

What is the Lord's Plan for Strengthening & Protecting You?

II Thessalonians 3:1-5

¹ You and I have brothers and sisters suffering terrible persecution throughout the world for simply standing firm for their Christian faith! Most of these precious people are located within “The 10/40 Window”. ¹ “Many governments in the 10/40 Window are officially or unofficially opposed to Christian work of any kind within their borders.”

There are no guarantees in life. Who knows what our future may hold? Maybe within your lifetime you may be given the choice to either deny Lord Jesus or suffer for Him!

Does God give His children any assurances of strength and protection if they come under persecution?

Our scripture today shows us some of what God has provided with what our responses to it should be. ²

¹ “Those regions of the eastern hemisphere, plus the European and African part of the western hemisphere, located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator . . . Roughly two-thirds of the world population lives in the 10/40 Window, and it is predominantly Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, animist, Jewish, or atheist.” - “The 10/40 Window”, Wikipedia.

From Second Thessalonians, chapter 3, verses 1 through 5 we read, **Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. 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.**

God has made His word available to us. How are we to treat it? ₃

The first way is . . .

I. Having the Word Proclaimed - v1-3

Having the Word proclaimed. ⁴

Verse 1 says, **Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.** ⁵

What is the “message”? **Message**, in the original language, ² means “word”, a spoken idea or expression. This word is used to refer to Lord Jesus being **the message of God in person**. John, chapter 1, verses 1 and 14, **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.**

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First Peter, chapter 1, verses 24 and 25 (a quotation of Isaiah, chapter 40, verses 6 through 8) says, **“All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word**

² λόγος.

that was preached to you. ³ From the personified word, then, progresses to mean **the word of God which was preached to you**; the apostles' teaching. ⁷

Now verse 4, **We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command.** The message is **a command from God** delivered by His servants. it's like the Chain of Command in the military. God used His apostles as His instruments to deliver His message of salvation.

As we proceed down the chain of command, we come to you! God wants to use you the same way. ⁸ He tells you to **Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.** ⁴ ⁹

What needs to happen to the message to make it effective? Notice again verse 1, **Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.** ¹⁰

³ The word here, in the original language, is ρημα. emphasizing a word that is uttered or proclaimed.

⁴ Mark 61:15.

First, it **must be free to spread rapidly**.¹¹ The phrase spread rapidly⁵ means to run fast without any obstacles in the way!¹² It has the idea of Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 1, **Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.**¹³

Then, it needs to be honored. Do you really take God's word seriously?¹⁴

The word **honor**⁶ is to "glorify"; to be bright or brilliant! It refers to the "Shekinah" in the Tabernacle and the Temple; the brilliance of God's presence!¹⁵ It was most notably seen as the pillar of fire and the brilliant cloud in the wilderness journey.⁷¹⁶ This is

⁵ τρέχω.

⁶ δοξάζω.

⁷ Exodus 14:24 - During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion.

what happened to Jesus at the Transfiguration! ⁸ ¹⁷
Whenever people are won to the Lord through spreading this message, the word of God is glorified!

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The second way we are to treat the word of God is . . .

II. Having the Word Obeyed - v4

Having the Word obeyed. Again, verse 4, **We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command.** We must take the word seriously enough to obeyed it! ¹⁹

Notice in verse 4 the phrase **you are doing**. Your salvation is **confirmed** when you obey the gospel! ²⁰

The gospel message is the story of our Lord's life, death, burial and resurrection. First Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 1 through 4 says, **Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you . . . Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,**

⁸ Matthew 17:5 - While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him".

that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures . . . ²¹ Obeying the gospel initially is your response to it; your faith, repentance, your “Good Confession” and your baptism. ²²

Your obedience to the gospel is important! The first chapter of this book includes, **He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** ⁹ ²³

Continuing in verse 4 is **continue to do.** ²⁴ Your salvation is **guaranteed** through your faithfulness to this gospel message. Your initial responses are simply continued; except baptism which you only need to submit to once. ²⁵

Faith: belief in the gospel message grows into trust in Lord Jesus as a person. As you trust Him as Savior you obey Him as Lord. ²⁶

Repentance: it’s the daily process of transforming the old life into the new one. You recognize the worldly

⁹ II Thessalonians 1:8.

elements of your old life, forsake them and commit yourself to the elements of the new life. ²⁷

The Good Confession: it's sharing your growing faith with anyone who will listen. ²⁸ The basic announcement here is **Jesus is The Son of God** ¹⁰ and **Lord** of your life. ¹¹ ²⁹

The third way we are to treat the word of God is . . .

III. Having the Word Appreciated - v5

Having the Word appreciated. Verse 5 states, **May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.** ³⁰

The phrase **direct your hearts** ¹² means to cause you to appreciate or understand. ³¹

So what are you to appreciate and understand? ³²

¹⁰ Matthew 16:16 - You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹¹ Romans 10:9-10 - That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

¹² κατευθύναι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας.

God's love for you. ³³ He loved you enough to go to the cross for you. ¹³ ³⁴ He loved you even when you were His enemy.¹⁴ How much love does it take to impress you? ³⁵

Christ's perseverance. ³⁶ He suffered innocently because that was the only way to save you. Hebrews, chapter 9, verse 22, **In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.** ³⁷

He suffered innocently because He was the only one who could do it. Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 15, **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.** ³⁸

Let your lives prove that you appreciate what Lord Jesus did for you! ³⁹

¹³ John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁴ Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Focus on the Word of God; the gospel message of salvation. Trusting it will bring you strength. Obeying it will bring you eternal protection. Appreciating it will bring you closer to God!

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