is our own progressive, personal holiness
 - i. Discuss what are the sanctifying influences in your life.
 - 1. Faith - we must have true, reliant faith in God,
 - 2. Love - we must have a love that is more than "moral self-improvement"; love must be godly hope brought to others.
 - 3. What two exhortations does Paul give? (v15)
 - a. Stand fast
 - i. Grammar = present active imperative - "do this now and keep doing it whilst now is called now"
 - ii. This is a metaphor for perseverance
 - 1. 1 Thess. 3:8; 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:11,13
 - iii. This emphasizes the need to persevere in the face of physical and mental persecution and false teaching.
 - iv. In 1 Cor. 15:1, 58 - this term is used in the context of the resurrection of Jesus. We can persevere because of the hope of eternal life in Christ
 - b. Hold to the traditions which they were taught
 - i. Grammar - same as above
 - ii. We are to continue to cling to the truths that Paul preached
 - iii. "the traditions" = Greek "padosis" used a number of ways in NT (not always positively):
 - 1. 1 Cor. 11:2, 23 synonymous with gospel truths
 - 2. Matt. 15:6, 23; Gal. 1:14 synonymous with Jewish traditions
 - 3. Col. 2:6-8 synonymous with gnostic speculations
 - iv. Roman Catholics use this verse as a biblical proof-text for Scripture and tradition is equal in authority
 - 4. What two things does Paul mention that God has given to us? (v16)
 - a. Eternal comfort - why do we have eternal comfort?
 - b. Wonderful Hope - why do we have a wonderful hope
 - 5. Finally, Paul gives a short benediction - a type of prayer - in which he prays for:

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6. Comfort and strength in their work and speech
 - a. What is our work?
 - i. How does 2 (d) play out in this?

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