

(2 Thessalonians) Finally Brethren

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of praying for the word of God to run swiftly and be glorified, and trusting in God's faithfulness and protection in the face of Satan's opposition.

Duration: 46:44

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Thessalonians 3:1, 2 Thessalonians 3:5-15

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Faithfulness Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of the enemy and acknowledges that he can outsmart and outmaneuver us. However, the preacher reminds the audience that they have the Lord on their side, who is fighting for them. The preacher highlights the faithfulness of God in guarding and establishing believers, keeping them safe from the evil one. The sermon also addresses the human condition of being indifferent and easily distracted, but emphasizes that Jesus Christ helps believers to love God and be patient. The preacher concludes by discussing a problem in the church where some individuals are not taking responsibility for themselves and are relying on the church for support.

Transcript

Second Thessalonians chapter three coming to the end of this brief but dynamic and really exciting epistle as we considered the second chapter last week and we saw all of the different things that pertain to the second coming of Jesus Christ, talked about the rapture of the church and talked about the rise of the antichrist and the tribulation and all of those things that will be happening upon the earth and talked about the fact that there will be many that will come under a strong delusion at that time because they did not receive the love of the truth, God will send them a strong delusion that they might believe the lie and that will result in their condemnation, Paul said and then in verse 13 you remember we sort of had to rush through the latter part of that second chapter there but

Paul went on now to make a contrast between those who would be condemned because they did not receive the love of the truth and those of course who are believers and he says we are bound to give God thanks always for you beloved because God from the beginning chose you for salvation so just making that contrast reminding them that although these things are going to come upon the world they're going to come upon those who reject Christ not upon those who have embraced him God has chosen us for salvation and so again just that encouragement that when those horrific things begin to come down on planet earth which they will do at some point in the future that we who have put our faith and trust in the

Lord that we will be delivered from that and brought into heaven and there we will obtain

the glory of Jesus Christ and so Paul then coming to the final section of the epistle he says finally brethren pray for us pray that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified just as it is with you so pray that God's word would run swiftly or another translation is pray for the word of the Lord to have free course Paul is asking for prayer that the word of God might go out unhindered that it might spread rapidly and of course he's speaking specifically of that ministry that they had of bringing the word but of course the application would go far beyond that it would it would apply to every possible situation where the word of God is being sent forth and so you know even as we just did a moment ago it's an important thing for us to be praying that that God's word goes out and

that those people that he has raised up to minister his word to share his word that as it goes forth from them it would go forth from them unhindered because the word of God is the dynamic that brings about the transformation in people's lives of course the gospel is contained in the word of God the the gospel is an aspect of the word of God and Paul tells us in writing to the church in Rome that the gospel is the power of God to salvation so the more the word of God can get out the more likely people are going to get saved the more the word of God can freely flow into a community the more likely lives are going to be transformed the more the word of God can be brought to the people of God the stronger God's people are going to be so this is something that we need to be praying about as

well we need to be praying that God's word would have free course that God's word would run swiftly and be glorified and we're so thankful for the many opportunities that we have for receiving God's word I'm thankful for the opportunities that I have to bring God's word to people and when we think about radio and we think about all the different bible studies in the churches and all of that it's a wonderful thing that we are allowed to experience the word of God going forth freely but as you know this is really more the exception than the rule this doesn't happen everywhere and most places there's a famine for the word of God most places there's a spiritual death and the word of God needs to go forth in a powerful way and so as we pray for places as we pray for different parts of the

country as we pray for different countries around the world different regions and things you know sometimes you might be at a loss for what to pray sometimes you might think well I don't really know what to pray for those people in Africa I don't really know how to pray for the brothers and sisters in China I don't know how to pray for people in the Middle East or wherever they might be well this is one thing that we can pray for everybody everywhere Lord let your word run swiftly and be glorified Lord let your word go out with free course without hindrances without obstacles and that's something that we definitely need to pray because Satan knows better than any of us the impact and the effect of God's word and he's working overtime to try to stop the word of God from going forth I think

