The Glory of God in the Salvation of His People

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Let me invite you to open your Bible with me to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

! Finding 2 Thessalonians 2 again, let me just remind you of two things.
Gentlemen, for you men of any age, today at 4 o'clock, our Institute Interest Meeting. Would love for you to come and learn more about that. And for our ladies, our next Ladies' Night of Theology is one week from Tuesday, May the 6th.
That's in here from 6.30 to 8.30. If you've never been before, I teach this every couple of months. It's just for ladies. Men aren't allowed to be in here.
And we just walk through elements of theology together. Ladies from all over the state come and are a part of it. We had right around 500 who were here. We did this a few weeks ago.
[1:12] And we've been doing this for about seven, eight years or so. And it's always a joy to be able to do that. So ladies, make note of that. Any lady of any age, doesn't cost anything, don't need to sign up. Just show up.

Invite any lady that you think would enjoy being with us. We go from 6.30 to 8.30. And just have a wonderful time of fellowship and study together. So ladies, I'd love to invite you and encourage you to be with us one week from Tuesday, May the 6th.
From 6.30 to 8.30 at night here in the sanctuary. 2 Thessalonians. We were looking in verses 13 to 17 last week. And we'll pick that up this week.
Let me read it to us. Let's read it to us.
Either by our spoken word or by our letter. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.
[2:41] Our theme for this section here is the glory of God and the salvation of His people. The Lord graciously saves people by His grace and the glory for that salvation every time goes to the Lord alone.

You've heard me mention many times, including recently, when someone is saved, when they are converted, brought from death to life, let our first words be, praise the Lord.
Look what God has done. Had the joy of even just last Sunday from someone who was brought to faith there on that Easter Sunday morning, shared with me the good news of their repentance and conversion, and just rejoicing in what the Lord has done.
This is the work of God, not the work of men. And so we say it's the glory of God in the salvation of His people. Three major headings I want you to see.
The first we looked at last week. The second two we'll look at today. What we looked at last week was that we are to remember the source of our salvation. The source of our salvation is not our works, not our good effort, not our even sincerity.
[4:06] The source of our salvation is the grace of God alone. Verse 13, Brothers, beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved.

This is the source of your salvation, the sovereign work of God. Your salvation wasn't 50-50. It wasn't 90-10.
It wasn't 99-1. This is the work of God. This is why believers should be the most thankful, grateful, joyful, humble people on the planet.
Because we recognize we are sinners deserving of judgment. And apart from the grace of God would have no hope. But through His grace, we who deserve judgment instead have been given forgiveness and called His own.

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I hope you never recover from the reality of your salvation. If you're a Christian and you're not still stunned by the truth that He would save your soul, you need to revisit the reality of your sinfulness and your inadequacy to save yourself and the complete grace of the Lord Jesus that saved you.
[5:27] Remember the source of your salvation. We pick up from last week. Let me give you a second heading in verse 15. And that is to live in the strength of your salvation.

We remember the source of it. It was His grace. Now we live in the strength of it. Again, back to verse 15. So then, brothers, stand firm. Hold to the traditions that you were taught by us.
Live in the strength of it. Be strong in your faith. Be strong in the salvation God has given to you. He says first to stand firm.
That we are to believe the right things and we are to live according to them. And I want to say to you, for all of you that are believers, do not be ashamed of what God has said and stand boldly in the truth of what He has revealed to us in His Word.
This is important for you to wrestle with because we live in a day in which if you hold to the teachings of Scripture, you should expect to be mocked.
[6:43] So be it. You stand firm in the truth. And do not think that it is being humble to be unclear or vague or silent where God has been cleared.

This is an epidemic in churches today. Certain issues and doctrines that are very clear in Scripture, that people are no longer willing to stand firm and be strong in, and they will couch their cowardice in humility.
Well, we can't know these things. These are hard questions. How can we be sure? Who am I to try to say what's right and wrong?
Well, here's the reality of it. It's not our job to determine right and wrong. It is our responsibility to declare right and wrong as it's been revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in His Word.
And we've got this epidemic of Christians and pastors and churches who try to pretend they're humble and act unsure of what God has said simply because they don't have the courage to say what God has revealed.
[8:14] Let me remind you, we want to always be gracious. Our words should be kind.

