

2 Thess 2:13-15 message (JoshuaYu)

I. Last week

- A. Last week it was covered how God purposely makes it harder for lawless people to come to repentance, to the extent that He would send a deluding influence upon them which would incline them to further solidify the lawless choice they've already made.
- B. We would be wise to remember that God desires all mankind to be saved, but in reality only some will choose life and relationship with God, hence it was taught last week that this was God's attempt to separate those who sincerely desire to follow Him versus apart from those who desired lawlessness.

II. This week

- A. So then this week, I have the privilege to teach the next three verses. And these verses describe the other group of people who have faith in Christ and who were chosen by God.
 - 1. (Next slide // Picture), I see these next three verses as a picture that encapsulates what a Christian chosen by God should look like and also tells us what to do in order to get there.
 - 2. Prayer
 - a. Pray that we remember how we "ought to" and "should be" living.
 - b. Pray that you would give us the grace to see the value in the future glory you have for us.
 - c. Pray for encouragement to hold onto the teaching and traditions you've given to us.
- B. Verse 13 – Read out loud – **Should**
 - 1. **Should**; this is a keyword that sets the tone for the next couple of statements. Paul isn't speaking to their current condition and how they are currently living, but what they should be striving towards, and what to do in order to get there.
 - 2. IMO, this is a helpful way to perceive the word of God. Rather than thinking that an intellectual recognition of biblical truth will bring with it the experiences of what it actually says; Thinking of it as something that is something yet to be experienced, reserved solely for those who have put in adequate directed effort.
- C. Verse 13 – Always give thanks to God for you!
 - 1. Wouldn't it be nice if the phrase just stopped there? // Now if I stopped there, seems reasonable enough - always give thanks to God, for we believe that He is good; but let's read a couple more words, always giving thanks to God for our fellow brothers and sisters!
 - 2. For you! (let that statement settle into your mind for a moment)
 - a. Always giving thanks to God for the people closest in our lives who profess faith in Jesus Christ (spouse, partner, sibling, brother, church members, kids, father & mother, friends)
 - b. If I were to have written the bible, it would've went something like; we should always give thanks to God for you when you treat me the way I want to be treated.
 - c. When I got married to my wife, I was surprised at how quick I was to justify my selfishness, how determined I was to defend my selfishness, all the while

pointing out to my lovely wife how she was also doing the same kind of selfish things towards me!

3. Immediate reaction, Why?
 - a. Why should I give thanks to God for so and so? When so and so is doing x, y, z, that is bringing negative effects upon my current circumstances? When we have this kind of thinking, it exposes not only how self-interested we are, but how much emphasis we place our reasoning on the condition of our present circumstances.
4. Remember this is “should” -- we should be always giving thanks to God, for this reason -
 - a. Because they are beloved by God; Because God chose them from the beginning for salvation.
5. God has chosen us, brothers and sisters - Side note
 - a. Comforting idea - knowing that God took the time, energy, and thought to choose every single one of us; it is a heart warming thought; our hearts are full of warmth towards this thought.
 - b. Humbling idea - at the same time, we are humbled by this idea - knowing that although we have made efforts towards salvation, in the end it is only made possible through God’s choosing and grace, and not based upon our own efforts.
6. One idea that could help us in this endeavor to always give thanks to God for the people in our lives! // Every believer is on a different part of the path; and when you’ve come farther in your Christian life, it becomes more tempting to judge and look down upon those who are less mature than you; but remember that unless you are Jesus Christ, we all started from humble beginnings as enemies of God, immature in our thinking, and selfish in our ways.

D. Salvation is through sanctification

1. There is no salvation without sanctification; put in another way, there is no salvation from hell if a person remains sinful and unholy -- so then if a person willfully continues in practicing sin (all sin is done according to the will), then that person will not enter the kingdom of God (they fall into the previous category mentioned by Paul)
2. There is no sanctification without the Spirit’s help; put in another way, we cannot attain sanctification without the help, grace, wisdom, strength that comes from God (Spirit). And we only need to encounter tempting circumstances to see how weak we are.
3. There is no sanctification without faith [obedience] in the truth; put in another way, there is no sanctification without the individual’s willful choice to obey God’s commands

E. Verse 14 - Obtaining the Glory of Jesus Christ

1. Paul is referring again to the purpose of God choosing and calling us. In verse thirteen Paul describes it as salvation through sanctification; Here Paul is referring it to as obtaining the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Glory is a word that is not commonly used in our day to day language; the English definition refers to it as ‘high renown or honor through notable achievements’ or ‘magnificence or great beauty’. When we see glory referenced in the bible, I think the definition leans toward “magnificence or great beauty”.

