

2 Thessalonians 3

2/27/2011

Introduction

Review

The anti-Christ has lots of power, influence and claims to be God. But he has no power over Jesus who will defeat him with the “breath of his mouth.” There is no reason for the Christians to be caught off guard or to be deceived because they are chosen by God.

Chapter 3 Intro

Think about a time you were part of a team and had a free rider. How did that make you feel? What did it make you want to do? What about when everyone is doing there share, but someone still needs help – how do you feel about helping that person?

Paul is wrapping up his letter with prayer and with final instructions, pointedly addressing his earlier point about not being idle.

-v1 – Paul wants prayer (comment about Paul’s attitude toward prayer -> nothing is accomplished without it) that the word of God would spread rapidly (run swiftly – similar to Psalm 147:15)

What does it mean that God’s word is honored?

-v2 – Pray to be delivered from evil men -> men without faith who are opposed to the gospel and those who proclaim it. Evil and wickedness is not just passive reluctance but active resistance. It is always opposed to God. What does this mean for the church? The gospel is always either retreating or advancing.

-v3 – juxtaposition of people without faith and God who is always faithful. Another encouragement that God will overcome the evil one and protect his children. Matthew 16:18 – Jesus promises that the gates of Hell will not stand against the church

-v4 – Paul is confident that the Thessalonians will continue to do the things Paul commanded. Why? He commands some pretty difficult things. Where is his confidence? Not with us, with God.

-v5 – Paul prays for them – their hearts are directed by God – to his love and perseverance

Warning Against Idleness

Why is work important? – Gen 2 (work is not the curse, our work is cursed because of sin)

-comes from God

-provides for our needs

-keeps us busy -> helps avoid sin

Paul set an example when he was with them

Had been accused of taking advantage of people to whom he was preaching – refuted in the first letter

He had a right to asking for help as a laborer for God - He paid his own way to avoid this charge

What is the difference between being generous and taking advantage? When is it ok to seek help from the church?

How do we treat the idle brother? Address the sin, don't get caught up in the sin ourselves (don't associate with the sinner) -> for the goal of restoring him as a brother

Final Greetings

Prayer for peace – in a non-peaceful environment

How do we understand peace in our culture? What is the difference between peace and ease/happiness?

Paul signed his own letter. Usually had a scribe, but signed it with his own hand.

Why would he draw attention to it? Show his real concern for the Thessalonians. Avoid doubt about the authenticity of the letter.

Summary

What are some of the key take-aways from the letters to the Thessalonians?

-God sustains us in trials, accomplishes his purposes

-Paul has true concern and love for his flock, even when he is separated from them

-we should continue to live as befits a follower of Christ, without being idle or imposing on others

-Jesus is coming back and will destroy the evil one and take the elect to be in heaven with him forever