We should love people. We should fight against pride and arrogance with all of our being, and that's difficult because as fallen human beings, we all struggle with pride.
We don't need to be hateful, vindictive, arrogant people. But do not think it is holy to act humble by being vague on what God has made clear.
There are things that are right and wrong. There are things that are true as determined by the Word of God. And in those things, stand firm, Scripture says.
Live in the strength of your salvation. He goes on to say in verse 15, Hold to the traditions.
[9:20] And this refers to the gospel that's been passed down from Jesus and the apostles to the church. Now, this is an important distinction I need you to see today.

Many times, even in the Scripture, the idea of tradition can, depending on the context, can be a negative thing.
I just want to give you an example of this so you can see the distinction. In Mark chapter 7, in verse 5, Jesus is speaking.
He says, Well, did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites as it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.
In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.
[10:19] In that context, Jesus is saying that if you hold to your tradition instead of the divinely revealed word of God, then you are holding to something that you need to let go of.

That's true today. There are churches today who are ruled by tradition. You could go to any number of churches and say, Why do you do this thing?
And the answer is, because we've always done that. And when you say, but that's not what the Bible says, the answer comes back, that's what we've always done. And when you hold to your tradition, instead of what God's word has revealed, that's sinful.
In 2 Thessalonians, though, the context makes this clear. When he says, stand firm and hold to the traditions you were taught by us, either by spoken word or by letter, he's referring to hold to the tradition of the faithful revelation of Jesus Christ.

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Jude 3, Although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.
[11:46] The traditions that we are to hold on to and not let go of are the things that have been revealed to us in Scripture. So let's make sure we're clear on this.

There are some traditions our church has here. And traditions can be a helpful thing. They can be a good thing. They can be a special thing. But if they're traditions that we've established, we can enjoy them as long as they're not contrary to Scripture.
But we're not going to go to war over them. Our church is not going to fight over traditions. When it comes to the tradition of the gospel in the sense of what has been passed down to us by God's word, unyielding.
We're not backing up one inch. We will stand strong. We will stand firm. We will stand unapologetic for the things that God has revealed.
But there are some traditions of men that can be sinful, avoid those. There are other traditions that can be helpful, but we don't war over them.
[13:00] For many years, our church had their tradition in the summer that we did one combined service. We put extra chairs. We did one combined service for the Sundays of summer.

I loved that tradition. Some of you, it was harder because it was crowded, not your thing. For others of you, loved it because you got to see other people. Regardless, it was something I loved.
We can't do that anymore. The Lord has grown our church family to where we just can't fit in one service in the summer. For many, many years, our church has a tradition of doing Christmas Eve service, one service at eight o'clock.
Last year, we broke tradition because we can't fit in one service. And we had a second Christmas Eve service. The tradition was broken.
We're not going to fight over that. We're not going to war over that. That's a tradition of men.
[14:05] It's not sinful. It's not wrong. But it's just something our church has done and enjoyed and celebrated. And by God's grace, those things are wonderful. But sometimes traditions have to change.

That's okay. That happens in your family. You have certain traditions, and you do this every year for Thanksgiving. You do this every year for Christmas Day.
You do this every year for fill-in-the-blank holiday. And then you move, or your children get married, or any number of things happen. And sometimes traditions change.
And I want to urge you and your families, don't go to war over traditions. Enjoy them. They can be helpful. They can be encouraging. They can provide stability in your family and in the church.
But you've got to make a distinction between what are the traditions of men and what has been passed down by the Holy Spirit in His Word. At our church here, we want to be kind.
[15:08] We want to be gracious. We don't want to be domineering. But I'm going to tell you right now, our church will not fight over man-made traditions. We will not do it.

