

Washington church of Christ

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washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com

Order of Services

Sunday, July 21, 2013

Song Leader	Tom Dolan
Prayer	Bob Wydro
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	David Osinski
Prayer for the Cup	Lee Redd
Prayer for the Collection	Antonio Ruggiero
Assisting at the Table	Cameron Wydro
Scripture Reading	Daniel Wydro
Morning Closing Prayer	Stan Thompson
Evening Opening Prayer	Bob Celentano
Announcements	Scott Thomas

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

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Great is Thy Faithfulness...

Many of the songs we sing in our worship can be directly associated with passages of scripture. When I read the words of the Apostle Paul as recorded in 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5, I immediately think of # 190 in our song books ... *Great is Thy Faithfulness*.

In the first two verses of this portion of his letter to the Saints at Thessalonica, Paul solicits their prayers for troubles he is currently facing. Since it is commonly accepted that Paul is writing this letter from Corinth, it also accepted that the troubles most probably relate to the opposition he faced from the "Brethren" in Corinth.

And, based on Paul's request that the Thessalonian Christians pray ...

"...that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,"
(2 Thessalonians 3:1 NKJV)

There must have been some in Corinth who were going to great lengths to oppose and hinder the progress of the Word of God there, for Paul also asked that they pray that ...

"... we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith."
(2 Thessalonians 3:2 NKJV)

The word translated "unreasonable" really means "out of place." It is usually used of *things*, and this is the only place in the New Testament where it references *persons*. Here then, were people totally out of line and actively wicked in opposition to the gospel. Paul's desire to be delivered from them had nothing to do with his own comfort or safety ... he was concerned, rather, for those who did not yet "have faith." And, as he knows that the Christians in Thessalonica are also under attack, he writes to them words of affirming encouragement.

But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. (2 Thessalonians 3:3-5 NKJV)

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not,
Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided,
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Thomas O. Chisholm

In his commentary on this passage, Lloyd J. Ogilvie says, "There appears to be a play on words at the beginning of this sentence. The last word of verse 2Thessalonians 3:2 was *pistis*, faith. The first word of verse 2Thessalonians 3:3 is *pistos*, which can mean "believing" or "faithful" in the sense of trustworthy. It is obvious that Paul here affirms the faithfulness of God. And what a contrast between this and the unbelief of men and women! Especially stark is the contrast between the unfaithfulness of the "out of place and wicked men" and the faithfulness of God. It is at the point of discouragement with people who oppose us or let us down that the faithfulness of God needs to be recalled."

In our text Paul states that God in His faithfulness is both the source of our strength (*"who will establish you"*), and the One who guards and protects us.

In researching for this article it seems that while Paul's use of the word "evil" here can be either neuter or masculine, most commentators prefer the masculine *"the evil one"* for two reasons. First, it seems as though the contrast between the Lord and the evil one makes the sentence more consistent. Secondly, there is the same ambiguity here as in the version of the Lord's instruction for prayer to His Disciples Prayer as recorded in Matthew 6:13 ...

"And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:13 NKJV)

Here again, God is thus seen as strengthening and guarding us, not just from evil in principle, but from one who is evil personified.

Another reference of consistency with this view of Paul can be seen in Ephesians 6:12 ...

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12 NKJV)

Martin Luther is quoted as saying, "If you don't believe in the devil, it's because you've never resisted him." If we are not to some degree aware of our need for God's strength and protection, it may well be that we have surrendered to the enemy.

Though human beings cannot be trusted, God is faithful to his promises and his purposes. He may always be confided in ... and when people are unbelieving, obstinate, unkind, and prepared to do us wrong, we can go to Him, and we will always find in Him One in whom we can confide. This is an outstandingly interesting statement, and is a beautiful illustration of the help from God a truly spiritual mind will feel that it has.

We often see, and experience, the fact *"not all have faith."* We witness their infidelity. We see how they turn away from the truth. We see many who once gave some evidence that they had "faith" and then abandon it all. At these times, how consoling is it to be able to turn, as Paul did, to One who is faithful ... who never fails us ... and who will certainly accomplish His benevolent purposes.

Men may be faithless and false, but God never is. They may refuse to embrace the gospel, and may even set themselves against it, but God will not abandon His great purposes.

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

(2 Timothy 2:11-13 NKJV)

Our Prayer List...

For Spiritual Strength – Georgia DeLorenzo ... Sondra DeLorenzo

For Physical Healing - Larry Smith (Sharon Ferencze's brother)

For Wisdom and Good Judgment – The Leaders of our nation ... the leaders of our congregation

For God's Care and Good Providence – Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

EVENTS AND NOTES

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ✦ THERE WILL BE A TEACHER'S MEETING THIS AFTERNOON AT 5PM. ALL TEACHERS SHOULD PLAN TO ATTEND. PLEASE LET BOB JAMES KNOW IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND.
- ✦ THIS WEEK'S THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY WILL BE CANCELLED IN FAVOR OF THE LADIES THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY.
- ✦ THE NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY WILL BE THURSDAY, JULY 25TH, AT 7:00PM.
- ✦ THE NEXT MEN'S BUSINESS/SPIRITUAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 4TH, STARTING AT 4PM.
- ✦ THE WASHINGTON LADIES' RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 6TH & 7TH.
- ✦ OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING WITH JOE WORKS OF THE FAIR LAWN CONGREGATION ON OCTOBER 11TH – 13TH.
- ✦ SONG SERVICE AT THE EAST ORANGE CONGREGATION ON SEPTEMBER 21ST AT 5PM.