

## CONFIDENCE IN TIMES OF STRESS (1)

**Introduction:** Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5. **Context:** In verses 1-15 Paul admonishes the brethren not to be weary in well-doing.

1. He solicits the prayers of the Thessalonians on his behalf: (1) That the Word may be accepted among others as it has been among them (3:1); (2) That he may be delivered from unreasonable men who have not the faith (3:2).
2. Paul then expresses his confidence in the Thessalonian brethren (3:3-5).

### A. PAUL' PRAYER FOR THE WORD.

1. Consider Paul's prayer request: (1) Not that he be eased from persecution, but more importantly, (2) that the Word of God may make progress.
2. Ask yourself: "What is my prayer for this congregation and its saints?" Are you looking for (1) a place of ease and comfort for yourself and your family or (2) a place where the Word of God may run swiftly and be glorified?
3. Theme of the chapter (3:6): ". . .*withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.*"
  - a. "*Withdraw yourselves from every brother who walks disorderly*" -refuses to work; is idle, does not produce (see also verse 11).
  - b. "Disorderly" is a military term that means "out of ranks" and has special application to those who are "disobedient to the prescribed order or rule."

### B. DELIVERANCE FROM UNREASONABLE AND WICKED MEN.

1. Paul wrote from Corinth where he had found such men (Acts 18:4-6, 11-16).
2. For "unreasonable" the NEB has "wrong headed."
3. The reason for this kind of opposition: "*for not all have faith*"; *i.e.* they cannot be relied upon for they will persecute in an attempt to hinder the gospel.
4. Jesus could not trust himself to some people (John 2:24-25).

### C. CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD.

1. Though in life there are those who we cannot trust both in an out of the church, there is one who will stand by us "*because He who is in you [Christ] is greater than he who is in the world [Satan]*" (1 John 4:4).
2. Note some passages that assure the Christian that the Lord will keep him from evil (Jude 24; 1 Pet. 1:5; 2 Pet. 2:9; John 17:15; 1 Cor. 10:13). Yet the Christian is always free to refuse that power (*e.g.* Gal. 5:4; Heb. 3:12; 4:11).
3. Where could Paul place his confidence? (1) First in the Lord (3:3-4) and also (2) in his brethren: "*that you do and will do the things we command you.*"
4. Paul expressed the same confidence in the Corinthian brethren (2 Cor. 7:16).

**Conclusion:** Can the Lord depend upon you? Can your brethren? Paul's prayer for them (3:5). "Direct" - make straight (*cf.* 1 Chron. 29:18; 2 Chron. 19:3).

Sunday Morning