

KEYS TO SALVATION (2 Thessalonians 3:3-5)

I. God's faithfulness.

- A. In verse 2, Paul mentioned that all men don't have faith.
 - 1. There are those in life that don't care about God.
 - 2. They do not care about being faithful to their word or the word of God.
- B. God, on the other hand, is completely faithful, always doing that which He has promised to do.
- C. God has never gone back on a promise.
 - 1. In all things, God has been, is and will be faithful.
 - 2. This is one of the great concepts that inspires people to have faith in God - He can be totally trusted.
- D. Paul says that God, as He has promised, will strengthen His people.
 - 1. God does this in a number of ways.
 - 2. First and foremost, is through His word.
 - a. This is what Paul was providing the Thessalonians.
 - b. They didn't have completed New Testaments at this time, but Paul provided one for them through his position as an apostle.
 - 3. God strengthens us through circumstances that inspire faith in Him.
 - 4. God strengthens us through our brethren.
- E. God has made sure that His part is completely done when it comes to having what we need to be strengthened.
- F. Paul then says that God will keep us from evil.
 - 1. The word keep means to guard or protect.
 - 2. Again, God has given us everything we need for our protection.
 - 3. The word indicates that whatever is being kept is valuable to the one doing the keeping.
 - 4. God views us as valuable and does not want any to be lost.
- G. How does God do these things: the answer is His providence.
- H. God's providence is His care for that which He has created.
 - 1. If God didn't care, deism would be true.
 - 2. This idea is that God began it, and then let it go and does not care what happens.
 - 3. Fate and chance are not biblical ideas.
 - 4. Neither is the miraculous idea some have about God's providence.

I. Wayne Jackson wrote: "As the Lord works to bring about man's salvation through spiritual laws, His ultimate purpose is enhanced in His sovereign use of natural law as well."

1. This simply means that God operates in this world by means of natural law.
2. He does not operate now in a miraculous way.
3. When someone who was at the point of death takes a good turn and recovers, this is not a miracle.
4. It may or may not be God's providence, but it is not a miracle.

J. I came across four principles we need to understand about God's providence:

1. God never providentially operates in a way that is not consistent with His nature or His word.
2. Providence does not negate man's free moral agency.
3. The providential must be distinguished from the miraculous.
4. God works behind the scenes in providence, thus we cannot be dogmatic that something that happened was definitely providential.

K. Satan does all He can to hinder us, but God's faithfulness is a key to our salvation.

II. **The Christian's fervency.**

A. God does all that He can for us because He is faithful.

B. However, we must do our part, which is remain fervent for Him.

C. Paul told the Thessalonians that He had confidence in Christ concerning them.

1. The word confidence is interesting.
2. It literally means persuaded.

D. Paul was persuaded that, through Christ and His power, the Thessalonians would do all that they had been taught to do.

1. Notice, He did not place his trust in the human heart.
2. The human heart is weak.

E. However, with Christ, all things are possible.

F. If they remained fervent for the Lord, then Paul was persuaded that they would be saved because of the faithfulness of God.

G. If they remained fervent in spirit and willing to be faithful, God would work through them to accomplish their salvation.

H. This is a note of encouragement to them.

1. Paul was pepping them up so to speak.
2. I know you can do it is what He is telling them, because God is on their side.

III. **The focus of the Lord.**

- A. The word direct means to focus on something or guide someone to something.
- B. In this case, the focus of the Lord is on getting people into the love of God.
1. This can either mean God's love for us, or our love for God.
 2. Lightfoot said, "The apostles availed themselves, either consciously or unconsciously, of the vagueness or rather comprehensiveness of language, to express a great spiritual truth" and that both meanings "are so combined and interwoven, that it is very seldom possible, where the expression occurs, to separate one from the other."
- C. Both are necessary aren't they?
1. We need to get into God's love that is reserved for Christians.
 2. We need to love God in order to obey Him.
- D. It is the focus of Christ, through the work He did and now does, to get us into that love and to get us to endure the hardships of life while waiting for His return.
- E. Through all that the Lord has done for us, we should be able to patiently endure that which comes our way as we wait for His return.
1. We should gain confidence and hope by looking to Him.
 2. He does this for us because He is faithful to us.
- F. When we stay in God's word and see His that He never turns from us in any event, then it allows our patience to grow.