3. God called us through the gospel in order for us to obtain the “magnificence of great beauty of Jesus Christ”. An obvious follow-up question to this would be, what does that look like?
 4. Preface, as far as I know (feel free to correct me later), no human being while alive on earth has obtained the glory of Jesus Christ while they were still living on earth except Jesus. So then when the apostles are teaching this idea in the NT, we know that they themselves have yet to experience this because they haven’t finished the race yet and I think that adds to why it is difficult to explain and thus understand.
 5. 2 Peter 1:16-18
 6. Matthew 17:2-3
 7. Moment on the mountain where Peter sees the glory of Jesus Christ with his own eyes. Jesus’ face shining, his garments shining. IMO, I suspect that Elijah and Moses probably looked like Jesus as well, shining with bright clothes. That is why Peter made the faulty assumption to build three tents, and God the Father quickly says “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased, listen to Him!” Setting Jesus apart from Moses & Elijah.
 8. This majesty and glory seems to be something that would be reserved for just Jesus Christ himself, however in that same experience, Peter sees two other fellas, Elijah and Moses, which I believe indicates to us that this kind of glory is shared with the other children of God. And when God calls us from the beginning for salvation, when He calls us through the gospel, it is so that we may reach that same glorified state of magnificence and great beauty.
- F. Other verses that indicate this idea - Read verses
1. We were called to obtain the glory of Jesus Christ; we will not become God but we will also be sons and daughters of God, sharing in the same kind of glory that Jesus has in the kingdom of God. This idea is something that the apostles wanted to convey through their letters, something that they were all eagerly waiting for. Sharing in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; being free from their earthly bodies.
- G. Diagram for the progression of a Christian
1. We all start born in the flesh and start as selfish human beings. Two circles represent our inward and outward state.
 2. One day we hear the gospel, and repent of our sinful and selfish ways, and begin this journey of putting off our old selfish ways, and put on a new way of life that is righteous and loving.
 3. If we go far enough, early church literature would describe that there is a state that we can mature to which they describe as purity of heart. Where we have rid of all the vices within our hearts and replaced them with holy and good virtues that reflect Christ. However no matter how far someone progresses in their purity, they will always carry the burden of their sinful flesh; a decaying, sick and sinful body.
 4. This is why apostle John would say, if we say we have no sin, then we call ourselves a liar; no matter how pure our heart is, our bodies will always be tainted with sin and so we eagerly wait for our new glorified state. Where the outward manifestation of our bodies will match our inward purity of heart.
 5. This section would be described as salvation and sanctification.
 6. While this entire progression is the reason behind God’s calling and choosing.
- H. Traditions

1. So now the obvious question is. Well how do we get there, how does one start from selfish with a decaying body, to purity of heart, obtaining the glory of Jesus Christ.

I. Stand firm

1. Perhaps it's a human thing, but in my opinion, more than ever the society we live in is obsessed with the newest trends. Whether it be related to fashion, technology, the new diet, the new supplement for health. And this trend has also found its way in the church.
2. Stand firm -- there's a lot of effort to come up with new inspiration, new angles, new ideas to interpret and teach the bible; sometimes, it's even difficult to preach on the same bible section and hear the same kind of teaching cause we feel this need to come up with new inspiration or new perspective rather than saying the same things; I think it would be wise to really focus our efforts to repeatedly teach, repeat, and consistently make efforts to follow the things that the apostles made abundantly clear to us! Standing firm in the clear teachings of Jesus and the apostles.
3. Stand firm implies that you already know, that you already know what you've been taught, and so then the efforts are not to learn something new per se, but to develop, build upon, and make consistent effort to stay within the boundaries of what you know to be godly, holy, and good.

J. Traditions

1. Adverse reactions -- And so when we read the word traditions, we often have an adverse reaction (and rightfully so) to it because of either what we've been taught on Sundays, or what we've read in the bible, or how people within the Christian community (and even ourselves) have negatively promoted human traditions in place of the word of God.
2. 13 times in the NT -- This word in greek for traditions is used 13 times in the NT; (three times used in the positive sense, 1 Corinth 11:2, 2 Th 2:15, 3:6); and even Paul uses the word in a negative sense, recognizing how we being selfish hold onto human traditions while neglecting the commandments of God.
3. But here Paul is instructing us that we should stand and hold onto the traditions that were taught, either by letter or through word of mouth. And so traditions that are passed down through generations can be a good thing. We have to recognize that some of the traditions were written down, but some of them were passed orally.
4. Anything noteworthy in society comes at the cost of daily practicing a tradition, routine, or habit; that is also the same for Christian maturity; we don't spontaneously become God fearing, loving people. Using Paul's words, we become God fearing, loving people, obtaining purity and glory of Jesus Christ through standing firm and holding onto traditions.

K. Traditions (continued.)

1. Some traditions that Christians have
 - a. We meet on Sundays
 - b. We have different ministries for different demographics (womens, mens, youth, college, small group)
 - c. We celebrate the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - d. We often practice communion, eating the body and drinking the blood of Jesus Crist
 - e. We regularly sing psalms, spiritual songs when we gather

2. Different parts of a tradition
3. Goal - what the action is intending to accomplish
4. Action - applied effort on a repeated basis
5. Intent - necessary motive and intent required for action to make progress towards goal
6. I believe the trap that we often hold onto, is stressing potentially good traditions but losing sight of the goal in what they are supposed to accomplish and also the intent behind the tradition - so then we have these traditions that we strongly hold onto but we don't know why we do them, hence we do them out of habit and without intent.
7. When traditions are practiced in this kind of way, then practicing traditions will have little effect in our progress towards sanctification.

L. Tradition (continued)

1. Reevaluate some of the traditions that we currently hold onto, specifically concerning our spiritual growth and path towards sanctification
 - a. 1) Stop some of them, discernment
 - b. 2) Refresher upon what is the goal and purpose of the traditions
 - c. 3) Newly resolve the intention and motive that is needed in order to make progress towards that goal
2. Broad strokes
 - a. Traditions require set aside time
 - b. Traditions require doing something on a consistent basis (daily, weekly, yearly)
 - c. Traditions often include putting off vices, and putting on virtues
3. This is hard; I believe this is why God gave us the body, the church, brothers & sisters for encouragement, given us those who have gone before us as teachers, fathers and mothers. We have each other to encourage one another, hold each other accountable, and spur one another on in standing firm in our traditions in our progress towards sanctification.
4. As a church and community, I encourage us to talk about our traditions that we hold onto, which ones should we reevaluate, what are the goals behind each of the things we do, and the intention required behind each one.
5. Individually, I would encourage you and myself to take ownership of our own traditions. Come up with something that is biblically based, and something that fits your specific needs. All the while, asking God for wisdom, asking each other for assistance, accountability, and feedback.