

Translations

II Th 3:1-5

- 1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,
 - 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.
 - 3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.
 - 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.
 - 5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.
- (NKJ)

II Th 3:1-5

- 1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph, as it did among you,
 - 2 and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men; for not all have faith.
 - 3 But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from evil.
 - 4 And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things which we command.
 - 5 May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.
- (RSV)

II Th 3:1-5

- 1 Finally, dear brothers, as I come to the end of this letter, I ask you to pray for us. Pray first that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and triumph wherever it goes, winning converts everywhere as it did when it came to you.
 - 2 Pray, too, that we will be saved out of the clutches of evil men, for not everyone loves the Lord.
 - 3 But the Lord is faithful; he will make you strong and guard you from satanic attacks of every kind.
 - 4 And we trust the Lord that you are putting into practice the things we taught you, and that you always will.
 - 5 May the Lord bring you into an ever deeper understanding of the love of God and of the patience that comes from Christ.
- (TLB)

II Th 3:1-5

- 1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also (it is) with you;
 - 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith.
 - 3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil (one).
 - 4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command.
 - 5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.
- (ASV)

II Th 3:1-5

- 1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:
 - 2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.
 - 3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.
 - 4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.
 - 5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.
- (KJV)

II Th 3:1-5

- 1 Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as {it did} also with you;
 - 2 and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.
 - 3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil {one.}
 - 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will {continue to} do what we command.
 - 5 And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.
- (NAS)

II Th 3:1-5

- 1 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.
 - 2 And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith.
 - 3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.
 - 4 We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command.
 - 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.
- (NIV)

International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database**FAITHFUL; FAITHFULNESS**

And not only so, but human faithlessness will give an opportunity for a manifestation of the faithfulness (aletheia) of God, abounding to His glory (verse 7). God's faithfulness here is His unchangeable constancy and fidelity to His covenant promises; and it is this fidelity to His promises, or the fact that God's gracious gifts and election are without any change of mind on His part, which gave to Paul the assurance that all Israel should finally be saved <Rom 11:25-29>. Moreover this covenant faithfulness of God is grounded in His very nature, so that Paul's hope of eternal life rests on the fact that God who cannot lie promised it before the world began <Tit 1:2>; and the certainty that God will abide faithful notwithstanding human faithlessness rests on the fact that God cannot deny Himself <2 Tim 2:13>. It is because God is faithful that His promises in Christ are yea and amen <2 Cor 1:18,20>. This attribute of God, moreover, is the basis of Paul's confident assurance that God will preserve the Christian in temptation <1 Cor 10:13>; and establish him and preserve him from evil <2 Thes 3:3>. And since God is faithful and His gracious promises trustworthy, this characteristic attaches to the "faithful sayings" in the Pastoral Epistles which sum up the gospel, making them worthy of trust and acceptance <1 Tim 1:15; 4:9; Tit 3:8>.

This faithfulness of God in the sense of fidelity to His promises is set forth as the object of sure trust and hope by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was the basis of Sarah's faith that she would bear a child when she was past age <Heb 11:11>; and it is because God is faithful to His promise in Christ that we can draw nigh to Him with full assurance of faith, holding fast without wavering the profession of hope <Heb 10:23>.

John also ascribes this attribute to God. Since one of the most precious of God's promises through Christ is the pardon of sin through the "blood of Jesus Christ," John says that God's faithfulness, as well as His righteousness, is manifested in the forgiveness of sin <1 Jn 1:9>.

The faithfulness of God is viewed from a slightly different point by Peter when he tells his readers that those who suffer as Christians and in accordance with God's will should "commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator" <1 Pet 4:19>. The quality of faithfulness, which in the Scripture is more frequently ascribed to God in His relation to man as gracious Saviour, and as the ground of hope in His gracious promises, is here applied by Peter to God in His relation to man as his Creator, and is made the ground of comfort under persecution and suffering. The omission of the article before the words "faithful Creator" makes emphatic that this is a characteristic of God as Creator, and the position of the words in the sentence throws great emphasis on this attribute of God as the basis of comfort under suffering. It is as if Peter would say to suffering Christians, "You suffer not by chance but in accordance with God's will; He, the almighty Creator, made you, and since your suffering is in accordance with His will, you ought to trust yourselves to Him who as your Creator is faithful." It is, of course, Christians who are to derive this comfort, but the faithfulness of God is extended here to cover all His relations to His people, and to pledge all His attributes in their behalf.

