

FAITH BIBLE FELLOWSHIP of Fairfield Glade

Pastor Dave Evangelista ~ 5.3.09 ~ Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

“Nothing But the Truth”

As we look at the close of this letter, we observe the ministry, writings and character of the Apostle Paul, as totally balanced. He moved from prophesying to practical exhortations on godly living. He turned from the negativity of the lies of Satan to the positive emphasis of God's Truth. He turned from warning to thanksgiving and prayer. He now points to the fact that every believer had four responsibilities toward God's Truth:

1.) Believe the Truth

(See 2 Thess. 2:13, 14) We have noted in our studies a thread of consistent thanksgiving in his letters to this church. He gave thanks for the manner in which they responded to God's work in their lives. In these two verses, Paul reviewed the five stages in their salvation experience:

Stage One: God loved them. (2 Thess. 2:13a) *“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord,”* Whatever God does for the lost world springs from His eternal love for it.

Stage Two: God chose them. (2 Thess. 2:13b) *“Because from the beginning God chose you to be saved.”* God and His grace gives us through Christ what we do not deserve and God in His mercy, does not give us what we do deserve, but He gave that to Christ as punishment for our sin.

Stage Three: God set them apart. (2 Thess. 2:13c) *“Through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the Truth.”* The Sanctification Paul mentioned here refers to the Spirit's work in leading the unbeliever to faith in Christ.

Stage Four: God called them. (2 Thess. 2:14a) *“He called you to this through our Gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* In order for God to fulfill His eternal plan, He sent Paul, Silas and Timothy to Thessalonica to preach the Word of God. The call of God went out to

the whole city, but is effective only in those who believed; the Truth and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ.

Stage Five: God gave them glory. (2 Thess. 2:14b) *“That you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* We are awaiting Christ's return and then the glory shall be revealed. (See Romans 8:17-19). Being neutral about God's Truth is a dangerous thing. It brings with it tragic eternal consequences.

2.) Guard the Truth

(See 2 Thess. 2:15) *“So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.”* Paul had told them about the future rebellion against the Truth, namely the great apostasy headed by the Antichrist. But Paul also warned in his letters that there was a clear and present danger of apostasy and that the church must guard God's Truth and not turn from it. There are repeated warnings about this in the New Testament. The Truth of the Gospel began as an oral message proclaimed by our Lord and the Apostles. Later this Truth was written down by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and it became Holy Scripture. Paul stated clearly that the believer's dual responsibility in guarding Truth and to hold to the teachings do not move away from the Truth of the Gospel. (See 1 Corinthians 16:13 & Colossians 1:23). If we stand, then we can hold—hold fast and hold firmly. Each generation of Christians must receive the Truth from others. Guard it and be faithful to keeping it intact for the next generation. Sometimes it requires faithful believers to refuse to fellowship with those who have rejected and / or turned from the 'Faith'. (See Romans 16:17-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 John 7-10; 1 Timothy 6:3-5).

3.) Practice the Truth

(See 2 Thess. 2:16 & 17) *“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope encourage; your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.”* It is not enough to believe the Truth and guard it; we must also practice it. If we hear the Word of God but do not obey it we are only fooling ourselves. When Paul was with them, He encouraged them individually as a Father does his children. Paul encouraged them to walk, to please God and to grow in their love for others. He taught them about the Rapture of the Church in order that they might encourage each other. To calm their fears, he explained the Day of the Lord to them. Paul was concerned about two aspects of their Christian life: their word, their work, their saying and their doing. If our ‘walk’ contradicts our ‘talk’, we lose our testimony. “Our Walk” and “Our Talk” must agree; our good works and good words must come from the same yielded heart. Too many Christians today emphasize guarding the Truth but downplay living the Truth.

4.) Share the Truth

(See 2 Thess. 3:1-5) We guard the Truth and practice it so that we can share it with others. The Word of God is glorified in the lives of those who share it and those who receive it. (See Acts 13:48, 49) The universe was created, and is sustained by the Word of God. (Hebrews 11:3) *“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”* The theory of evolution is a lie! Surely God’s Word can accomplish His work in this world. Of course, there is always opposition to the Word and Work of God. Paul asked his friends to pray that he might be delivered from unbelieving men who were evil and wicked. Just as the spirit uses dedicated people to share the Word, Satan uses wicked people to oppose the Word. The evil one

also enjoys using backslidden believers to oppose the work of God. Paul had confidence that his readers would not yield to Satan. But, they would permit the faithful Lord to establish them and guard them from the evil one. We cannot have confidence in ourselves, but we can have confidence in God for ourselves and for others. In a battle, it is not enough for only the officers to fight—every man must do his duty. This is also true of the work of the local church. A soldier obeys primarily out of loyalty and fear, a Christian has much higher motives for obedience, i.e., God’s love and Christ’s return.

Our challenge going forward: In summary there are four great responsibilities for us to fulfill:

- 1.) Believe the Truth; 2.) Guard the Truth;
- 3.) Practice the Truth; 4.) Share the Truth.

If we fulfill these duties we will experience joy and power in our lives and growth and blessings overflowing in our church.