Do Not Be Shaken

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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.!

They're facing persecution. We see that in chapter 1 of this letter, verse 4. Therefore, we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring.
Verse 7 of chapter 2 that we'll get to next week says, For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.
Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And so what you see is in chapter 1, they're facing current persecution.
In chapter 2, he's going to deal with the persecution that comes at the end of the age. Now that's instructive for us because what that tells us is that we should expect, as the church, suffering.
[1:30] Whether that's in the current present age in which we live or at the end of the age, the time of the tribulation, that we should expect that being a follower of Jesus Christ, while it is joyful, while it is an abundant victorious life, it is never going to be without its opposition.

There's persecution that's a part of following Christ. We know that. We understand that. And the church that Paul is writing to here is being reminded of that.
Now a little context to help you to know exactly what's going on when we get to chapter 2 now.
Now, there's a false teaching that has been permeating inside this church at Thessalonica.
So remember, Paul establishes the church. He's there for a few weeks. He and his missionary friends are driven out of the city. Then he sends Timothy back to give a report on the church.
He gets a good report. Shortly after that, he gets a second follow-up report from someone about the church. He's written 1 Thessalonians. A few months later, he writes this letter, 2 Thessalonians, to a church that is faithful but needing to be corrected on a few things.
[2:48] A church that is enduring, yet having to be reminded about the reality of suffering and affliction and persecution. Now, part of what's happening when you come to chapter 2 is this false teaching has permeated the church that has told the church that they are already in the day of the Lord.

This is, if you were to read 1 Thessalonians, the five chapters, and then 2 Thessalonians, three chapters, when you get to chapter 2, it's already the sixth mention of the return of Christ in just a few chapters.
As you can tell just by reading that, this is a very pivotal theme as Paul has established the church and has taught the church. And the suffering and the frustration and the disappointment that the current church he's writing to is dealing with deals with their present circumstances.
The false teacher has convinced them that they are already in the day of the Lord. Now, they know, as we know, that to be a believer is to have suffering and affliction, opposition.
But that crosses over to a cataclysmic form when you get to the events of the Great Tribulation.
Their understanding from Paul being with them, according to 1 Thessalonians, is they believed that the church would be lifted up, snatched away before the time of the Great Tribulation.
[4:38] So let's put all that together. Paul has taught them that the church would be snatched away, raptured, lifted up before the Great Tribulation. The false teacher has convinced them that they are in the days of the Tribulation.

Which means one of two things. Either Paul was wrong when he taught them, or Paul was right, and they're not true believers, and that's why they are still here going to the Tribulation.
As you can imagine, that has brought them great angst as they considered that. Paul, who has received this report about what has happened, writes this letter to correct them and to comfort

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them.
The question is, what should this church in Thessalonica do in their anxious moments? What should you do in your anxious moments?
When you are confused about what's happening in the world, when there are theological questions that you can't fully resolve, when there are frustrations and uncertainties that threaten your well-being and your peace of mind, what should we do?
[6:02] Well, what we should do are the very same things that Paul reminds this church that they should do, and by extension, of course, writing to all of us in the church age about how we should live our lives in a world that does have opposition, that does have false teaching, that does have persecution, and in the midst of that, we are not to be shaken.

How do we do that? Number one, guard against deception. Guard against deception. Chapter 2, verse 1. Now, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our being gathered together to Him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.
So Paul writes to the church, and he says, first thing is guard against deception. Do not be quickly shaken.
Do not be led astray. And this reminds us that we are to be dug down deep in our knowledge of God's Word.
[7:37] That we are to be believers who have doctrine and devotion that glorifies Christ. Doctrine is what you know. Devotion is how you live.

Doctrine is your belief. Devotion is your behavior. We are to have a knowledge and an obedience as God's people that reminds us and the world around us that we are not shaken when things arise. When suffering arises, or when false teachers arise, we will not be shaken because we know the truth of God's Word. Now I confess to you, I'm often amazed at how few people who call themselves Christians take this to heart.
I'm amazed at how many times people treat gathering with God's people as light, or optional, or boring.
I'm amazed at how many people have this idea that's just like, as long as we're going to church somewhere, or as long as my kids go to church somewhere, they don't care what they're taught.
[9:00] They don't care what doctrines poured into them. They don't care what things are being put into their minds. And what this reminds us of, if we are going to guard against deception, we're going to have to be people who know the truth, who believe the truth, and obviously who then would live the truth.

So he says, do not be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us.
And what's he talking about? Every false doctrine delivered by any spoken word, in one sense, has a spirit behind it, a spirit of deception.
Let me just remind you from John 8, 44. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.
When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. So in one sense, anytime you hear false teaching, it has this demonic, satanic spirit behind it.
[10:31] We know that because the Lord himself says that the devil is the father of lies. So what Paul is saying is that I don't want you to be led astray by the father of lies.