I've watched churches be ripped apart my whole life by man-made traditions. We will enjoy them. We will use them for our good. We will not divide over personal preference.
But when it comes to the gospel, when it comes to the revelation of God's Word, we will not retreat. We will not compromise. Because we have been called by God's Word to stand firm in those things.
Look again at verse 15 specifically.
Stand firm and hold to the traditions that were taught by us, either our spoken word or by our letter. Hold on to these things.
[16:13] Our church is not looking to be new because our message is old. There are some things we want to keep new.

Lights. Carpet. Signage. Let's keep that accurate. Okay? What we do when we gather, this is of old. Sing. Pray. Read the scripture. Proclaim the gospel. We're not looking to reinvent anything. We hold to those things.
We hold to them. The traditions of men should never become more important to us than the gospel handed down to us by the Lord.
And if you've not been in a church where that battle has surfaced, then consider yourself fortunate. Because there are people who love their tradition and do not read their Bible.
[17:22] And they go to church every single Sunday. So when we say hold firm and be strong, we're not talking about in my opinion or in your opinion or in my preference or in your preference.

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We're talking about living in the strength of what's been given to us by the Lord. So what you can see unfolding in this passage are these two sides of the same coin.
On the one hand, we see that we are to be strong and holding on. But at the same time, we've got to make sure we're holding on to the right things and holding loosely to the other things.
And our church can't afford to ever get those mixed up. We hold loosely to our preferences. We hold with all of our might to what God has revealed to us.
Live in the strength of your salvation. And what you see happen is some people reject tradition because they just don't want to hold to anything of the past.
[18:48] This happens in churches. They want to reject all tradition. They don't want to hold to anything that's come before them. And that's dangerous. Because that's a very arrogant way to live.

On the other side, you've got people who believe their tradition will get them into heaven. And that's deadly because traditions of men cannot save.
So the church must be crystal clear here. If we come to the place where we think, you know what? Everyone who came before us, they don't know anything.
Let's throw out any songs that were written before us because they didn't really understand music. Let's throw out the way that people shared the gospel and did evangelism and made disciples because we're the ones that have finally figured that all out.
Now, if that's our attitude, that's a dangerous, dangerous way to live. But if we say on the other side of that, we've always done it this way.
[20:01] And the church I grew up in always did it this way. And we're getting our security simply from keeping the traditions of men, then we've put our hope in something that is not the gospel.

So we've got to be clear. What's interesting is, as I say those things, those things sound so contemporary.
They sound so today. And what I just said is a word, I believe, for every church in 2025. Yet, that teaching comes from a church 2,000 years ago.
It's the same because the human condition hasn't changed any. People still love their preference, still love their opinions, and religious people still get hung up on things they think make them good.
Let's be clear. We are to be strong. But it's by holding on to what God has revealed to us. And we are to hold loosely the things that we have established.
[21:21] Remember, the source of your salvation is His grace alone. Live in the strength of your salvation. And then third, verse 16 and 17, enjoy the satisfaction of your salvation.

Enjoy the satisfaction that comes to us. Verse 16, May the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace.
So notice what we have been given to enjoy. His love, His comfort, hope, and grace. These are blessings that cannot be taken from you.
See, here's the reality. There are a lot of things that can be taken from you. Disease can take your health.
Death can take your spouse. Betrayal can take your friend. Fire can take your home. Lies can take your reputation.
[22:33] And we live in a world where we see things taken all the time. Let's remind ourselves of the satisfaction of the believer that the blessings we have in our salvation can never be taken from us.

Never. The hope you have in Christ, the grace you've been given through the work of Jesus, the security of your salvation, these things can never be taken from the believer.
And it's interesting to me that every single person in this sanctuary, every one of you, whether you are a believer, an unbeliever, whether you are a curious unbeliever, or even if you're someone that's here today and you can't stand anything about the things of God, you're just here because somebody makes you feel like you have to come.
Regardless of where you would be on that spectrum, all of us long for the things that only the gospel provides. I mean, look at what he mentioned.
He says that through the gospel we have love. Everybody here wants to feel loved. Eternal comfort. Everybody here wants to experience that. Hope.
[23:51] Everybody is looking for hope. But all these things only come to us through the gospel. Which begs two questions for us.

