

The Gospel and Perseverance

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Preacher: John Lau

[0 : 00] Good morning all. We have come to the last sermon on the Gospel Life series! that looks into the two letters of Paul wrote to the believer in Thessalonica.

! Acts 17, we call it that they became followers of Jesus after Paul risen with them from the Scripture over three weekends, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and raise from the dead, and pointing out that Jesus is the Messiah he is proclaiming.

Paul was forced to leave this newfound church after being with them for three weeks and have to go down from Thessalonica to Beria.

And the Word of God, the Gospel, continues to work among them. Paul tells us his gratitude towards God at the beginning of the two letters, for the Lord's message rang out from them, and their faith in God has become known everywhere around their area.

The believers in the area became their witness and reported how they returned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and how they are waiting for Jesus' return from heaven.

[1 : 38] God raised Jesus from the dead, and Jesus will return to rescue us from the coming world. People traveled through Thessalonica.

Witnesses of faith have worked in these new believers, even though the person who brought them the gospel, Paul and his own companions, was forced to flee the city when the opposition planned to kill them.

The Thessalonian church continued to live out their faith, showing love to people traveling through the area, based on their hope in Jesus. Paul says in the beginning of his first letter, the 1 Thessalonians 1-3, that we always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayer.

We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor pumped by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And he reiterates his thanksgiving to God in the beginning of his second letter. In 2 Thessalonians 1-4, Famous English preacher, Charles Spurgeon once said, conversion is a turning into the right role.

[3 : 20] The next thing is to walk in it. A daily going on that role is as essential as a first starting, if you reach the desired end.

To strike the first pole is not all the battle. To him that overcome, the crown is promised. To start in a race is nothing.

Many have done that who have failed, but to hold out until you reach the winning post is a great point of the matter. Perseverance is as necessary to amend salvation as conversion.

It is with great concern for their salvation and grow in their faith that Paul writes the two letters to the Thessalonians. And he prays for them in the final chapter of the two letters.

His prayer for them tells us a lot of his intention. He prays in what Michelle has read out to us in verse 5. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

[4 : 29] So let us today look at three aspects of perseverance. Paul has called upon God to help direct the Thessalonians into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

And Spurgeon is of the view that perseverance is as necessary to amend salvation as conversion because they both understand the temptation of the lies of Satan for the believers to give up.

When writers of Hebrews urges to persevere in chapter 10 to hold unswavingly to the hope that we profess and not giving up meeting together, he points out that the habit of giving up is a real thing.

To endure and persevere is not easy, especially when it's unpleasant and painful. Paul continued to pray for the Thessalonians that they may be considered worthy of the calling of God in 2

Thessalonians 1, chapter 11.

And God might fulfill every desire for goodness and work of faith by his power. And he says in verse 12, When we persevere and demonstrate that we are worthy of the calling of our God, our Lord Jesus will be glorified in us and we are glorified in him.

[6 : 11] It is important and necessary to persevere because it helps us to fulfill the ultimate reason we have created. Perseverance is the key to understand the meaning of our existence.

For the ultimate reason you and I are made is to glorify God and fulfill and fully enjoy him forever. Our way of life, how we live and conduct ourselves means to win the respect of those who are outside of the relationship with God.

We are who God used to bring his lost children back into his love. Your salvation is not exclusively for you yourself to enjoy.

We are all saved for a reason. We are saved to be on God's mission to help his lost and dark world get back to their loving Father and Lord.

And you will fulfill that calling by persevering. Perseverance is necessarily important because it is also not easy. And Paul was using a lot of military terms and language in his two letters because as believers of Jesus, living out a Christian life among wicked and evil people by staying faithful to God can be a daily battle.

[7 : 36] We are pulled from all sides and there are two main enemies of perseverance we face, one from the outside and one from within. Last Sunday, our senior minister Steve introduced us to the concept of a man of lawlessness from chapter 2 of 2 Thessalonians.

The most important point is to understand the secret power of lawlessness that is already at work and not to miss the forest for the tree and to focus on finding out who is this man of lawlessness.

So let me encourage you to look at our listen to that sermon again to show up your defenses against the first enemy of perseverance.

The one that can come from outside trying to get into our mind, the deceitful and delusion of the works of Satan that is in this world.

Here are some of the deception and delusion that Satan used. Christianity, having faith and hope in Jesus, has been presented as a cruel underdog that denied freedom to abort life, whether it's an unwanted pregnancy or euthanasia.

