

**Thursday, July 21, 2022 ▫ Read 2Thessalonians 2:15–17**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What does the apostle call them in v15? What two commands does he give them? To what are they to hold fast? By what two methods were these traditions taught? To Whom does v16 appeal? By what four words is He called, and what does each imply? To Whom else does it appeal? What does it call Him? Whom has the Father, specifically, loved? What two things has Jesus given them in behalf of the Father? What sort of consolation? What sort of hope? By what mechanism or principle? What does he pray that Jesus would do to their hearts (v17)? In what two things does he pray that Jesus would establish (strengthen) them?*

**What enables a Christian to stand fast?** 2Thessalonians 2:15–17 looks forward to the second serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these three verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **we are made to stand fast in God’s teaching, from God’s love, lived out by God’s work.**

**Hold on to God’s teaching.** In vv13–14, we heard that we have been set on the path to glory by the loving, eternal intentions of God toward them. That’s the end and the beginning, but what are we to do in the moment? A great part of the Christian life is just standing (cf. Eph 6:13–14!). With a glorious eternal end guaranteed by everlasting electing love, that’s what the apostle commands them to do: stand! But how?

By holding onto traditions. Now, we must not think that these are traditions of men, as if things might be added centuries later to which v15 applies. The word ‘traditions’ points not to the idea that these teachings come from man, but that these teachings come from God. They came by Word (“logos”) and by epistle. This is special revelation. The Holy Spirit using ordained servants to proclaim words that are from Jesus Christ. And not words that are just for the Thessalonians, but words that are to continue to be handed on.

Christian ministry is teaching-based ministry. The Christian life is a teaching-based life. Standing comes by holding on to the teaching that is from Jesus.

**Be held onto by God’s love.** In Php 3:12, the apostle talks about pressing on to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of him. There is a similar “mutual holding” going on here. The Thessalonian brethren can hold onto God’s Word, because it is the Triune God Who holds onto them.

Grammatically, the verbs are singular, so the “Himself” in v16 underlines to us that it is especially the Son Who has loved us. He is the Lord: YHWH, the Creator, the covenant God, the God of the bush in Exodus 3, the One Who pours out His Spirit and upon Whose Name we call to be saved from Joel 2. He is Jesus, YHWH Who saves. He is the Christ: the prophet like Moses, the Priest forever like Melchizedek, the forever-king from the line of David. And it is He Himself Who loved us. Who gave us everlasting consolation (paraklesis) and good hope by grace.

We can hold onto the Word because everlasting, Triune love holds onto us in the Lord Jesus Christ!

**In which God works in our works.** This Triune love does a Triune work. The Son has given everlasting “paraklesis” (v16) in which He “parakletes” their hearts (beginning of v17), which of course reminds us that He does so especially by His Spirit. In this, He acts in conjunction with “our God and Father.”

But our *standing* is not *inactivity*. No, we are to speak every good word. And, we are to do every good work. And the work of the Triune God in comforting our hearts doesn’t make us passive but rather strengthens us in speaking and doing every good thing.

How do you distinguish what transitions to hold onto? Why is it that for these specific traditions, you can hope to have strength? How does the passage set this dependence over/against passivity?

*Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for how often we feel like giving up, giving in, or becoming passive and inactive. Remind us that not only are we required to hold onto Your word, but we may be assured of speaking every good word and doing every good work because You, our Triune God have loved us and strengthen us.*

**Suggested songs: ARP46 “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength” or TPH243 “How Firm a Foundation”**

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Second Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 15 through 17. These are God’s words Therefore brethren stand fast and hold the traditions, which you were taught whether by word or our epistle. 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 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

In the previous passage, we had One of the great statements of God’s electing love and predestining to salvation. And he said 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 to, which he

called you, by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord.

Jesus Christ. So you have the triune God who has loved and decided to save through. Jesus Christ for Jesus's glory through the Sun, for the glory of the sun. By the work of the Spirit who gives us Faith in the truth, which joins us to the Son and through, which we are not only justified but also sanctified and the end of that sanctification is our salvation.

And then he comes and you might think that oh well if God has decided everything beforehand then I don't have to do anything, Just do whatever I want and God will save me and I'll go to heaven. Except that the way that the spirit brings you into union with Christ is through faith in Jesus, and what happens between your justification when you're made righteous before, God forgiven of all your sin, acquitted of your guilt between your justification and your glorification when you are perfectly.

Holy and therefore perfectly happy because you can't be happy without being holy. Not truly happy and not lost. Truly holy what happens in between a sanctification and in sanctification God. Works by sustaining Our words and works. And so he immediately follows one of the most emphatic statements of election and predestination in the whole Bible with a command.

