

has appealed to their knowledge of the gospel and what it has promised them as a bulwark against all the deception that Satan and the world can muster, which is a sure defense and cause for us to **“stand firm.”** When he says, **“hold to the traditions which you were taught,”** he refers to the whole body of teachings and commandments which he delivered to them, when he disciplined them for that brief time of 3-4 weeks, and also which he delineated to them in the writing of the letters of 1 & 2 Thessalonians. This he confirms when he says **“whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.”** As Paul had taught them in 1 Thess 2:13, the message that they had received was the very **“word of God,”** and not of men, lest it should be viewed as something that could be disregarded. The Christian message and the Holy Bible are in fact the very words of God which have been manifested to us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and attested to by many powerful proofs, both by the hands of Jesus and the Apostles, and are to be received as the very authoritative **“word of God,”** which is to be revered accordingly and swiftly obeyed, lest we should be taken away and held captive by sin and death with the world of unbelievers. You might remember the strong exhortations that Paul gave them seeking that they would live in a manner that glorifies God as His holy people.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-13 - 11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, 12 **so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.** 13 And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but **for what it really is, the word of God,** which also performs its work in you who believe. NASB

See here then Paul reaffirming to them to remain obedient to the **“traditions,”** or teachings and commandments which he delivered to them, and exhorting them again to remain steadfast in their faith, regardless of the opposition they may face, and, even if the whole world falls prey to a deceiving Antichrist and perish forever. Even though we be assured of God's election and calling, we are frequently exhorted in Scripture to **“stand firm”** and see to it that we remain steadfast in the faith, holding tightly to the teachings and **“traditions”** we have learned, and to persevere in the faith until the end, for only if we persevere in the faith shall our hope be realized.

Hebrews 3:12-14 - 12 **Take care,** brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. 13 **But encourage one another day after day,** as long as it is still called "Today," **lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.** 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;** NASB

Dear Christian, do not be moved from the hope that is held out in the gospel, for we shall reap a great reward in due time. Behold, your God has promised to uphold you and deliver you safely to His kingdom and glory, therefore **“stand firm.”**

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 - 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, 17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word. NASU

A. 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace – Here now is the conclusion of the main part of the letter, the section from 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17. Paul has written in this section to clarify the fact that the Thessalonians, in spite of **“much affliction”** that they are facing from persecutors, have not entered into **“the day of Lord”** (v-2:3), and will not fall prey to the deception that will occur when the events preceding **“the day of the Lord”** (v-2:3-12) occur. In contrast to those who will be deceived and fall prey to the Antichrist's deception (v-2:10-12), the Thessalonians, like all true Christians, have been **“chosen”** by God from the beginning and are secure in their salvation because of God's great purpose in saving them, a fact clearly attested to by their ongoing **“sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth”** (v-2:13). Now in these final words, seeking to give them further assurance, he explains that they are secure in their salvation because it is

God who keeps them secure, through the *means* of divine, **“hope, comfort and strength.”** As verses 15-17 are clearly connected to verses 13 and 14, Paul’s aim becomes rather vivid. He aims to assure these afflicted Thessalonians that their salvation lies firmly in the grip of **“the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father,”** who being the great authors of our faith, **“has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace.”** Notice how Paul looks to **“the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father,”** as the ones who have saved us by the gifts they have **“given us,”** which he describes as **“eternal comfort and good hope by grace.”** Here salvation is connected to Christ and God **personally**, as Paul makes a pointed expression of this fact when he says, **“Himself and God.”** Our salvation is not just some things that has been randomly offered up and made available to everyone who happens to come along and stumble onto the knowledge of it and believe, but it is firmly anchored in a personal election by God, which has been firmly established by the all sufficient atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, and applied to us by the Spirit through faith (v-2:13), and in these verses, will be seen through to its end by the keeping power of Christ Himself and God, in whom we have set our hope. This powerful promise from God is described by Paul as **“eternal comfort and good hope by grace.”** The **“comfort”** and **“good hope”** that the Gospel gives to us is not temporal, but endures beyond the grave, to that **“eternal”** Kingdom laid up for us in glory, where we shall never die, and be personally united to Christ and God forever, a promise so magnificent, that its **“good hope”** shall strengthen us to face even the most bitter persecution and cause us to **“stand firm”** in the midst of it. All of this was freely given to us who did not deserve such kindness and mercy, but flows to us by the unearned and personal **“grace”** of Christ and God, **“has loves us.”** See here, Paul firmly places the **“eternal comfort”** of our **“good hope by grace,”** into the strong hands of **“the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father.”**

B. 17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word – Now in this benediction meant to give assurance, Paul even ascribes the very good work we do and the word we speak, to the motivating power of God at work within us. This is clear by the fact that he is wishing that God will **“comfort and strengthen your hearts.”** He does not ascribe our perseverance **“in every good work and word”** to our ability to carry them out, but rather even the aspect of salvation we call **perseverance**, he ascribes aptly to both Christ and God. If the Thessalonians are to endure through the trials and snares of Christian life in a fallen and evil age, and live productive and fruitful lives **“in every good work and word,”** it will be by the **“comfort and strength”** that God gives to our **“hearts”** to encourage us. See here the final perseverance and good works of the saints are ascribed to God, and He is to get the glory for it, and we are not to boast in them. Yet even in this work of God in our perseverance, we see that the Christian life is one that characterized by **“good work and word.”** The Christian is to be *busy* doing the work of the Master and doing it the Master’s way, for we have been bought with a price, and charged with a great work in the world. This great commission of our Lord was given to all of His disciples, even to the end of the age henceforth, and includes both our **“good work and word”** to carry out.

Matthew 28:19-20 - 19 "Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. " NASB

Let us therefore be encouraged **“in every good work and word,”** to **“stand firm”** in the faith by God’s **“eternal comfort and good hope by grace,”** that we may glorify our Lord in our life, and if he so choose, even in our death at the hands of those who hate both Christ and His Gospel.

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 - 1 Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; 2 and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. NASU