

CHOSEN AND CALLED

God's Word:

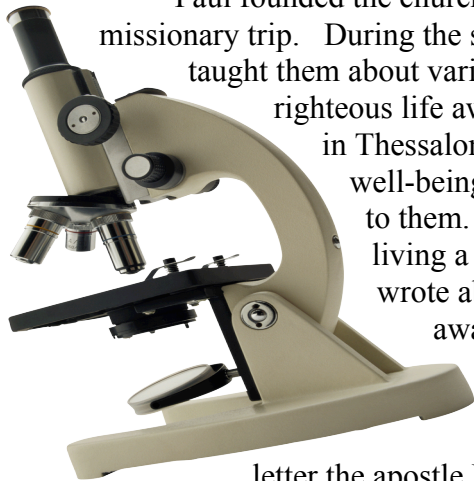
II Thessalonians 2:7-17

Key Verse:

"SO THEN, BRETHREN, STAND FIRM AND HOLD TO THE
TRADITIONS WHICH YOU WERE TAUGHT, WHETHER BY WORD
OF MOUTH OR BY LETTER FROM US."
II THESSALONIANS 2:15



Breaking It Down:



Paul founded the church in Thessalonica during his second missionary trip. During the short time he spent with the Thessalonians he taught them about various topics that would be useful in living a righteous life awaiting Jesus' return. Paul loved the brethren in Thessalonica and was concerned for their spiritual well-being. That is the reason he wrote his first letter to them. In this letter he encourages them to keep on living a life worthy of Christ's calling. Paul also wrote about Jesus' second coming and the fate that awaited the believers that had already passed away.

Today's lesson takes us to the second letter the apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. Paul was very thankful to God for their growing faith and their love for one another, even in the midst of persecution. He was also very concerned with the rumors of false teachings amongst some believers. These teaching were regarding the second coming of Jesus. Some were saying that Jesus had already come and the Thessalonians had missed it. Paul does not identify who is responsible for this; however he does write that these teachings are causing distress to the point

that some are losing their assurance in Christ. We do not have much information about who gave the believers this erroneous message. Some scholars believe some of the church members had misunderstood what Paul had written about Jesus' second coming in his first letter. Others say maybe there were false teachers within the congregation trying to take people away from the gospel of Christ.

Paul warns the brethren concerning the Lord's second coming. He exhorts them not to let anyone mislead them by suggesting the Lord has already returned, even if they say God spoke to them, or they hear a preaching or a letter saying it's from us. He points out that there will be visible signs before Jesus' second coming. These Paul had spoken to them about when he had come the first time. Paul speaks of the mystery of lawlessness already at work although someone is holding this lawlessness in check. This will continue until the one who is restraining this lawlessness is taken out of the way. Then the person or individuals who are behind this wickedness will be revealed and then destroyed by the breath (word) of the Lord's mouth, bringing an end to their evil ways. Still many will have believed in this way of lawlessness and evil as a result of the wonders and signs performed by this agent of Satan. The Lord will also destroy such folks for not loving the truth of his Gospel but instead finding pleasure in wickedness.

Not obeying God's message will have dreadful consequences on those who disobeyed. However Paul wants the Thessalonians to keep in mind the teachings they had received by tradition, by word of mouth or through letters sent by him. He wanted them to understand their calling was from God unto an eternal salvation, even though now they were suffering persecution. "It was for this He called you through our Gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Thes. 2:14).

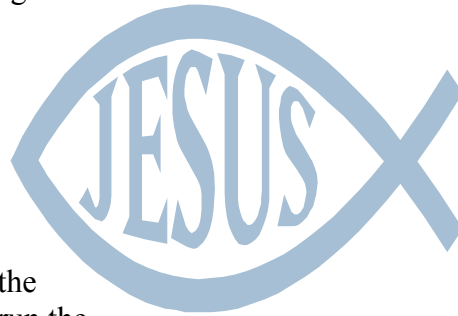


Living It:

It's not easy living for a specific goal when the majority of people are living so carelessly. It's especially hard when they criticize you for being so foolish in believing "that Christian mumbo jumbo." Some who hate the faith start rumors and some so-called believers start making false predictions about the exact day Jesus will return. Time keeps on ticking and the Lord has not come yet. To many, it's very difficult to keep on waiting for the Lord's return. For us, this should be a time we take advantage of, by working hard in studying scripture and sharing the Gospel. The apostle Peter wrote to the first century believers who were growing impatient with Jesus' coming. "The Lord is not slow about His

promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” (II Peter 3:9)

We as believers, including the young believers, must know the scripture well in order to not be persuaded by any false message or tale. We must be certain that the things we hear all around us do not take our trust away from the Lord. A good practice is to always compare the messages you hear from people to the Bible. If the message doesn't line up with the Bible, you must discard it. Otherwise you run the risk of having this erroneous thought take hold of you and cause you to drift away from trusting only in the Lord and His word.



This week's lesson has a very important message for all believers - young and mature. We must live our lives in a manner that is worthy of Christ's calling on our lives. Don't live like Christ will never come back, or think that He is taking too long so I can do my thing for a while. Get serious if you want to live with Christ eternally. You must start now, and there are no excuses why you can't. If you need help knowing how Christ wants you to lead your life, ask your teacher. "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?" (II Peter 3:10-11)



Understanding It:

1. What was Paul's concern with the brethren in Thessalonica?
2. How did this false message get to the church?
3. How did this false message affect the believers in Thessalonica?
4. What must we do to avoid falling prey to false messages about Christ's coming?



Doing It!



This week, take time from your busy schedule and look up these verses: Galatians 5:13, I Thessalonians 4:7 and 1 Timothy 6:12. Read them through a couple of times each. Then pray for the Spirit to show you the message He wishes you to meditate on concerning your calling in the Lord.