

Confidence and Quietness

23rd Sun. after Pent. – 11/13/22 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-13 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 4 [Paul speaks to the Christians at Thessalonica,] **“And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command.”**

vv. 12-13 **“Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly... As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.”**

Introduction

✘ By the time Paul writes this 2nd letter to the Christian converts in Thessalonica, it has been 15 years or so since he was converted and appointed by Christ to be His apostle to the Gentiles. And it was even before Paul knew to call Jesus Lord that the Word of the Lord was speeding ahead, going faster and farther than anyone could ask or imagine.

➔ The Lord’s Word was proven true in the conception and birth of the Messiah by a virgin. Its veracity was confirmed 30 years later when, according to Scripture, Jesus suffered, died, was buried, and rose again from the dead. Fifty days after He rose, The Lord’s Word prevailed again when, on Pentecost, in a single day, thousands were converted at Peter’s preaching. In fact we don’t have the time we’d need right now to recount all of the instances and ways that The Word of the Lord was fulfilled and proven to be true by the mighty work of the Triune God – and all of this was long before Paul even knew to call Jesus His Lord.

✘ On that day when Jesus did encounter Saul (whose name Jesus changed to Paul) on the road to Damascus, what seemed like an interruption – abrupt, troubling, blinding – to Paul was all within Jesus’ divine purpose. Acts 9:16 shows the Lord explaining to Ananias, who would baptize the newly blinded and newly believing Paul, “I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of My name”. Jesus was clear from the get go that Paul’s life would not be easy or pleasant or nice or simple to understand. His new career as Christ’s Apostle promised no cushy return on his retirement investments.

➔ As it was for Jesus so Paul would not always know where he would lay down his head every night or where he would be buried. Jesus though, He knew full well all that Paul have to endure for the sake of the Gospel; as Christ’s servant – all of the pains, trials and tribulations.

✘ So what about you my dear Christians? When you encounter pains or trials or tribulations because of your faith – whether it’s from the political or business world; or in your family or personal life – what do you do? Are you surprised? Do you despair? Don’t be, because suffering and trial are our lot too as this old world is wearing out and Satan thrashes around, seeking his prey like a hungry lion. Are you growing tired? Don’t be. As Paul promises in 1 Corinthians 10:13, Nothing “has overtaken you that is not common to mankind”. Your battles are not new, and trust me, they are not your own. You labor with Christ and with all His people. And so, Paul teaches us today that we have confidence because of the Lord’s faithfulness and quietness, because our lives are entirely His gift.

I. Confidence – because of the Lord’s Faithfulness

✘ In verse one, Paul tells the congregation that he planted in Thessalonica to pray that the Word of the Lord would “speed ahead” just as it did to them; making a way for faith. And the basis for this bold prayer is not in the people who are praying – that would never be dependable, but Paul lays out the fact in verse three, “the Lord is faithful”. He is the only one, Paul goes on to say, that “will establish you [within His eternal presence] and guard you against the evil one”. This is certainly the Lord’s desire. He taught us to pray in the Lord’s Prayer, “deliver us from evil”; literally, from “the evil one”. You see, whenever Paul was wearied

or perplexed or near death, he knew that he still had a loving Father and a Savior whose atoning blood was shed for him...and so do you!

→ Yes, you – you can have confidence in the Lord's faithfulness because His record is solid (v 4). Just think about it; which of His promises has ever failed? The promise that the Seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head? The promise that in the Seed of Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed? The promise that death would not find anyone inside the homes on which the lambs' blood was smeared on the doorposts? The promise that the Virgin would conceive and bear a Son? The promise that the Holy One of God would not see corruption? No, no and no again! All of God's promises find their "Yes" in our Lord Jesus and their "Amen" to God's eternal glory!

✘ His record is solid. His faithfulness is sure. Not one single day in your life has been lived apart from His care and love. You may have always known that care and that love or you may not have always known or always appreciated or always cared about it. But still He did not take it from you. He never left you, nor did He forsake you. He can't, because to do so would be against His very nature.

→ If God were anything other than a loving Father, He would not have sent His Son to the cross for you. He would not have laid on Jesus' shoulders your sin, your complaining, your grouching, your fear, your cowardice, your indifference, your shallowness and pettiness. God did not count those trespasses against you, but made peace with you by the blood of Jesus' cross so that you and Paul and all the saints might say Romans 5:1 together, "Therefore...we have peace with God".

✘ We need that peace with God, don't we? We need steadfastness in Christ. The world swirls and changes constantly. It did in Paul's day and it does in ours. Notice in verse five that Paul's prayer is not that "it will all work out" for you; or that "everything you ever wanted will someday fall into your lap". No such promise is ever given in the Bible. But what is promised is that Jesus Christ is "steadfast". Everything and everybody changes and comes and goes. The surest things and the surest friends are here today and gone tomorrow. 1 Peter 1:24-25 tells us "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever". Hebrews 13:8 likewise assures us, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever".

→ So you won't have a bad day or a bad week or a bad month or a bad year in which God is not your loving Father and Christ is not your steadfast Savior. You won't face a little difficulty or a big bill or a temporary inconvenience or an accident that changes life forever without a Father who sees and knows your every need, and a Brother who was Himself perfected through suffering. You will not see a single sunrise without knowing the Father who set the sun and the moon and the stars in the heavens and the Savior who truly is your one and only "forever friend"! So today and always friends, simply trust in the Lord!