[8 : 54] Believing in Jesus is a runner-up to the champion of life that restricts people from expressing their sexual orientation and desire. becoming a Christian is taking on a minority, troublesome, unpopular choice of life that will derail your career.

And everything the Bible teaches goes against a pursuit to be the center of your universe. It's silly to hand over the control of your life to someone else.

And when everyone is living for themselves, it seems ridiculous to live for others and live in obedience of some writing that is archaic and irrelevant to contemporary life.

It's so lame and primitive to need some religious crutches to get by in your life. Only the intelligent people need religion. These are the attitudes that sum up the first enemies of perseverance, the noise from the world that worked out by Satan.

The second enemy of perseverance is from Rufinus. It's our tendency to become idle and destructive and end up being a busybody.

[10 : 16] It appears that some Thessalonians may have quit their job in anticipation of Jesus' return. In 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 10 implies that they are able to work, but are willing to do so.

These people end up going around eating others' food without pain, exploring and taking advantage of others. Paul has alluded to this ungodly behavior in his first letter.

In chapter 4, verse 11, to call upon the believer to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life. You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you.

However, the situation seems to have worsened to the point that Paul has to highlight and instruct them against as his parting note in 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 10-11.

For even when we were with you, we used to command this to you, that if anyone does not want to work, neither shall he eat.

[11 : 29] We hear that some among you are idle and destructive. They are not busy. They are busybodies. The term busybody describes someone who meddles in the affairs of others, pries into things they are not their concern, and infuse themselves where they are not needed or wanted.

It goes beyond being merely inquisitive and enter the realms of destructive and sinful behavior. Paul alludes to many sinful behavior that can come from within us.

So some are blatant, and others are not so obvious, especially in 1 Thessalonians 2. 2 Thessalonians 3.

2 Thessalonians 3.

Your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lusts like the pagans who do not know God, and that in this matter, no one shall wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister.

[13:29] The temptation to sin is real. It is a daily battle that all Christians encounter. No one is immune or has the ability to stop sin.

Ourself can become our worst enemy when it comes to living a disciplined, godly life as disciples of Christ, especially when we are not taking ownership of the wrongs we have done.

Our desire to be loved by God often jeopardizes our obedience towards God. We are often easily distracted and have this fear of missing out, which drives us to continue scrolling from social media to keep up today with the latest gossip.

Instead of avoiding and fleeing from sin, we often test the boundary, thinking we are good enough to overcome temptation. Jesus teaches in Mark 7 and Matthew 15 that sin is what comes from within us, coming from our hearts that corrupts and defiles a person.

It's not the environment that causes a person to sin, but our desire from within to be equal or greater than God. Our rebellion to not wanting God to be our rulers of our life that causes us to sin against God and others.

[14:55] Trying to do good is such a battle. Trying to stay faithful to the call we have received from God drains us every day. We are so prone to growing tired of doing what is good, and so Paul encourages us in verse 13 of our chapter today, So, how are we to fight these enemies from outside and from within?

How are we to persevere? The simple answer is, we can't. There is no way we can persevere until the end to bring glory to God without the interference of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Relying on our own strength and might, we will get no way. Paul prays to Jesus continuously throughout these two letters. Paul referred to Jesus in various forms and by his full title up to 20 times within these two letters.

As Jesus is the only way to the Father, he is also the only way of perseverance. The sanctity of Jesus in our life is the only way to persevere.

Only when we remain in Christ, we are able to stay faithful to the end as Paul prays in 1 Thessalonians 5, 23-24.

[16:28] May God himself, the God of peace, satisfy you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

God is the one who will keep us faithful to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. John 15 tells us that this works of Jesus. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

Remain in me as I also remain in you. No branches can bear fruit by itself. It must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

Apart from me, you can do nothing. Jesus' word is what makes us clean. As we accept Jesus' teaching, we become acceptable to God and craft back into God, become a branch of the vine. Keeping ourselves in God's word is how we remain in him. It's by remaining in Jesus that we will get anywhere in life. John continues to record Jesus saying, If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

[17:49] This is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourself to be my disciples. Paul has full confidence that the Thessalonians are doing and will continue to do the things God commanded them because the word of the gospel is working among them.

Lord Jesus is at work in their life through his word. Looking back at Paul's prayer in 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 4, we have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command.

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. His prayer for the brothers and sisters in Thessalonians, we feel the way we are to persevere.

He continues to pray in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 16 and 17. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us by his grace, gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encouraging your hearts and strengthen you in every good deeds and word.

