

Fact Sheet for **“Remaining Steadfast”**
2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

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2 Thessalonians is a short letter filled with prophecy about the second coming of Christ. But at the same time Paul encourages them both in their faith and in their everyday life choices. He begins with a usual greeting.

^{ESV} ¹ ¶ Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ² ¶ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 3-10 now make up one long and complicated sentence in Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians. We will take his sentence one piece at a time.

³ ¶ We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

Paul give thanks to God for them...
because their faith was growing...
and their love for each other was increasing.

Paul began most of his letters by affirming his readers. This letter follows that pattern.

The word translated “faith” here can also be translated “belief”, as in verse 13 of the next chapter. Here’s why this is important. This connection between “belief” and “faith” is going to be very important as we move into chapter two next week.

Because of their faith and love Paul boasted about them.

⁴ Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica, and for three Sabbaths Paul reasoned with them in the synagogue (Acts 17:1-3). Several of the Jewish people were persuaded, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women (Acts 17:4). But then trouble started (Acts 17:5-9). The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas on to the next town, Berea (Acts 17:10-12). But those who had caused the trouble in Thessalonica pursued Paul and Silas to Berea (Acts 17:13). This resulted in the brethren sending Paul and Silas on by sea (Acts 17:13-14). The persecutions and afflictions that the Thessalonians were experiencing, and that Paul referenced in 2 Thess. 1:4, were likely in the same vein. And Paul praised them for steadfastness and faith.

Have you ever been ridiculed because of your faith? Have you remained steadfast?

⁵ ¶ This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

Paul would write similar words to another group of believers (Philippians 1:29-30). Do you also remember God's words to Ananias when God directed him to go to Saul (Paul) following his Damascus Road encounter (Acts 9:15-16)?

⁶ since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷ and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ^{8a} in flaming fire,

This coming of Christ is *not* a reference to the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess 2:1). This coming has a very different feel to it. It is a reference to the second coming of Christ (Revelation 19:11-16).

Paul continues...

^{8b} inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

This is not a pleasant idea, particularly when we think of people we know and care about. But one day the books have got to be balanced. And it makes me think of 2 Peter 3:9 about God's patience, not wishing that any should perish.

⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

Again, this is not a pleasant idea. But that day will not be ugly for those who have believed in the gospel.

¹⁰ when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

And so ends one of Paul's long sentences.

Paul now sums up this first section.

¹¹ To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹² so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Think about each line in these two verses carefully.

What do you pray for others?

What is your resolve?

Are you steadfast in your faith?