

October 16–22. 1 and 2 Thessalonians:
“Perfect That Which Is Lacking in Your Faith”

Overview

We learned in Acts that Paul went to Thessalonica on his second mission, preached about 3 weeks, and had good success among the Gentiles

Acts 17:1-4

[1] Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

[2] And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

[3] Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

[4] And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

From Paul’s letters we learn that these saints remained devout and he has encouraging words for them

1Thes 1:3-4

[3] Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

[4] Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

They seem to be excelling in the principles of faith, hope, and charity
Paul numbered them among the elect of God

The Saints in Thessalonica were progressing so well in the gospel that he was able to move beyond the gospel basics and discuss such principles as the second coming and the great apostasy

Obtaining a Testimony of the Gospel of Christ

Paul reminds them of the conversion process that they had gone thru that brought them to a knowledge of Christ and His gospel

1Thes 1:5-6

[5] For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

[6] And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

What do you think Paul meant when he said that they had received the gospel “in much assurance”?

(not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost)

Bruce R. McConkie

“The gospel had by the Saints of old included, first, the word, that is, the doctrines, principles, and laws, the statutes and judgments of the Lord.... [And] second, the power, the saving grace, the gifts of the Spirit, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and that abundant testimony in which true Saints so delight.

“Paul also said that these things—the word and the power, which taken together comprise the true gospel.” (CR, Oct. 1968)

2 Nephi 32:3,5

[3]... feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

[5] And... if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.

Paul reminds them that they felt the influence of the Holy Ghost while listening to the message and testimony of those who taught them with love and diligence

1Thes 2:4-8

[4] But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

[5] For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

[6] Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

[7] But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

[8] So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

How did Paul approach the opportunity to preach the gospel?

(as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel
not as pleasing men, but God; Nor of men sought we glory; verse 8)

Carlos E. Asay

"Paul spoke of affectionate desire and a willingness to give all; Alma recognized the worth of souls and a desire to cry repentance.... These scriptural accounts and others testify of a spirit-real, powerful, and compelling—that leads us to reach outward in preaching, teaching, and service. Such influences, combined as one, might be referred to as the spirit of one's calling." (In the Lord's Service: A Guide to Spiritual Development,

pg. 31)

Recall that during His ministry the Lord said, “my sheep hear my voice”. Paul tells the Thessalonians that a reason for their conversion was because they were numbered among His sheep

2Thes 2:13-14

[13] But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

[14] Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is a reason given by Paul that the saints had received a “belief of the truth”?

(God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation)

Bruce R. McConkie

"Our friend Paul... speaks of members of the Church as 'the called of Jesus Christ,' as those who are 'called to be saints' (Rom 1:6-7; 1Cor 1:2)...

"'God hath from the beginning,' that is, from before the foundations of the world, 'chosen you [his saints] to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2Thes 2:13-14). That is, the saints were foreordained in the councils of eternity to believe the truth, to be sanctified, and to save their souls; and then in this life they are called to that gospel whereby these eternal promises can be fulfilled." (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3:328)

Resurrection of the Just

There seemed to have been a misunderstanding among the Thessalonians that the righteous who were living on earth at the time of the first resurrection would have an advantage over the righteous who had died. Paul discusses the first resurrection to help them understand the blessing to the righteous living and to the dead

Paul makes it clear that not only the righteous living will be caught up to meet Him but also the righteous who have died.

All who believe should be comforted by the knowledge of His second coming

1Thes 4:13-18

[13] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

[14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep

in Jesus will God bring with him.

[15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

[16] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

[17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

[18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Who will be caught up to meet Christ at His second coming?

(the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds)

Sterling W. Sill

“At Christ's coming a great number of very exciting things are going to take place. He is not coming alone; as Paul says, he will come with his mighty angels. At his coming a great many of the faithful dead will be resurrected and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. And some of the righteous who are then living upon the earth will be changed from mortality to immortality in the twinkling of an eye to join that impressive company in the air.

Certainly this is something to look forward to.” (CR, April 1966)

Paul stresses the importance of being ready for His coming

1Thes 5:1-6

[1] But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

[2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

[3] For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

[4] But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

[5] Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

[6] Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

What do you think Paul meant by, “ye... are not in darkness... Ye are all the children of light”?

Erastus Snow

“We are called to be the children of light. Blessed are they who continue in the light, for the day of the Lord will not overtake them as a thief in the night; but woe unto them that depart from, or reject that light that shines in the midst of the darkness, for the day cometh and that speedily, when they will be overtaken as by a whirlwind. The command of the Lord to the Saints is to watch, for we know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man shall come. The precise time of his coming has not been revealed; the prophets

were ignorant of it; it could not be declared to the apostles of the Lamb, and, indeed, the Savior said that not the angels, nor even he himself, knew the day or the hour of this important event.... These things have been spoken that the Saints should watch and not fall asleep.” (JD, 20:372)

2Thes 1:7-10

[7] And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

[8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

[9] Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

[10] When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

What will happen to the wicked who are alive at Christ’s second coming?