This attribute is also ascribed to Christ in the New Testament. Where Jesus is called a faithful high priest, the idea expressed is His fidelity to His obligations to God and to His saving work <Heb 2:17; 3:2,6>. But when in the Book of Revelation Jesus Christ is called the "faithful witness" or absolutely the "Faithful and True," it is clear that the quality of faithfulness, in the most absolute sense in which it is characteristic of God in contrast with human changeableness, is ascribed to Christ <Rev 1:5; 3:14; 19:11>. This is especially clear in the last-named passage. The heavens themselves open to disclose the glorified Christ, and He appears not only as a victorious warrior whose name is faithful and true, but also as the one in whom these attributes have their highest realization, and of whom they are so characteristic as to become the name of the exalted Lord. This clearly implies the Deity of Jesus.

In summing up the Scripture teaching concerning God's faithfulness, three things are noteworthy. In the first place, this characteristic of God is usually connected with His gracious promises of salvation, and is one of those attributes which make God the firm and secure object of religious trust. As is the case with all the Scripture teaching concerning God, it is the religious value of His faithfulness which is made prominent. In the second place, the so-called moral attributes, of which this is one, are essential in order to constitute God the object of religion, along with the so-called incommunicable attributes such as Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Unchangeableness. Take away either class of attributes from God, and He ceases to be God, the object of religious veneration and trust. And in the third place, while these moral attributes, to which faithfulness belongs, have been called

"communicable," to distinguish them from the "incommunicable" attributes which distinguish God from all that is finite, it should never be forgotten that, according to the Scripture, God is faithful in such an absolute sense as to contrast Him with men who are faithful only in a relative sense, and who appear as changeable and faithless in comparison with the faithfulness of God. See RIGHTEOUSNESS; TRUTH; UNCHANGEABLENESS.

UNCHANGEABLE; UNCHANGEABLENESS

5. His Relations to Men: Finally, God is unchangeable not only in relation to the universe, but in His relations to men and especially to His people. This follows from His unchangeable ethical nature. The Scripture often connects the unchangeableness of God with His goodness <Ps 100:5; James 1:17>; with His truthfulness and mercy <Ps 100:5; 117:2>; and with His covenant promises (<Exo 3:13> ff). In connection with His covenant promises, God's unchangeableness gives the idea of His faithfulness which is emphasized in the Old Testament to awaken trust in God (<Deut 7:9; Ps 36:5> (6 in Heb); <Ps 92:2> (3 in Heb); <Isa 11:5; Lam 3:23>). This idea of God's unchangeableness in His covenant promises or His faithfulness is repeated and emphasized in the New Testament. His gifts or graces and election are without repentance <1 Thes 5:24; Rom 11:29>; He is faithful toward men because unchangeably true to His own nature <2 Tim 2:13>; His faithfulness abides in spite of men's lack of faith <Rom 3:5>, and is in many places represented as the basis of our confidence in God who is true to His election and gracious promises <1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 2 Thes 3:3; Heb 10:23; 11:11; 1 Pet 4:19; 1 Jn 1:9>. See FAITHFULNESS. It is thus the religious significance and value of God's unchangeableness which is especially emphasized throughout the Scripture. Because He is unchangeably true to His promises, He is the secure object of religious faith and trust, upon whom alone we can rely in the midst of human change and decay. It is this idea to which expression is given by calling God a rock, the rock of our strength and of our salvation (<Deut 32:15; Ps 18:2> (3 in Heb); <42:9> (10 in Heb); <71:3; Isa 17:10>). God is even eternally a rock, the never-failing object of confidence and trust <Isa 26:4>.

It appears, therefore, that the Scripture idea of the unchangeableness of God lays emphasis upon four points. First, it is not lifeless immobility, but the unchangeableness of a living Person. Second, it is, however, a real unchangeableness of God's nature, attributes and purpose. Third, this unchangeableness is set forth as one of the specific characteristics of Deity in distinction from all that is finite. Fourth, God's unchangeableness is not dealt with in an abstract or merely theoretic manner, but its religious value is invariably emphasized as constituting God the one true object of religious faith.