that that's probably the majority of of Satan's activity is directed toward stopping the word of God from going out because you see he knows he knows so much better than many church leaders he knows the danger to his enterprise of God's word going forth he knows that that means his captives are going to be liberated his prisoners are going to be taken from him because that's what the word of God does so praying for that praying that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified just as it is with you and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men for not all have faith so again this is Paul requesting deliverance prayer for deliverance from notice unreasonable and wicked men you know the gospel is the most reasonable proposition the irony is that people think that

they're being reasonable right by rejecting it you know there was a period in history known as the age of reason and during the age of reason the enlightenment period and all of that they basically were saying okay we're going to stop believing in God and we're going to start reasoning through things and we're going to put our faith in our ability to reason now what they were here's the mistake they were making they were thinking that the problems in the world were related to belief in God but that wasn't really the root of the problem the problems in the world were super religious superstition because what they failed to take into consideration even today that the vast majority of the church in those days was far from the biblical revelation of God in the Christian life and it bought

into all kinds of different philosophies and all kinds of pagan traditions and ideas so they were rebelling against religion but they were not really rebelling against the true revelation of God because that wasn't so much what they were experiencing but they thought it was you know to this very day you hear so often people will talk about how the church has always stood in opposition to progress the church has always opposed scientific advancement and oftentimes they will make a reference to the astronomer Galileo and they will use that as one of the great illustrations of how the church has always tried to keep people in the dark and not wanting people to progress and so Galileo this wonderful man of science he comes forth and he makes a scientific discovery that's contradictory to the

bible and the church tries to suppress that and the church puts poor Galileo in prison and here you see once again another example of these backward fundamentalist Christians trying to stop progress you know that whole story is bogus the whole thing is not even a reality it's a total distortion and a twist on what really happened you see Galileo did rebel against something indeed but he didn't rebel against the bible Galileo was a bible believer and from the bible he came to the conclusion the right conclusion that it wasn't a geocentric universe in other words that the sun didn't revolve around the earth but the other way around but guess what the catholic church taught that no it revolves around the earth where did they get that they didn't get it from the bible you know where they got

it they got it from aristotle and they believed aristotle the catholic church at a certain point in its history basically said the bible's a good book to tell you about salvation it's a good book to tell you how you know to get to heaven but it's not really helpful when it comes to science or anything like that we're going to look to aristotle for an understanding of the natural world and the roman catholic church embraced totally lock stock and barrel aristotle's philosophies and it was aristotle who taught that the earth was the center of the universe so galileo comes along he says no that's not really true now the church that's steeped in aristotelian philosophy they aristotle's opposing the church so yes they did persecute him and the pope did throw him in prison but not for that

reason the reason the pope threw him in prison is because he had been a friend of the pope and he publicly criticized the pope so the pope said okay you talk about me i'll pay you back and he slapped him in prison but this thing is all blown out of distortion or all distorted and blown out of proportion and it's used quite frequently to show how christianity has always been against progress and scientific advancement and all that it's nonsense but you find that people who you would think would be reasonable because they're otherwise intelligent sometimes they are the most unreasonable of men i read an article just recently in a magazine that i get called natural history it was an article by the renowned biologist atheist anti-creationist richard dawkins the article is entitled the

illusion of design listen to what he says he says the world is divided into things that look as though somebody designed them wings and wagon wheels hearts and televisions and things that just happened

through the unintended workings of physics mountains and rivers sand dunes and solar systems mount rushmore belonged firmly in the second category until sculptor guts on borglum carved it into the first charles darwin moved in the other direction he discovered a way in which the unaided laws of physics the laws according to which things just happen could in the fullness of geologic time come to mimic deliberate design the illusion of design is so successful that to this day most americans he's astounded by that most americans including significantly many influential and rich

