

Sanctify

1 Thessalonians 4:3a

It is God's will that you should be sanctified

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

¹³ But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁴ He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruits.

- Words can be used to tear down.
- Words can be used to build up.
- Decide and take responsibility for your words.

I. Encouragement is a powerful force God uses in our sanctification.

Give background of 2 Thessalonians

They were upset, fearful, being lied to, deceived, and their faith was shaken.

Paul identifies the problem and explains what must happen before the return of Christ.

He then encourages them with TRUTH.

The truth will

1. Drive out fear
2. Erase confusion
3. Give direction
4. Encourages the heart

- A. Unpack the scripture
 1. Why was Paul encouraging them?
 2. What did they need?
 3. What were they experiencing?
- B. How does Paul encourage them?
 1. Thankful for them.
 2. Brothers and sisters loved by the Lord.
 3. God chose you as firstfruits
 4. Sanctifying work of the spirit through belief in the truth.

Encouragement is telling someone to believe the truth

- God has the final say on all things.
- What does God have to say?

C. He tells them to believe the truth

Believe the Truth (2 Thes. 2:13–14)

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).

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!

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.
- “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit” (1 Peter 1:2).
- It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction to the sinner (John 16:7–11).
- Though I did not realize it at the time, as I look back I can see how the Spirit led in bringing me to faith in Christ; and this is the experience of every believer.

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).
- In order for God to fulfill His eternal plan, He sent Paul, Silas, and Timothy to Thessalonica to preach the Word of God.
- What was ordained in eternity was accomplished in time.
- God used human instruments to bring the Gospel to the lost; and by trusting Christ, these people proved their “election of God” (1 Thes. 1:4).
- The call of God went out to the whole city, but it was effective only in those who believed the truth and trusted Christ.
- It is dangerous to engage in idle speculation about divine sovereignty and human responsibility.
- Both are taught in the Bible.
- We know that “salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9), and that lost sinners can never save themselves
- We must admit that there are mysteries to our salvation; but we can rejoice that there are certainties on which we can rest.
- Do not use the doctrine of election to divide the church or disturb the weak, but to glorify the Lord.

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.
- This is quite a contrast to the future assigned to the lost (2 Thes. 1:8–10).
- Believers already possess God’s glory within (John 17:22; note the past tense in Rom. 8:30—“glorified”).
- We are awaiting Christ’s return, and then the glory shall be revealed (Rom. 8:17–19; 2 Thes. 1:10).
- When sinners believe God’s truth, God saves them.
- When they believe Satan’s lie, and reject the love of the truth, they cannot be saved (2 Thes. 2:10–12).
- Being neutral about God’s truth is a dangerous thing.
- It has tragic eternal consequences.

Joshua 1:6-9

The Condition

¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: ² “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.

The Promise

³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

The Command

⁶ **Be strong and courageous**, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷ **“Be strong and very courageous.** Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

⁹ Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.**"

The Result

¹⁰ So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: ¹¹ "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.'"

D. Be encouraged.

E. Encourage others

When you are discouraged you are less likely to be growing.

When you are discouraged you are more likely to stop "fighting the good fight of faith"

When you are discouraged you are more likely to passionately pursue Christ.

When you are discouraged you are more likely to fade away and pull away from other Christ encouraging relationships.

Encouragement is a powerful force God uses in our sanctification.

- The Spirit and the Word work in tandem to produce change in us.
- The work of the Holy Spirit in Sanctification
- The Holy Spirit works through the Word.
- The Word is transformational because of the Spirit.
- They work in tandem.
- The Word is the truth.
- The Spirit illuminates the word.
- The word transforms – It is powerful and sharper than a 2-edged sword.

II. Hold Fast to the Word.

2 Thessalonians 2:15

So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Illustration

The Life and Death Grip of Henry Dempsey

On Sept. 3, 1987 Henry Dempsey was flying his 15 passenger Beechcraft 99 turboprop from Lewiston Maine to Boston.

At 4,000 feet he heard a noise in the back of the plain where the rear stairs are.

He turned the controls over to his co-pilot and walked back.

The plain hit turbulence knocked him against the door and it fell open.

Dempsey was sucked part way out, fell face down on the steps, and grabbed for something—anything that might save his life.

He caught a railing and held on.

The co-pilot thought he had fallen out and diverted the flight to a nearby airport.

When he landed, they found him with his face 12 inches off the runway and with his hands so tight around the rails that his fingers had to be pried open.

What I want you to see from this story is that the life and death grip with which Henry Dempsey held on to the stair railing at the back of that Beechcraft turboprop is the kind of grip we should have on the teachings of the apostle Paul handed down to us in the New Testament.

The wind and the suction and the gravity and the noise that swirled around him and tried to pull him to his destruction was less dangerous than the mystery of lawlessness that is swirling around you today and which will someday become even stronger. And the stakes are greater, because the mystery of lawlessness and unbelief is sucking us not to physical death in the Atlantic ocean, but to eternal destruction in hell.

III. Depend on the Spirit in prayer

2 Thessalonians 2:13b

because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

1 Peter 1:2

who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:

Sanctify = means to set apart

Question

- How do you become a stranger in the world?
- You look like everyone else...
- Here is how it happens. It happens through the work of the triune God-head.
- Father, Son, Holy Spirit.
- Father, Holy Spirit, Son.

1. Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.
2. Through the sanctifying work of the Spirit.
3. For obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood.

- a. Why are you chosen... for obedience.
- b. sprinkling by his blood

1 Peter 1:17-19

¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, ¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

The blood was shed and by it you were ransomed and what you were ransomed from was **WAYS**, futile, empty, suicidal, Christ-dishonoring ways.

- For obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood are not two separate things.
- One thing.
- Obedience that is accomplished through day by day “*sprinkling by his blood*” by which I am set free from my “*futile ways*” into obedience.
- I am reminded what it cost to get me to a place of obedience.
- If you are walking in **ANY** patterns of life that are not obedient to Jesus it means that you are scorning the blood.
- Knowing you were ransomed.. not with perishable things like silver or gold or 500 million mega millions jackpots but with blood...

When you walk in patterns of disobedience you are thumbing your nose at the blood.
The blood has infinite value.
Don't thumb your nose at the blood.

We are chosen for obedience

Encouragement is a powerful force God uses in our sanctification.

Hold Fast to the Word

Depend on the Spirit in prayer