

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH



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NEW MERCIES CHRISTIAN CHURCH | JOHN 4: 28-30

Eld. Robert Pierce

2 Thessalonians 2:13 – 3:5

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.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 – 3:5

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 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, ² and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

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³ But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. ⁴ And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

⁵ Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Nothing But The Truth

Paul was a balanced Christian who had a balanced ministry; and we see evidence of this as he brought his letter to a close. He moved from prophecy to practical Christian living. He turned from the negative (*Satan's lies*) to the positive (*God's truth*), and from warning to thanksgiving and prayer.

Nothing But The Truth

Paul's emphasis was on the truth of God's Word, in contrast to Satan's great lie which Paul discussed in the previous section. Every believer has four responsibilities to God's truth.

Believe the Truth

2 Thes. 2:13–14

He gave thanks for the way they responded to God's work in their lives. In these two verses, Paul reviewed the stages in their salvation experience.

Believe the Truth

God loved them (v. 13a)

Whatever God does for the lost world springs from His eternal love. We must never conceive of His great plan of salvation as an impersonal machine. His salvation is rooted and grounded in His love (*John 3:16*). God proved this love at the cross where Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world (*Rom. 5:8*).

Believe the Truth

God chose them (v. 13b)

It is not love alone that saves us, for God loves the whole world, and yet the whole world is not saved. Love reveals itself in *grace* and *mercy*. God in His grace gives us through Christ what we do not deserve, and God in His mercy does not give what we do deserve—but He gave that to Christ! We dare not explain away God's election of sinners (*1 Thes. 1:4; Eph. 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2*).

Believe the Truth

God set them apart (v. 13c)

The word *sanctify* means “*to set apart.*” There is a progressive sanctification that makes us more like Jesus Christ (*1 Thes. 5:23*). But the sanctification Paul mentioned here refers to the Spirit’s work in leading the unbeliever to faith in Christ.

Believe the Truth

God called them (v. 14)

The same God who ordained the end (*salvation*) also ordained the means to the end (*“belief of the truth”*). The person who says, *“God already has His elect, so there is no need for us to pray, witness, and send out missionaries”* does not understand divine election. The greatest encouragement to evangelism is the knowledge that God has His people who have been prepared to respond to His Word (*read Acts 18:1–11*).

Believe the Truth

God gave them glory (v. 14b)

What began in eternity past reaches its climax in eternity future: we share in the glory of God (*John 17:24; Rom. 8:29–30*). What begins with grace always leads to glory.

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Guard the Truth

2 Thes. 2:15

God works in this world through the truth of His Word, and Satan opposes this truth by substituting his lies. Human nature is prone to believe a lie and resist the truth. Satan accomplishes his best work through people in so-called Christian institutions (*churches, schools, etc.*) who do not believe God's truth. They have "a form of godliness" but have never experienced the power of God's saving truth.

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Guard the Truth

The word *tradition* simply means “*that which is handed down from one person to another.*” The truth of the Gospel began as an oral message proclaimed by Christ and the Apostles. Later, this truth was written down by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and it became Holy Scripture (see *2 Tim. 3:12–17; 2 Peter 2:16–21*). God’s truth was not invented by men: it was handed down from God to man (*1 Cor. 15:1–6; Gal. 1:11–12*) and each generation of believers had guarded this truth and passed it on to others (*2 Tim. 2:2*).

Guard the Truth

Paul stated clearly the believers' dual responsibility in guarding the truth: "*stand fast, and hold the traditions*" (2 Thes. 2:15). *Stand fast* means, "*Do not move away from the truth of the Gospel*" (see 1 Cor. 16:13; Col. 1:23). You and I are helping to guard the "*precious faith*" and we must not be moved by the wiles of Satan or the praises of men.

Guard the Truth

If we *stand*, then we can *hold*. This word means “*to hold fast, to hold firmly.*” It is related to a Greek word that means “*strength, might, power.*” We are not to hold God’s truth in a careless way, but grasp it firmly with power and never let it slip from us. Each generation of Christians must receive the truth from others, guard it, and make sure it is kept intact for the next generation.