PATIENCE

In all places the American Revised Version margin has "stedfastness," except <James 5:11>, where it has "endurance"; makrothumia is translated "patience" <Heb 6:12; James 5:10>; makrothumeo, "to bear long" (<Mt 18:26,29; James 5:7>; See LONGSUFFERING); the same verb is translated "be patient" (<1 Thes 5:14>, the Revised Version (British and American) "longsuffering"; <James 5:7-8>, the King James Version and the Revised Version (British and American) "patient"); makrothumos, "patiently" <Acts 26:3>; hupomeno <1 Pet 2:20>; anexikakos is translated "patient" (<2 Tim 2:4>, the Revised Version (British and American), the King James Version margin, "forbearing"); epieikes, "gentle" (<1 Tim 3:3>, the Revised Version (British and American) "gentle"); hupomeno (<Rom 12:12>, "patient in tribulation"). For "the patient waiting for Christ" <2 Thes 3:5>, the Revised Version (British and American) has "the patience of Christ."

Patience is often hard to gain and to maintain, but, in <Rom 15:5>, God is called "the God of patience" (the American Revised Version margin "stedfastness") as being able to grant that grace to those who look to Him and depend on Him for it. It is in reliance on God and acceptance of His will, with trust in His goodness, wisdom and faithfulness, that we are enabled to endure and to hope stedfastly. See also GOD. W. L. WALKER

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Theme Studies

- Matt 9:38 "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."
- Luke 10:2 Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.
- Rom 15:30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in
- 2 Cor 1:11 you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.
- Eph 6:19-20 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.
- Col 4:3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,
- 1Thes 5:17 pray without ceasing,
- 1Thes 5:25 Brethren, pray for us.
- Heb 13:18-19 Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.
- Acts 12:24-25 But the word of God grew and multiplied. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.
- Acts 6:7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.
- Acts 13:49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.
- Acts 19:20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.
- 1 Cor 16:9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.
- 2 Tim 2:9 for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.
- Ps 138:2 I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name.
- Acts 13:48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.
- 1Thes 1:5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.
- 1Thes 2:1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain.

- 1Thes 2:13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.
- Rom 15:31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,
- 1 Cor 15:32 If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"
- 2 Cor 1:8-9 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,
- 1Thes 2:18 Therefore we wanted to come to you-- even I, Paul, time and again-- but Satan hindered us.
- 2 Tim 4:17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.
- Deut 32:20 And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faith.
- Matt 17:17 Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."
- Matt 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.
- Luke 18:8 "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"
- John 2:23-25 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.
- Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.
- Acts 13:50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.
- Rom 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"
- 2 Cor 4:3-4 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
- II Th 2:17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.
- Gen 48:16 The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

- 1 Chr 4:9-10 Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.
- Ps 19:12-13 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret sin. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.
- Ps 121:7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; he shall preserve your soul.
- Matt 6:13 And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.
- John 17:15-16 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.
- 2 Pet 2:9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,
- Jude 1:24-25 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.
- 1 King 8:58 "that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.
- 1 Chr 29:18 "O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You.
- Ps 119:5 Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!
- Ps 119:36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness.
- Prov 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.
- Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.
- Deut 30:6 "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.
- Jer 31:33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.
- Rom 5:5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.
- 1 Cor 8:3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.
- Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

- James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?
- I Jn 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.
- Heb 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- 1 Pet 4:1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

Matthew Henry's Commentary

The apostle's pious request

I. The apostle desires the prayers of his friends: Finally, brethren, pray for us, v. 1. He always remembered them in his prayers, and would not have them forget him and his fellow-labourers, but bear them on their hearts at the throne of grace. Note,

1. This is one way by which the communion of saints is kept us, not only by their praying together, or with one another, but by their praying for one another when they are absent one from another. And thus those who are at great distance may meet together at the throne of grace; and thus those who are not capable of doing or receiving any other kindness may yet this way do and receive real and very great kindness.