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One, where are you looking for these things? And two, where can these things truly be found? every one of you, myself included, longs to be loved, experience comfort, and have hope.
Every one of us. The question is, where are you looking for those things? and where can they be found?
They can only be found in salvation to the Lord Jesus Christ. The good news in that is that for those who are believers, they have everything their heart longs for.
But if you don't know Christ as Savior, you will spend the rest of your life looking for the same things that can only be found in the gospel, but if you're looking to worldly things to meet them, you'll never find them.
[25:17] And so the scripture is given to us to remind us as believers that we should live in the satisfaction that we have in our salvation everything our soul longs for.

And church family, this is why as a congregation we should be kind and gracious and loving and supportive of each other and serving each other because we're not trying to find our satisfaction in worldly things.
By God's grace, we've been pulled from that. So serve. Don't worry about trying to keep up some reputation of power or authority or any of those things.
Just be a servant. Just serve each other. You've already got the satisfaction of hope and comfort and love. You're free to serve and forgive.
forgive. Someone's hurt you? Forgive. You say, but I need to hold on to my anger to make sure I can stick it to them.
[26:35] No, you've been set free from that. Your hope, your comfort and your love comes from Christ, not what some other person did or said about you.

You're free to forgive them. And the whole world is looking for what only Christ provides. So if you're a believer and you've experienced salvation, then enjoy the satisfaction of knowing you have what everyone else longs for.
And then spend the rest of your life telling people the one who gave it to you. verse 17 says, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.
Comfort your hearts with the words and promises of God. I don't pretend that everybody who comes to church on Sunday morning has been longing for this all week.
I don't pretend every person who comes to church Sunday morning on Saturday night can hardly sleep. They're so excited to be here. I know that's not real life for everybody all the time. I get that.
[27:57] But if you could understand that what we're doing in this place truly is the sweetest privilege known to man.

We get to worship our living God with our brothers and sisters. That we get to open our Bibles and hear God speak through His word.
That we get to remind ourselves of what is true and what is eternal and what matters forever and forever. My friends, that should affect the way that we live.
that should impact the way that we view even gathering with God's people on Sundays. Comfort your hearts.
When you come to church on Sunday, get here early enough to where you're not rattled, to where you're not frantic. Spend some time in the morning, get your own heart prepared so you're not distracted.
[29:09] Lift your voice and sing so that your mind engages with the truths that we're proclaiming. Have your Bible open with you so that you're reading the word of God.

The only perfect part of our worship is when we're reading His word because it is perfect and without error. Engage with each other, encourage each other, and let the Lord's day be that day by which everything else in your calendar revolves around, not where you fit this in the cracks of your schedule.
Why? Because this is where we remind ourselves of the comfort we have as God's people, where we repent, where we confess, where we serve, where we use our gifts, and we remind ourselves of the truth that what we have from Christ in the gospel is truly the answer to every longing of our soul.
Comfort yourselves and establish your hearts in every good work and word. So many people never enjoy the blessing of salvation because they're so busy trying to earn God's favor.
Let me just remind you of the three things we've looked at these two weeks. Remember the source of your salvation is God's grace alone. Live in the strength of your salvation and hold fast to the

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truth of His word and enjoy the satisfaction of your salvation by reminding your heart of the comfort that we have as God's people.
[31:07] As we close this morning I want to speak to you briefly here as a grandfather. Fifteen years ago I would have spoken these truths as a father.

grandfather. Let me speak to you as a grandfather for a little bit. Most of you know I've got two grandchildren. The boy Sutton Michael, the girl Rosie May, and they will always be a part of my life and will always be a part of my family.
I love those two grandbabies no matter what. Now I know that I'm not going to always approve of every decision they make and I'm not going to always agree with every single thing they do the rest of their life.
And no matter how much I love them as they grow up I won't affirm anything they do in their life that's sinful. But my love for them will never cease.
it will never diminish. And at an early age those two grandbabies I get the privilege of being grandpa to will know that I love them and they will see that I enjoy spending time with them and playing games with them and just being a part of their lives.
[32:46] parents. The more they get to know me as they get older the more they'll come to understand how much their grandpa loves them.