americans stubbornly refuse to believe that it is an illusion now this is what richard dawkins says he says yes everything looks like it is intricately designed it does look that way but it's an illusion now and what is the basis for that statement the basis is simply he is an atheist and as an atheist there's not a possibility that there is a designer god therefore what appears to be designed is not really designed it's just natural selection mimicking design now to me and maybe i'm just too simple-minded but that seems utterly unreasonable it seems to me that if it looks like it is designed it probably was designed and you ought to go with that over this other hypothesis but he's very very insistent that there is no design but again not because he has any proof but simply because he has

already concluded there is not a designer so we have all around us today we have unreasonable men and paul says he had him in his day he said pray that i could be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men you know with people like this the problem is you can't make any progress you can't get anywhere because they're irrational they have in this particular area they have turned off their reasoning faculties you know i was thinking the other day about what it is that jesus has done for humanity i actually i was driving home the other day and i was i was passing a cemetery and as i did i saw a family there by a grave and i just looked at that and i thought you know how sad but i thought how glorious that jesus christ our lord conquered death and so here it is in just sort of a nutshell what

has jesus done for humanity well jesus has done the greatest thing that anybody could ever do he's conquered mankind's greatest foe he's conquered death that's what he did he did a lot of other things but that is the great accomplishment of the lord jesus christ he has abolished death as the apostle paul would put it in another place now you would think that the human race would be so incredibly thankful for that you would you would just think it's a reasonable thing to think that we would be lined up to just say lord thank you thank you that you conquered death oh how wonderful that you did this for us so why don't we see that happening why on the other hand do we see men lashing out against jesus striking out against him foaming at the mouth full of hatred and animosity toward him the

point is this it's totally unreasonable the reactions the response those attitudes are totally unreasonable you can't explain it rationally it's a form of insanity to have animosity hatred hostility towards someone who has only done good things and brought the greatest benefit imaginable to the human family but there are plenty of unreasonable people and that is something that we live with it's something that we deal with but paul i think he was very wise in his prayer request here that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men lord deliver us from that there are those people that you will to a large degree waste your time contending with and there's a point where we need to be sensitive enough to the spirit to realize that you know maybe that's the case with a particular

individual and we we just need to walk away from it at times because there are people who will waste your time take up your time distract you you know sometimes what'll happen i've seen this many times somebody might go out and engage with somebody in a conversation about the lord and that particular person might be open and interested and then someone else will come along who's not interested in an

answer at all but they want to thwart what's happening they want to interfere with it they want to derail this attempt to witness to or to minister to somebody and they'll come in and start throwing in all kinds of doubts and sophisticated questions and things of that nature these people really do that and it's those kinds of people that i think would fall into the category perhaps of what

jesus talked about when he said do not cast your pearls before swine and do not give what is holy to the dogs it's hard for us to comprehend and believe but there are some people who are just downright wicked rebels against god and that's the way they lived and that's the way they'll die and that is what they will spend eternity regretting but there are people like that sadly unfortunately but it's a reality they're wicked men and they do not have faith so being delivered from such but the lord is faithful paul said who will establish you and guard you from the evil one you know sometimes it's just these little verses here and there that can bring such encouragement to us isn't it here's a promise god is faithful and he will establish us and he will guard us from the evil one satan is

alive and well and he's prowling about the earth he's going back and forth in it up and down upon it and what is he doing peter says that he's going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour but thank god the lord jesus has prayed for us thank god that the lord protects us from the evil one and we can be encouraged by that promise i'm no match for the enemy he can outsmart us he can outmaneuver us he certainly has much more power than we could ever imagine having but we've got the lord and he's fighting for us and if god be for us who can be against us not even the devil he can't succeed so the lord is faithful to guard us and to establish us and to keep us from the evil one and we have confidence in the lord concerning you both that you do and will do the things we command you

now may the lord direct your hearts into the love of god and into the patience of christ i love this fifth verse it's ministered to me many many times guess why you know there are times when i just don't feel like i have the kind of love for god that i ought to have or that he deserves from me and that can be overwhelming that can that can sort of bring on despair and condemnation but what a wonderful thing to know that i can come to the lord and say lord please help me to love you more and he does that that's what paul says here may the lord jesus christ direct your hearts into the love of the father that's what he's talking about here and isn't that a wonderful thing you know the lord doesn't come to us and say hey you don't love me enough i'm sick and tired of you and that lack of love