(taking vengeance on them that know not God
shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the
Lord)

Sterling W. Sill

"The first time he came as a man of sorrows who was acquainted with grief but the second time he will come as the mighty God. He came the first time as the Prince of Peace. He will come the second time as King of kings and Lord of lords. He came the first time to atone for our sins; he will come the second time to judge those sinners who have not repented. The Apostle Paul says, 'the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2Thes 1:7-8)....

"This glorious second coming of Christ is scheduled to usher in the earth's Sabbath of a thousand years.... However, before this can happen, the wicked will be destroyed by fire and Satan will be bound." (CR, April 1966)

The Falling Away

But Paul makes it clear to the early saints that the day of Christ is not at hand. There are things that must take place first. Specifically a falling away from the truth – the apostasy

2Thes 2:1-4

[1] Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

[2] That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

[3] Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there

come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
[4] Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

What do you think Paul means when he says that there will be, “a falling away first”?

(that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first)

James E. Faust

“With this falling away, priesthood keys were lost, and some precious doctrines of the Church organized by the Savior were changed. Among these were baptism by immersion; receiving the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands; the nature of the Godhead—that They are three distinct personages; all mankind will be resurrected through the Atonement of Christ, ‘both ... the just and the unjust’; continuous revelation—that the heavens are not closed; and temple work for the living and the dead.” (CR, April 2006)

Paul tells them that the falling away has already started taking place

2Thes 2:5-9

[5] Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

[6] And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

[7] For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

[8] And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

[9] Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

JST 2Thes 2:9

Yea, the Lord, even Jesus, whose coming is not until after there cometh a falling away, by the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

What do you think Paul meant by, “the mystery of iniquity doth already work”?

Neal A. Maxwell

“New Testament epistles clearly indicate that serious and widespread apostasy began soon. James decried ‘wars and fightings among’ the Church (James 4:1). Paul lamented ‘divisions’ in the Church and how ‘grievous wolves’ would not spare ‘the flock’ (1Cor 11:18). He knew an apostasy was coming and wrote to the Thessalonians that Jesus’ second coming would not occur ‘except there come a falling away first,’ further advising that ‘iniquity doth already work’ (2Thes 2:3, 7).

“Near the end, Paul acknowledged how very extensive the falling away was: ‘All they which are in Asia be turned away from me’ (2Tim 1:15)....

“Widespread fornication and idolatry brought apostolic alarm. John and Paul both bemoaned the rise of false Apostles. The Church was clearly under siege. Some not only fell away but then openly opposed. In one circumstance, Paul stood alone and lamented that ‘all men forsook me’ (2Tim 4:16).” (CR, Oct. 1993)

The Importance of Good Works

Paul exhorts the saints to do good works

1Thes 5:14-22

[14] Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

[15] See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

[16] Rejoice evermore.

[17] Pray without ceasing.

[18] In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

[19] Quench not the Spirit.

[20] Despise not prophesyings.

[21] Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

[22] Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Paul emphasizes the importance of abstaining from fornication and bridling or lusts

1Thes 4:3-7

[3] For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

[4] That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

[5] Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

[6] That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

[7] For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Dallin H. Oaks

“We believe that, as an essential part of His plan of salvation, God has established an eternal standard that sexual relations should occur only between a man and a woman who are married.

“The power to create mortal life is the most exalted power God has given to His children. Its use was mandated by God’s first commandment to Adam and Eve but other important commandments were given to forbid its misuse.

The emphasis we place on the law of chastity is explained by our understanding of the purpose of our procreative powers in the accomplishment of God's plan." (CR, Oct. 2013)

Paul uses himself and other ministers in stressing the importance of physical work

2Thes 3:7-13

[7] For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

[8] Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

[9] Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

[10] For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

[11] For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

[12] Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

[13] But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

Why is it important that we work for our own sustenance if possible?

Spencer W. Kimball

"The Lord's way builds individual self-esteem and develops and heals the dignity of the individual, whereas the world's way depresses the individual's view of himself and causes deep resentment.

"The Lord's way causes the individual to hasten his efforts to become economically independent again, even though he may have temporary need, because of special conditions, for help and assistance....

"The Lord's way helps our members get a testimony for themselves about the gospel of work. For work is important to human happiness as well as productivity." (CR, April 1976)