Therefore brethren. Stand. Fast. Stand fast. And how do we stand fast? How do we stick to this new life that God has given us in Christ by His Spirit? How do we keep from sliding back into living for ourselves as fleshly people in the way that someone who doesn't know God at all?

Could live. And the way that someone who doesn't know Christ at all, could live isn't a condemnation of us when we live an entire day in a way that any, you know, well, disciplined pagan could have by common grace. In fact, there are many pagans who by common grace live better than many who profess themselves to be Christians, but that is a condemnation of us.

How do we stand fast? Well, we stand fast by holding to the traditions. Therefore brethren stand fast and hold to the traditions now. All sorts of mischief is, is done out of this idea of holding to the traditions because they say hold to the traditions of the word, you know, good, quote, unquote and definitely put fear quotes on that.

Good Christians, have done this for a thousand years or 1500 years. Or even since the New Testament, there are a lot of things that they did wrong in the New Testament that they're doing wrong still and they think they're great traditions. But he doesn't leave us, he doesn't leave us with an excuse for doing that because he says, which you were taught whether by word or our epistle.

So when he says traditions here, he's not talking about anything that was handed down. He's talking about what came by the Word of God By the apostolic breaching By the apostolic writing. This is one of the traditions. Second Thessalonians chapter 2 And he uses the word tradition to say you keep holding fast to that by which God holds fast to you.

And so the he tells us that the love that God loved us and chose us. In in verse 13, is still giving us and has given us Everlasting, consolation, and good. Hope by grace. Now that's good. Hope that we have by grace is in God Himself. You see in verse 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and our God and Father.

So you see the sun and you see the father and what you might miss is that the word consolation comes from the word paraclete and then the word comfort. In verse 17 comes from the word paraclete, and who is the other paraclete? We custom saying the Perically. But when Jesus promised the Spirit, he said the other paraclete, why?

Because while Jesus was on earth, he was the Perically. He was the one called alongside the disciples and when he was going away, he said he would send another one to be called alongside and that is the Holy Spirit. So again verses 13 through 13 and 14 last week from all eternity.

That triune God play into the Salvation that he would accomplish. And now verses 15 through 17 in your life day by day. The Triune God, the Holy Spirit giving you from God the Father. And from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself this everlasting constellation and good hope by grace. So we are to do every good word.

And work verse 17 may comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work. Now, we do so badly that our flash tends to be self-satisfied whenever we say, a single good thing or do a single good thing. We internally God help us and have mercy on us.

Start patting ourselves on the back and say I said a pretty good thing. Well, I did it pretty good thing, but we're actually called to do and ought to do, as God's creatures and ought to do as God's subjects and have been redeemed to do as his saints and his beloved, and his adopted.

We ought to do every good word and every good work. Now the only hope for that, is God. The Holy Spirit. Giving us from the triune God. That good hope by grace that everlasting consolation, everything that we need from God. And so the Christian life is lived not sitting on our hands because we're good Calvinists and we figured out that God has planned the end from the beginning.

Christian life has lived and dependence upon the Triune God by the continual act of working of the Holy Spirit as we seek from God to do every good word and every good work. And that's how we stand fast. We hold on to the tradition of everything. The scripture teaches because it is God who holds onto us.

So, let's pray that the spirit would be using his word. Reminding us of all that. We've learned from his word, our whole life-long and particularly in every moment. The part from his word that we need to speak that good word. And that moment to do that. Good work. And that moment, let's pray.

Father, thank you for this portion of your word. Thank you for your Holy Spirit's helping us. Even now we feel quite sharply that we read and teach and weakness. And we listen to our daddy and weakness But O Lord, when we are weak, then you are strong. And so we pray that your grace would be sufficient for us and that your spirit would apply Christ to us that he would be glorified in good words and good works from our life as you continue.

Sanctifying us preparing us for that salvation, that heaven, that perfect holiness. And happiness that you have determined for us. In the Christ has earned for us and that your spirit is now fitting us for So help us today. I pray and pray that you'd help my children especially that they would honor you and that they would love the neighbors as themselves that they would give preference to others.

That they would not have grumbling hearts, but be able to rejoice that we would be content Sensorious toward or despising. Others. But desiring the best for them and humble about ourselves and amazed at your goodness and your love and not forgetful of you. But remembering you and living before you and lifting up our hearts to you offering everything we speak and everything we do to you.

Oh Lord, such a life is perfect and wonderful. Even as we ask for it, our hearts can feel a little bit of how good it would be to live like this. And yet though we've been taught this and sought this for so many years. Many of us yet, we are still barely infants, and living this way.

So we thank you that you've committed yourself to us and that your spirit is the one whom you have given to help us. And we pray that he would today and that you would be glorified by the bearing fruit and carrying out of this portion of your word in our lives, we asked these things in Christ's name.

Amen.