2. It is the duty of people to pray for their ministers; and not only for their own pastors, but also for all good and faithful ministers. And,

3. Ministers need, and therefore should desire, the prayers of their people. How remarkable is the humility, and how engaging the example, of this great apostle, who was so mighty in prayer himself, and yet despised not the prayers of the meanest Christian, but desired an interest in them. Observe, further, what they are desired and directed to pray for; namely,

(1.) For the success of the gospel ministry: That the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, v. 1. This was the great thing that Paul was most solicitous about. He was more solicitous that God's name might be sanctified, his kingdom advanced, and his will done, than he was about his own daily bread. He desired that the word of the Lord might run (so it is in the original), that it might get ground, that the interest of religion in the world might go forward and not backward, and not only go forward, but go apace. All the forces of hell were then, and still are, more or less, raised and mustered to oppose the word of the Lord, to hinder its publication and success. We should pray, therefore, that oppositions may be removed, that so the gospel, may have free course to the ears, the hearts, and the consciences of men, that it may be glorified in the conviction and conversion of sinners, the confutation, of gainsayers, and the holy conversation of the saints. God, who magnified the law, and made it honourable, will glorify the gospel, and make that honourable, and so will glorify his own name; and good ministers and good Christians may very well be contented to be little, to be any thing, to be nothing, if Christ be magnified and his gospel be glorified. Paul was now at Athens, or, as some think, at Corinth, and would have the Thessalonians pray that he might have as good success there as he had at Thessalonica, that it might be as well with others even as it was with them. Note, If ministers have been successful in one place, they should desire to be successful in every place where they may preach the gospel.

(2.) for the safety of gospel ministers. He asks their prayers, nor for preferment, but for preservation: That we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, v. 2. Note, Those who are enemies to the preaching of the gospel, and persecutors of the faithful preachers of it, are unreasonable and wicked men. They act against all the rules and laws of reason and religion, and are guilty of the greatest absurdity and impiety. Not only in the principles of atheism and infidelity, but also in the practice of the vice and immorality, and especially in persecution, there is the greatest absurdity in the world, as well as impiety. There is need of the spiritual protection, as well as the assistance, of godly and faithful ministers, for these are as the standard-bearers, who are most struck at; and therefore all who wish well to the interest of Christ in the world should pray for them. For all men have not faith; that is, many do not believe the gospel; they will not embrace it themselves, and no wonder if such are restless and malicious in their endeavours to oppose the gospel, decry the ministry, and disgrace the ministers of the word; and too many have not common faith or honesty; there is no confidence that we can safely put in them, and we should pray to be delivered from those who have no conscience nor honour, who never regard what they say or do. We may sometimes be in as much or more danger from false and pretended friends as from open and avowed enemies.

II. He encourages them to trust in God. We should not only pray to God for his grace, but also place our trust and confidence in his grace, and humbly expect what we pray for. Observe,

1. What the good is which we may expect from the grace of God-- establishment, and preservation from evil; and the best Christians stand in need of these benefits.

(1.) that God would establish them. This the apostle had prayed for on their behalf <2Thes 2:17>, and now he encourages them to expect this favour. We stand no longer than God holds us up; unless he hold up our goings in his paths, our feet will slide, and we shall fall.

(2.) that God will keep them from evil. We have as much need of the grace of God for our perseverance to the end as for the beginning of the good work. The evil of sin is the greatest evil, but there are other evils which God will also preserve his saints from-- the evil that is in the world, yea, from all evil, to his heavenly kingdom.

2. What encouragement we have to depend upon the grace of God: The Lord is faithful. He is faithful to his promises, and is the Lord who cannot lie, who will not alter the thing that has gone out of his mouth. When once the promise therefore is made, performance is sure and certain. He is faithful to his relation, a faithful God and a faithful friend; we may depend upon his filling up all the relations he stands in to his people. Let it be our care to be true and faithful in our promises, and to the relations we stand in to this faithful God. He adds,

3. A further ground of hope that God would do this for them, seeing they did and would do the things they were commanded, v. 4. The apostle had this confidence in them, and this was founded upon his confidence in God; for there is otherwise no confidence in man. Their obedience is described by doing what he and his fellow-labourers had commanded them, which was no other thing than the commandments of the Lord; for the apostles themselves had no further commission than to teach men to observe and to do what the Lord had commanded, <Mt. 28:20>. And as the experience the apostle had of their obedience for the time past was one ground of his confidence that they would do the things commanded them for the time to come, so this is one ground to hope that whatsoever we ask of God we shall receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight, <1 Jn. 3:22>.