that you have for me i'm finished with you and he doesn't do that now a lot of times we sort of imagine him doing that don't we how is it that so many times we go about thinking that god is angry with us god is upset god is probably just waiting to pour out some judgment upon me or god's just tired of me he's fed up with my failure and all of that you know what he's not he's none of those things as a father pities his children so the lord pities those who fear him he remembers our frame he knows that we are dust and he looks at us and he thinks oh you poor little dirt clod oh you poor little speck of dust oh you need my help don't you you even need my help to love me but isn't that a great thing that god helps us to love him i'm so glad that that's the case i'm so glad that it's not all

upon my shoulders that i've got to do this and that's the beauty of the gospel and that's the glory of the grace of god and yet so often in the church we forget these things and people live in condemnation because they know they're failing they know they don't love god as they really should but then somebody comes along and instead of doing what paul did hey i'll pray for you that the lord will direct your heart into the love of god they heap condemnation and judgment upon people so you know so many people sadly have been so wounded and beat up and battered in the church and sometimes by church leadership it's

such a sad thing there's that beating of the sheep you know and people come in every week to just get a spiritual spanking and they sit and they they already feel like they failed

and by the time the sermon's over boy they know for sure that they have utterly failed and they are totally condemned and they walk out into the world with their head hanging down and discouraged that's not what's supposed to happen when you come to church no you're supposed to be encouraged you're supposed to be built up the world beats you down the world heaps condemnation upon us the church is the place where we're to edify one another build one another up encourage one another remind one another hey the lord will direct your heart into the love of god you don't feel like you love god enough hey let's pray that god will help you to love him more god is so good you know he loves us and he's for us to the point of helping us in our weaknesses knowing that we have these weaknesses and

inabilities sometimes i think lord i just i know i should love you more i'm so hardened sometimes i'm so inappreciative you know recently i was reading through isaiah 53 and it was one of those times where it just struck me what jesus did he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him by his stripes we are healed when you shall make his soul an offering for sin and on and i'm reading this i'm just lord it's just so beyond me what you've done and you know it just provoked me to a just a time of prayer and in it and in this moment i can't imagine how i could be hardened to what the lord has done i in that moment where you know god is really bringing the reality of the cross home to me i can't imagine having a hard heart

toward that or or being insensitive or not being quick to worship when i think about that or hear about it or sing about it but the the fact of the matter is there are times when it's just like oh yeah jesus died well yeah that was great thank you jesus you know and and he just how could i be like that but how can i be so numb how can i be so indifferent that's the human condition that's that's what paul was talking about when he said we groan earnestly desiring to be clothed hey we want to get out of this body this fickle existence where one minute i'm praising god oh god i love you so much and two minutes later i'm like who's god where's god hey i'm hungry you know i'm distracted i'm whatever what's on tv you know any it's just like what it's like us you know it's weird but that's how

we are that's the human condition god knows all that that's why jesus christ will help you to love god because you need help he can't do it you can't do it on your own and thank god he comes and he directs our hearts into the love of god and into the patience of christ we just need the lord we need his help all the time jesus presented to us a relationship with god that is really a state of utter dependency that's what the lord is talking about jesus talked about feeding upon him i'm the true bread that came down from heaven and he said to feed upon me now think about that for a moment what what is food for your human body for your physical existence food is an absolute necessity you go back to it over and over and over and over and over and over and over again because if you don't you'll

die you'll become weak you'll wither you'll starve you have to keep going back to it you are dependent on food utterly totally completely dependent on food you can't live without it for very long jesus says feed on me i'm the bread of life what's he saying you are utterly totally completely dependent on me you can't live without me but somehow we we try to do that and sometimes we even think that that's the more honorable or noble or you know whatever we think that that's the way it should be and and sometimes even you know you hear people well intended but certainly misled and confused saying you know pick your own self up by your bootstrap you don't need to trust god for that come on god wants you to god helps those who help themselves don't you know that scripture and you know all of