II. Quietness – because our Lives are the Lord's Gift

✘ Paul himself trusted in the Lord for all he needed. But verse four says that he was also confident regarding the Thessalonians, that they were doing, and would do what was fitting for believers in Christ. You see, there's one characteristic of a Christian life that verse 12 shows us is especially suitable for those who are confident that their Father is providing for them each and every day. That is the gift of quietness.

→ You see, Thessalonica was not the easiest place to live for these new Christians. A substantial group there believed that the resurrection had already occurred. So they lived like nothing mattered. They just quit working. All they did was blab and chatter about their neighbors – yapping and running at the mouth. Paul calls them "busybodies" (v.11).

→ And we all know how harmful and hurtful words can be if someone is actively starting and spreading and feeding them as rumors, embellishments and constant complaints. Though it's not a Bible verse, the old saying, "Idle Hands are the Devil's Workshop" certainly fits with Paul's warning in verse 11. Those who are

able but will not work as God has made us to do, open up their hearts and minds to be influenced by Satan himself.

✘ In Matthew 7:16 Jesus said about people, “You will recognize them by their fruits”. So it does matter, not only what people around us are saying, but also what they do. The “busybodies” make it their fulltime job to try and make themselves look good while simultaneously tearing others down. And so, to avoid the chance of false accusations, Paul says in verses 7-8 that he and those with him made a point of working “night and day” to provide for themselves until the new church could get established enough to pay for their own pastor. Then Paul would move on to another place.

→ We all know how powerful it is for leaders to set an example, right? Well, Paul worked hard to show the Thessalonians what he thought of His Savior and the Good News of His Word. It was more important than anything else. Paul was willing to set everything else aside and inconvenience himself so that they could hear and believe the Gospel of Jesus as their steadfast Savior. He showed them the servant-heart of a true Christian.

→ The blabbers and chatterers operate opposite of that. They are willing even to set aside productive work so that others will pay attention to them; in order to stir up trouble and strife. They truly personify the term “busybody” as they talk and talk and talk just so that they can hear themselves speak; even taking someone else’s bread without lifting a finger.

✘ That’s why Paul sums up his teaching in verse 10 by saying, “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat”. That may sound too harsh but the idea is that freeloading comes with consequences. Talking and not working is not a “victimless crime”. Nothing is free. Everything has its cost. The question is, who’s the one that’s paying? Who will provide lunch? Who will help to provide meals when a baby is born or when someone goes into the hospital? Who will lend a helping hand when the lady down the street is too old to care for her house like she used to? All these things, all of this love and care, everything good about being together in our families, our neighborhoods, and our churches, cost someone something.

→ Of course Jesus knew that better than anyone else. His forgiveness and His mercy cost Him His life – that was the cost, and Jesus paid it willingly. Paul of course could not do the same as Jesus, but he worked to imitate Christ in giving up his “rights”, according to verse 9, for the sake of the Gospel. Everything costs someone something, and any Christian who is imitating Paul, who was imitating Christ, knows that too.

✘ So many of you clearly know this too – how providing meals when someone’s in need or lending a helping hand around the house or loving a child or a spouse or a parent for a lifetime all have costs. Yet because you are in Christ, you are happy to bear those costs. You don’t need to talk about it or tell everyone else what you’re doing. You don’t need to chatter and blab on and on.

→ All you need to do, as one who has received the power of Christ’s sacrifice at your baptism is bear the burden of serving others and sharing Christ’s love in humble ways and pray that you may do your Christian work quietly and confidently in order to give Jesus all the glory. That’s the mystery and the joy of the Christian life.

✘ I want to make sure that we don’t misunderstand and confuse a life of “quietness” with one of silence. Quietness is not the same thing as silence. Silence never speaks; quietness may sometimes speak. It may speak to encourage another person or to forgive or guide or sing or pray. Quietness does not have to be heard at all times, in every meeting or conversation. Quietness is happy – even quick to listen and slow to speak. Quietness will not set the whole world on fire and doesn’t need to. It is confident that the Lord will act in His way, through His given servants to fulfill His Word and will.

→ Even Jesus, the very Son of God modeled quietness for us all. He was quiet when Satan taunted Him in the wilderness; using only God’s Word to fight. He was quiet in the face of His many accusers, and when they made a mockery of Him as He was shedding His life’s blood for

the life of the world, He prayed that His mockers might still be forgiven. Quietness is confident. Loudness, brashness, yapping, blabbing, gossiping cannot be confident. Busybodies are nervous and anxious and worried about how they sound and how they look. But Christ, in His quietness, looked only to the Father for vindication and life, and His confidence was not put to shame. In quietness, He was raised on the third day as Victor over sin and death for all the world.

Conclusion

✘ Paul leads us in verse 13 to understand the joy of living for Jesus, because He lived and died for us. He says, “As for you, brothers...”, that is those who clearly know Jesus and the gift He has given to make us redeemed people for eternity, “do not grow weary in doing good”.

➔ So Christians, work diligently and lead the quiet life you’ve been given, in spite of the noise that this world puts into it. Share in the burdens of your fellow saints, love your family, your neighborhood, and your church – love your neighbor. Don’t seek after the world’s vindication or applause. You have a Father who sees in secret and a Savior in whose scarred hands your whole life is now hidden from sight. When He appears at long last with His angels and those in Paradise with Him, you will receive the life and glories that He has prepared for you; the treasures that nothing can touch. He is steadfast, He is faithful, and He will surely do it. Amen.