III. He makes a short prayer for them, v. 5. It is a prayer for spiritual blessings. Two things of the greatest importance the apostle prays for:--

1. That their hearts may be brought into the love of God, to be in love with God as the most excellent and amiable Being, the best of all beings; and this is not only most reasonable and necessary in order to our happiness, but is our happiness itself; it is a great part of the happiness of heaven itself, where this love shall be made perfect. We can never attain to this unless God by his grace direct our hearts aright, for our love is apt to go astray after other things. Note, We sustain a great deal of damage by misplacing our affections; it is our sin and our misery that we place our affections upon wrong objects. If God directs our love aright upon himself, the rest of the affections will thereby be rectified.

2. That a patient waiting for Christ may be joined with this love of God. There is no true love of God without faith in Jesus Christ. We must wait for Christ, which supposes our faith in him, that we believe he came once in flesh and will come again in glory: and we must expect this second coming of Christ, and be careful to get ready for it; there must be a patient waiting, enduring with courage and constancy all that we may meet with in the mean time: and we have need of patience, and need of divine grace to exercise Christian patience, the patience of Christ (as some read the word), patience for Christ's sake and after Christ's example.

Adam Clarke Commentary

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

[Finally, brethren]

The words to (grk 3588) loipon (grk 3063), do not mean finally, but, furthermore-- to come to a conclusion-- what remains is this-- I shall only add-- any of these phrases expresses the sense of the original.

[Pray for us]

God, in the order of his grace and providence, has made even the success of his Gospel dependent, in a certain measure, on the prayers of his followers. Why he should do so we cannot tell, but that he has done so we know; and they are not a little criminal who neglect to make fervent supplications for the prosperity of the cause of God.

[May have free course]

They were to pray that the doctrine of the Lord, ho (grk 3588) logos (grk 3056) tou (grk 3588) Kuriou (grk 2962), an allusion to the races in the Olympic games: that, as it had already got into the stadium or race course, and had started fairly, so it might run on, get to the goal, and be glorified; i. e., gain the crown, appointed for him that should get first to the end of the course.

2 Thessalonians 3:2

And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

[Unreasonable and wicked men]

The word atopoon (grk 824), which we translate unreasonable, signifies rather disorderly, unmanageable; persons out of their place-- under no discipline, regardless of law and restraint, and ever acting agreeably to the disorderly and unreasonable impulse of their own minds.

[For all men have not faith.]

The word pistis (grk 4102) is, without doubt, to be taken here for fidelity or trustworthiness, and not for faith; and this is agreeable to the meaning given to it in the very next verse: But the Lord is faithful, pistos (grk 4103) de (grk 1161) estin (grk 2076) ho (grk 3588) Kurios (grk 2962)

There are many, even of those who have received a measure of the divine light, in whom we cannot confide; they are irregular, disorderly, and cannot be brought under regular discipline: to these we cannot trust either ourselves or anything that concern, the cause of God. But the Lord is worthy of your whole confidence; doubt him not; he will establish you, and keep you from any evil to which you may be exposed by these or such like persons.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

[From evil.]

Apo (grk 575) tou (grk 3588) poneerou (grk 4190) may be translated, from the Devil or from the evil one. They had disorderly men, wicked men, and the evil one or the Devil, to contend with; God alone could support and give them the victory; he had promised to do it, and he might ever be confided in as being invariably faithful.

2 Thessalonians 3:4

And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

[And we have confidence]

We have no doubt of God's kindness toward you; he loves you, and will support you: and we can confide in you, that ye are now acting as we have desired you, and will continue so to do.

2 Thessalonians 3:5

And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ

[The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God]

The love of God is the grand motive and principle of obedience; this must occupy your hearts: the heart is irregular in all its workings; God alone, by his Spirit, can direct it into his love, and keep it right; kateuthunai (grk 2720), give a proper direction to all its passions, and keep them in order, regularity and purity.