this stuff and and they're discouraging independency on god they're telling you you shouldn't you shouldn't be so dependent on god you know god doesn't want you to be a big baby having to depend on him for everything get out and do it yourself well of course there are certain areas where practically speaking of course god's not going to go out and work for you 40 hours a week while you sit home and watch tv and then bring home the check and say hey don't worry about it here it is you know i i took care of this for you he's not going to do things like that but but he does he wants us depending on him he wants us to understand that he never intended us to live independent you know my children i i want them to keep depending on me even though they're grown up i don't say to them okay you're

grown up now look don't call me anymore don't bug me i don't expect me to give you any money you're on your own now i brought you into this world took care of you for 18 20 years now you get out of here and adios that's the way it is well some people might do that but that's pretty pathetic no of course a loving parent is you're going to stay connected to that child for their entire life or for your entire life and you're going to always be their parent and you're going to always be wanting them to some degree to have not a dependence on you like like a small child would that would be improper but to still have a dependence and a connection and so with the lord the lord if if you ever grow out of dependency on god you've grown in the wrong direction as we grow in the lord what we realize

is how much we really do need him because the fact of the matter is like jesus said apart from him we really can't do anything now spiritually that's obviously true but you know it's it's even more true than just spiritually we don't think of it in these terms usually but you know apart from him we really can't do anything we because we live on his planet we breathe his air the stuff that sustains us the food we eat it's all stuff that he provided for us he created it our bodies function because he created them to function and he helps them to continue on in a healthy fashion as one of god's servants once said i truly cannot tie my shoes in the morning apart from the grace of god and the help of god see we're whether we know it or not we're much more dependent than we would ever dream but

god wants us to depend on him he wants us to trust him that's part of this wonderful loving relationship that we have with him now in verses 6 through 14 or 15 paul it takes you know he's finishing up the epistle but he takes just a quick diversion here to address a problem that seemed to be happening there in thessalonica so he's he's finishing the epistle but it's almost like oh let's address this thing before we finish up here and what he's going to address are those who are conducting themselves in a disorderly fashion what he means by that is people who are not taking responsibility for themselves but sort of mooching off of the church leeching off of the body of christ and he's gonna he's going to address that with them here in verses 6 through 15 so let's just read through it real

quickly he says but we command you brethren in the name of our lord jesus christ that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us for you yourselves know how you ought to follow us for we were not disorderly among you nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge so we see here we're getting a picture of what he's talking about eating anyone's bread free of charge but we worked and labored toiled night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you not because we do not have authority but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us for even when we were with you we commanded you this if anyone will not work neither shall he eat for we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner

not working at all but are busy bodies so this is what he's referring to this disorderly conduct it was with people who were not taking responsibility within the church they were expecting everybody else to take

care of them and instead of working hard like they ought to they were just going about being busy bodies these problems have always been a part of human life and society and culture and we are faced with these things regularly in our day there are people that just think for some reason or that everybody else owes them a living that everybody else owes them something and we have numerous people come here to the church on a regular basis with the expectation that because we're christians we are supposed to just you know give them whatever they request we have people that come with

all kinds of interesting stories you know it's amazing their cars always broke down it's just far enough away where you can't really see it you know their wife and kids are there and they're headed off to a new area and when they get there everything's going to be fine but they need a hundred bucks to get there on and we hear these stories over and over and over again occasionally you find that there's a once in a while it's a legitimate situation but the vast majority of the time it's just simply people who don't want to work people who don't want to take responsibility for themselves and they found it's easier just to go from church to church mooching off people because christians are softies and they seem to just be easy prey and and so they've developed a little routine of doing this