But the love I have for my grandchildren is not based on their performance. I don't love them more because of something they can do.
I love them because they're a part of my family. And I want them to enjoy that. I want them to enjoy the blessing of knowing and this is true for many people in their family besides me.
I'm just speaking for myself. I want them to enjoy the blessing of knowing their grandpa's always on their side, always in their corner, always praying for them, always cheering them on.
I don't want them going through life asking themselves what could I do to make grandpa love me more? I don't want them going through life thinking I wonder if I achieve this award or if I get this recognition if that will make grandpa love me even more.
[34:04] I just want them to enjoy the benefits of being a part of our family. I want them to enjoy the benefits of gifts I will provide for them.

I want them to enjoy the blessing of knowing. that there's somebody in their life and they by God's grace have a lot of people that this is true for them but again I'm just speaking for myself here.
I want them to enjoy the benefits of knowing that their grandpa always loves them. Doesn't mean always will give approval for every decision they make but will always love them.
As my grandkids get older they may want to do things to show me they love me or they may draw a picture or paint a picture and they want to give it to me and they're excited and proud of what they've done and I'll celebrate that with them but I'm not going to love them more because of that.
And the last thing I want my grandkids doing is going through life asking themselves what could I achieve that would make grandpa love me more.
[35:22] I just want them to enjoy their relationship with me as their grandpa. I want them to trust me and I pray they'll be blessed by that relationship.

Not going through life trying to earn my love. They are in my family in the moment, the instant they were, they were forever loved by me.
That's just a taste. It's just a drop in the river of our relationship with God.
Believer, don't try to earn his love. He has loved you. Verse 13, God chose you.
Don't go through life trying to earn his love. Don't go through life thinking what could I do to make him more acceptable, to make him more kind towards me.
[36:44] What else could he do than he's already done? But instead of trying to earn his favor, enjoy the beauty of knowing you're his.

Live in the safety and security that comes from knowing he is mine and I am his.
Every human relationship we have is just a way for us to get some kind of glimpse into the joy of knowing that you belong to him.
So believer, don't try to earn his favor. in grace he has saved you.
Enjoy being his child. Unbeliever, don't make the tragic mistake of thinking that you could ever do something to earn your salvation.
[37:59] your placement into good standing with the Lord is by becoming his child, not by your work and the work for that was done by Christ on the cross and verified by an empty tomb that we

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celebrated last Lord's Day.

So I call you unbeliever to repent of your sin. Not to try to earn his salvation by what you do, but to by faith receive the gift, the blessing where the Lord tells us in his word that if we would call upon his name believing who he is, being saved by grace through faith not of yourselves.
So if you're not a believer and you're running yourself ragged trying to earn this salvation, it will never come to you that way. Just call upon the name of the Lord.
And if you're a Christian, stop trying to do things to make him love you more. God has demonstrated his love in this, Romans 5 says, that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.
Live in the joy and the satisfaction of knowing you belong to him. Our God and Father, we praise you today for your good gift of salvation and we pray that today we would with biblical eyes see your grace for what it is.
[39:52] Embrace the joy of knowing we belong to you. May we cease our striving of trying to earn your favor and instead live in the joy of knowing we are yours and then give our lives away joyfully for the sake of your name.

We pray that in the name of Christ your Son. Amen. As we close I want to invite you back tonight for evening service. We're going to have a good time tonight.
We're going to study together. We're going to sing together. Be looking at how we can apply God's word to all different parts of our life. We're going to have a unique time tonight. I think you're going to enjoy it a lot.
It starts at 5, ends at 6. Teenagers will be in here with us and invite you to all be back and be a part of that. Look forward to seeing tonight at 5 o'clock. God bless you. Love you church. You're dismissed. Thank you so much for joining us via live stream this morning.
If you have any questions whatsoever about our church or the ministries that our church provides, please visit us at fbcmustang.org. We would love to follow up with you and get to know you better.
[41:08] As always, we try to emphasize if at all possible, if you could be here physically present with us, we would love that and that would be a joy to serve you in that way.

Thank you again for joining us via live stream today. Have a great day. week's

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