[The patience of Christ.]

Such patience, under all your sufferings and persecutions, as Christ manifested under his. He bore meekly the contradiction of sinners against himself; and when he was reviled, he reviled not again.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

[Finally], [To (grk 3588) loipon (grk 3063)]-- `As to what remains. '

[Pray for us]-- as I have prayed for you <2 Thes 2:16-17>.

[May have free course], [trechee (grk 5143)]-- `may run, ' without a drag on the wheels of its course. That the now-creating word may `run' as "swiftly" as the creative word at the first <Ps. 147:15>. The opposite is, the word of God "bound" <2 Tim. 2:9>.

[Glorified]-- by sinners accepting it (stronger than in <Acts 13:48; Gal. 1:23-24>). Contrast "evil spoken of" <1 Pet. 4:14>.

As it is with you] <1 Thes 1:6,8; 4:10; 5:11>.

2 Thessalonians 3:2

And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

[That we may be delivered from unreasonable], [atopoi]-- men out of place, inept, out of the way, bad: an undesigned coincidence with <Acts 18:5-9>. Paul was now at Corinth, where THE JEWS `opposed themselves' to his preaching: in answer to his prayers and those of his converts, `the Lord, in vision, ' promised exemption from "hurt," and the conversion of "much people." Paul's desire for "deliverance" was in order that it might enable him to further God's word <Rom. 15:32>. `The synagogues of the Jews were fountains of persecutions' (Tertullian, `Gnost. Scorp. ' 10).

[Have not faith]-- Greek, `the (Christian) faith: ' the only antidote to what is "unreasonable and wicked." The Thessalonians, from their ready acceptance of the Gospel, might think "all" would receive it; but the Jews were far from having such a readiness to believe.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

[Faithful]-- alluding to "faith" <2 Thes 3:2>: though many will not believe, the Lord ('Aleph (') A C Delta G. But B, `God') is still to be believed as to His promises <1 Thes 5:24; 2 Tim. 2:13>. Faith on man's part answers to faithfulness on God's part.

[Stablish you.] Though wicked men were assailing himself, he turns away from asking prayers for HIS deliverance (<2 Thes 3:2>: so unselfish was he), to express his assurance of THEIR establishment in the faith and preservation from evil. This assurance exactly answers to his prayer, <2 Thes 2:17>, "Our Lord ... stablish you in every good word and work." So the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, hut deliver us from evil:" where, as here (in antithesis to "the Lord") is included, `from the evil one: ' the great hinderer of "every good word and work." Compare <Matt. 13:19; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:18>

2 Thessalonians 3:4

And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

And [De (grk 1161)]-- `Yea. '

[We have confidence in the Lord]-- as "faithful" <2 Thes 3:3>. Have confidence in no man when left to himself (Bengel).

[That ye both do.] B G (not 'Aleph (') A Delta, Vulgate) insert `that ye both have done' before, `and are doing, and will do. ' He means the majority by `ye; ' not all (cf. <2 Thes 3:11; 2 Thes 1:3; 1 Thes 3:6>).

2 Thessalonians 3:5

And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

[And], [De (grk 1161)]-- `But. ' While I am confident touching you, yet may the Lord direct your hearts. If "the Lord" be here the Holy Spirit <2 Cor. 3:17>, the three Divine Persons occur in this verse.

[Love of God]-- love to God <Matt. 22:37>.

[Patient waiting for Christ], [Teen (grk 3588) hupomoneen (grk 5281) tou (grk 3588) Christou (grk 5547)]— `the patience (endurance) of Christ; ' namely, which Christ showed (Alford) <1 Pet. 2:21; 2 Thes 1:4; 1 Thes 1:3>. Compare for the English version, <Rev. 1:9; 3:10>. At all events, this grace, "patience," is connected <1 Thes 1:3,10> with the "hope" of Christ's coming. Compare <Heb. 12:1-2>, "Run with patience (endurance) ... looking unto JESUS ... who, for the joy ... before Him, endured the cross:" so WE are to endure, as looking for the hope to be realized at His coming <Heb. 10:36-37>.