stuff paul says if a man doesn't work neither shall he eat if a man is capable of working he's not talking about a disabled person or somebody who's you know truly enabled or unable he says that these are disorderly people and they need to be dealt with they need to be put in order and occasionally i'm talking about people who are passing through occasionally you'll have people that'll sort of camp at a church for a while and go around taking advantage of the good christian people and whenever that does happen whenever that comes to the attention of the church leaders those people are dealt with and need to be dealt with paul says concerning them he says now those who are such we command and exhort through our lord jesus christ that they get a job that they work in quietness and eat their

own bread not somebody else's but as for you brethren do not grow weary in doing good and if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle note that person and do not keep company with him that he may be ashamed so he's talking specifically about those people if people are disobedient in this area he says note that person and do not keep company with them he said yet do not count them as an enemy but admonish him as a brother so people like this paul what he's saying is that you can't just let this go on you have to deal with it you have to rebuke a person you have to admonish them if they disregard what you're saying they don't pay any attention and they refuse to submit in this area he says don't keep company with him put him outside of the fellowship for a time but don't treat him as

an enemy paul's heart is you know see if you can win them back see if you can reconcile them but of course they have to comply to god's standard but there's one thing over here that i want to just touch on for a moment off the subject but paul mentions here the traditions verse six not according to the tradition which he received from us and one other place here in this thessalonian epistle paul makes reference to the tradition now remember these epistles to the thessalonians these were some of the earliest portions of the new testament that were written so at this time the new testament was in its process of being written down so they didn't obviously have the completed text as we do today they had the written words like we have here but there was still much that was tradition tradition

refers to oral orally transmitted or verbally transmitted teaching so paul is talking to them at this point about submitting to the written word and the traditions because there were things that had to yet be written down and and of course during that period of time that's the way it was now because paul says here that they were to acknowledge and be submissive to the traditions the roman catholic church which is huge on

tradition will use this to try to support a person's need to submit not only to the written word of god but to the traditions of the church as well but you see it's really an invalid position because this is a transitional period once the new testament was completed once it was written then of course it was no longer in being transmitted orally or verbally it was now all

penned out now tradition is not a bad thing unless tradition contradicts god's written word and that is a problem in regard to roman catholicism roman catholicism has many traditions that are blatant contradiction to what has been written down in the word of god paul would have never dreamed for a moment that the tradition would be in conflict with what he or the other apostles had written jesus had the problem you remember with the pharisees they had traditions their traditions in and of themselves were not necessarily the problem the problem was when the tradition contradicted the word of god and jesus would point that out to them he would say the word of god tells you to honor your father and mother but your tradition says whatever uh however you would your parents would have been

benefited it can be dedicated to god and you free yourself from having to obey god's word in order to keep your tradition that's the problem tradition is only bad when it contradicts god's written word or perhaps it's bad not in the same sense necessarily but it's bad when it prevents god from working freely because we only allow you know one type of way for god to move because that's our tradition that's the way we've been doing it but just just so you know when paul mentions tradition here he's not talking about what the roman catholics would say the the traditions of the church being of equal authority to the written word of god that was only the case at this transitional period while the new testament was being written and the traditions were just the verbal teachings that the

apostles were ministering to the fellowships that would ultimately be put down in written form so with that we come to now the benediction verse 16 now may the lord of peace himself give you peace always in every way the lord be with you all the lord of peace what a great title for the lord giving us peace we need peace the salutation of paul with my own hand which is a sign in every epistle so i write the grace of our lord jesus christ be with you all amen so that is the second epistle to the thessalonians let's pray lord we thank you for your word that we can gather and study it together that we can be strengthened and encouraged by it and we thank you lord that through it we see your heart revealed toward us a heart that loves us and wants to bless us and is for us and always looking

to help us lord direct our hearts into the love of god thank you that you do for us what we're not able to do for ourselves lord may your word run swiftly in our lives in this community around the world and may it be glorified and lord as we head into this holiday season and all the different activities and things lord we just pray your blessing upon this time of the year and as we come through it and get into a new year amazingly a new year ahead of us lord direct us guide us lead us into the things that you have for us in the year to come we pray we thank you for your goodness your love and your mercy we thank you for jesus our wonderful savior in his name we pray amen

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