Guard the Truth

It is not easy to *stand* or *hold*, because forces around us want to move us from the faith. Satan knows how to use lies to oppose God's truth, and he seeks to do this *within the fellowship* (*Acts 20:28–32*). Sometimes faithful believers must refuse the fellowship of those who have rejected the faith (*Rom. 16:17–20; 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1; 1 Tim. 6:3–5; 2 John 7–10*).

Practice the Truth

2 Thes. 2:16–17

It is not enough to believe the truth and guard it; we must also practice it. If we hear the Word, but do not obey it, we are only fooling ourselves

(James 1:22–25).

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Practice the Truth

Paul encouraged them to walk to please God (*1 Thes. 4:1*), and to grow in their love for others (*1 Thes. 4:10*). He taught them about the Rapture of the church in order that they might encourage each other (*1 Thes. 4:18*). To calm their fears, he explained the Day of the Lord to them (*1 Thes. 5:11*). In addition to his teaching, he urged them to minister to each other (*1 Thes. 5:18*).

Practice the Truth

Establishment in the Lord is also an important theme. Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica that he might establish them in their faith (*1 Thes. 3:2*); and Paul prayed that God might establish them (*1 Thes. 3:13*). The child must be taught to stand before he can learn to walk or run.

Practice the Truth

It is God who establishes, but He uses people to accomplish His work. A great need in our churches is for Christians who will take time to establish the younger believers. Group Bible studies are very valuable, as are the public meetings of the church; but individual discipling is also important. Paul encouraged the Thessalonican believers on a one-to-one basis, and we should follow his example.

Practice the Truth

Paul was concerned about two aspects of their Christian life: their *word* and their *work*, their *saying* and their *doing*. If our walk contradicts our words, we lose our testimony. Our “*walk*” and our “*talk*” must agree; good works and good words must come from the same yielded heart.

Practice the Truth

We are not saved by good works (*Eph. 2:8–10; Titus 3:3–7*); but good works are the evidence of salvation (*Titus 2:11–15*). It is not enough to depend on good words; the words must be backed up by the deeds (*1 John 3:18*). It must be a steady practice, not an occasional one. We must be *established* in our words and works.

Practice the Truth

Too many Christians today emphasize *guarding* the truth, but downplay *living* the truth. One of the best ways to guard the truth is to put it into practice. It is good to be defenders of the faith, but we must not forget to be demonstrators of the faith.

Share the Truth

A sequence of responsibilities is logical. Learning and living must go together. If we believe the truth, it changes our lives. We guard the truth and practice it so that we can share it with others. We cannot share what we do not believe *(unless we want to be hypocrites)*; and we can best share that which we have practiced ourselves.

Share the Truth

Surely His Word can accomplish His work in this world. But the preaching of the Word in the pulpit has too often been replaced by the entertainment of the world on the platform. Dr. Donald Coggan, Archbishop of Canterbury, has said of Christian pastors: “It is their task to feed the sheep—not to entertain the goats.”

Share the Truth

It is not enough that the pastor or church officers alone share the Word; each Christian must be a part of this vital ministry. The word *command* that Paul used in 2 Thessalonians 3:4 means “a military order passed down from a superior officer.” He used this word in 1 Thessalonians 4:2; and he repeated it in 2 Thessalonians 3:4, 6, 10, 12. Christ is the Captain of our salvation; we are His soldiers (2 Tim. 2:3–4). In a battle, it is not enough for only the officers to fight; every man must do his duty. This is also true in the work of the local church.

Share the Truth

What if an army were run with the same lack of obedience, order, and discipline that we often see in the local church? It would never win the war. If soldiers attended drill whenever they felt like it, they would never be equipped to face the enemy. If the recruits disobeyed their officers' orders the way some church members disobey the Word of God, they would be court-martialed.

Share the Truth

A soldier obeys primarily out of loyalty and fear. But a Christian has much higher motives for obedience: God's love and Christ's return (*2 Thes. 3:5*). *"If ye love Me, keep My commandments"* (*John 14:15*).

**Our Saviour loved us
and died for us.**

Can we not obey Him?

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Here, then, are four great responsibilities for us to fulfill: believe the truth, guard the truth, practice the truth, and share the truth. If we fulfill these duties, we will experience joy and power in our lives, and growth and blessing in our churches.