



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Study 11: GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN OUR PRESERVATION 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5

"All men have not faith but the Lord is faithful" (2 Thessalonians 3:2,3). The unbelief of man, of all men, of the whole Gentile and Jewish world cannot change or alter the faithfulness of God. The faithlessness and unfaithfulness of multitudes of men will not decrease or diminish the faithfulness of God. **"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar"** (Romans 3:3,4). Men are faithless but God is faithful. Sinners and persecutors are merciless but God is merciful and mighty. All the darkness of the world cannot extinguish a ray of God's light and all the dark powers of persecutors cannot overcome the least power of God who promises to protect and to **"keep us from evil"**.

The natural tendency of man is to fear the threats of persecutors who do not have faith in God. Religious persecutors are merely nominal worshippers who are faithless and unfaithful. They often frighten weak believers who do not consider how powerful and faithful our God is. However, we need to realize that **"the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men"** (1 Corinthians 1:25). Never should we ever be afraid of man, no matter how faithless, wicked or boastful he may be. **"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?"** (Isaiah 2:22; 51:12,13).

PROMISED PROTECTION, A COVENANT REVELATION

2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; Hebrews 10:23; 1 Peter 4:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:12,13; 1 Peter 5:6-10; Psalm 121:7; 119:101; John 17:14,15; 2 Timothy 4:18; Jude 20-25.

"But the Lord is faithful." Though unfaithful, undependable, unstable, unbelieving men cannot be trusted, God is faithful to His promises and His purposes. **"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself"** (2 Timothy 2:13). When people are unkind and perverse, we can always go to Him, we can always confide in Him, trust Him, believe Him and lean on Him. We shall always find in Him One who keeps His promises. This is a constant encouragement to all who are disappointed by unfaithful and undependable men and women of the world. Faith in God, looking up to the Lord and confiding in Him who is always faithful will save us from many heartaches, disappointment and backsliding. Those who put their trust in man will soon discover, to their sorrow, that **"all men have not faith"**; not all men are trustworthy. We witness men's infidelity everyday and everywhere. We see how they turn away from the truth. We see many who once professed **"faith"** abandon it all. There are many around us who seem to have no true, transforming faith and many professing believers who do not **"earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints"**.

What an encouragement to always turn to God who is faithful; who never fails and who will certainly fulfil His promises and assuredly accomplish His unalterable purposes! Men who do not have faith may refuse to embrace the gospel and even set themselves against it but God will not abandon His great purposes not to forsake His saints. **"Who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil."** God's purpose is to establish all who are saved in the family, in the truth, in the faith, in holiness and sanctification and in the love and kingdom of His dear Son. The evil one, the devil, cannot thwart His purpose. The evil ones, the emissaries and messengers of Satan cannot overthrow His plan. God will keep His children, citizens of His righteous kingdom, partakers of His holy covenant from all evil.

PERSONAL PURITY WITH CHRIST-LIKE RIGHTEOUSNESS

2 Thessalonians 3:4; Matthew 28:20; John 15:14; Romans 6:17,18; Philippians 2:12-16; Colossians 3:16-25; 1 Thessalonians 4:1,2,10; Philemon 21; 1 John 2:3-6; 3:22; 5:3,4; Revelation 22:12-14.

“And we have confidence in the Lord touching you.” The Thessalonians had received God's grace, saving grace and sanctifying grace, their hearts had fully turned to the Lord. The evidence of salvation and the experience of sanctification with hearts fixed on following Christ and obeying Him were clearly seen in their commitment. God's sustaining grace was also evident in their walk with the Lord and for this, the Apostle Paul was grateful to God. The Apostle knew that all these good qualities were the work of God's grace and the activity of the Holy Spirit in their individual lives and corporate church life. He expressed **“confidence in the Lord”** **“that He which hath begun a good work in (them) will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”** (Philippians 1:6).

“And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.” Having seen the outworking of God's grace, leading them to obedience, making their practice to agree with their profession, he expressed faith in God for their continued, hearty obedience in their daily future walk with God. His assurance of their continued obedience and holiness was not based on anything in them but on the power and grace of God. He knew that God in His faithfulness would grant them continued supply of grace, strength, willingness, power and commitment to keep on obeying Him. His confidence was not in their natural, unaided ability to do, obey and keep God's commandment. The best of men with the greatest resolution possible cannot live in obedience to all of God's commandments, continually, without any interruption in his natural strength. We all need God's grace – His saving grace, His sanctifying grace, His sustaining grace, His steadfast grace, His sufficient grace, His supernatural grace, His super-abundant grace. And grace is available for every true child of God.

PURPOSEFUL PERSEVERANCE UNTIL CHRIST'S RETURN

2 Thessalonians 3:5; Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 31:33,34; Romans 5:1,5; Matthew 10:37-39; Galatians 5:6,22,23; Luke 12:36-38; 1 Thessalonians 1:3-10; Titus 2:13,14; Revelation 3:11.

“Into the patient waiting for Christ.” Throughout the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, the Spirit of God, through the Apostle, fixed the attention of believers on Christ's Second Coming. The rapture of the saints, the resurrection of the righteous and our final gathering unto Christ at His return was to be the focus of the faithful. From the beginning of their Christian life, after repentance and faith in Christ, they had committed themselves **“to wait for his Son from heaven”** (1 Thessalonians 1:10). They were to live in great expectation so that they would be the joy of the Apostles **“in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming”** (1 Thessalonians 2:19). With such a prospect before them, the Apostle prayed for them **“night and day without ceasing”** that their hearts may be established **“unblameable in holiness at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints”** (1 Thessalonians 3:13). They had no shadow of doubt that **“the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, and we shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air”** (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). **“The day of the Lord cometh”** and they must live and walk in the light so that **“that day should (not) overtake (them) as a thief”** (1 Thessalonians 5:2-4). In the second Epistle, he continued to remind them that **“the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels”** (2 Thessalonians 1:7), then shall there be **“our gathering together unto Him”** (2 Thessalonians 2:1). To be ready and not to be ashamed in His presence at His coming, the Apostle prayed, **“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ”** (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

The heart is the source of all our thoughts, affections, actions, plans, desires, character and life. **“Out of it”**, that is, **“the heart”**, **“are the issues of life”** (Proverbs 4:23). When God cleanses the heart and directs it into His love, all the passions of the heart will be kept pure and pleasing to Him. Then will our lives be peaceful and pure when persecuted, righteous and resigned when reviled, humble and holy though hated, tender and teachable when tempted and tried, diligent and determined when despised, saintly and sanctified when slandered, gracious and godly when grieved, lowly and loving when unloved. So, living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, he looks up expectantly waiting for Christ's return.

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