The false teacher comes and speaks what that false teacher is saying is wrong, and we recognize this ultimately is from the father of lies, that there's a spiritual battle that's taking place.
Now what seems to be the way that this has happened is it seems that someone has forged a letter to the church claiming to be from Paul that has led them astray.
That's why he says, look at your text again in verse 2, don't be shaken or alarmed by a spirit or a spoken word, so whether it's from the teacher himself or the spirit behind the teacher or a letter seeming to be from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.
Paul says, when I was with you, I taught you these things. I wrote back to you 1 Thessalonians to help you understand these things. There's always going to be opposition.

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[11:49] There's always going to be persecution. At some point, the church is going to be lifted up to meet the Lord in the air. Seven years of tribulation will take place.

Then the events of the second coming of Christ will take place. It appears that a false teacher has forged a letter claiming to be from Paul saying to the church, this suffering you're facing, this affliction you're facing is because you're already in the day of the Lord.
Now, if you were with us a few weeks ago when we started this study, I told you then that in Thessalonica, the church there, the Christians there, were receiving great opposition from the Gentiles.
There also was a significant Jewish population in the city, and the church was getting opposition from the Jewish population, and false teachers were around them, and false teachers were targeting them.
So this church is getting opposition and persecution from Jew and Gentile and unbelievers. A false teacher appears to have forged a letter saying to them, all this suffering you're facing, all this persecution you're under, it's because you're already in the day of the Lord.
[13:05] And they say, wait a minute, we were taught by Paul that the day of the Lord would not come until we have first been lifted up to be with the Lord. So if we weren't lifted to be with the Lord, and the day of the Lord is already here, then that must mean we missed it, and if we missed it, does that mean we're not true believers?

Is there salvation in some other name besides Jesus? Jesus? This is the background. Paul writes this letter to correct that and says, do not be shaken.
Do not be alarmed. Do not follow any false teaching because all false teaching comes from the father of lies.
He says in verse 2, someone has told them the day of the Lord has come. The day of the Lord is a term that's found 19 times in the Old Testament, four more times in the New Testament.
The day of the Lord is a time when the Lord will deal directly and purposefully with sin. The day of the Lord refers to this time of the end times.
[14:23] It's the end of the tribulation. It's the time of the second coming of Christ. It's the time of entering into the millennial kingdom that the Lord establishes. The day of the Lord speaks of those events.

And Paul says if a false teacher or a demonic spirit or even a forged letter says something different than what you've been taught about who God is and what He's doing, do not be led astray.
I don't know if there's ever been a more pertinent word for the church in our day today than to say you better know your Bible and do not be led astray.
I don't know if the spirit of false teaching is different in our day than it's been in the past. There's always been false teachers, but the ability to communicate false teaching has never been stronger. The openness and willingness for people even inside churches to absorb false teaching is so dangerously high.
[15:42] so I say to you as Paul said of that church, do not be shaken in mind or alarmed and guard against deception.

Ephesians 4.14 says that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.
Moms and dads, you got little ones at home, teach your children the Bible. Don't hand that off to your Sunday school teachers.
We're going to do our best here to assist you, to partner with you, to compliment with you, but you have your children every day. Do not think that one hour, one day a week that they get here at the church is sufficient for their teaching.
It's not meant to be that way. You're their primary teacher. You're their primary influence. And don't think that your children are too young to begin training them.
[16:59] And don't think that because you didn't do as much as you wish you had when they were young, that they're too old to start today. However old your children are today, that's the age that you take seriously training your children in the things of God.

Teach them and train them. Help them to know the truth that they would guard against deception. Your children need to be taught the truth and you bring them to church to hear that truth reinforced so that they can glory in what is true and recognize when something is false.

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They would be able to discern truth from error. And so let me just say to you, moms and dads, you tell me at what age are you okay with your children being led astray?
Okay. And the answer is going to be never. Which means don't wait one more day to take seriously training your children to guard against deception.
We want to do our best as a church to help you to do that, to equip you to do that, but as much as we love you and love your family and as much as we love the ministry we have here, our church is never intended to be a substitute for godly parents in the home teaching and modeling Christ's likeness every single day.
[18:47] To our teenagers, you take the things of God serious. I see that. I'm looking on the front row at 11 or so people, every one of them with a Bible open, every one of them looking, every one of them paying attention and that's good and that's how it should be.

This idea that teenagers are just to be tolerated or just to kind of be kept quiet and then they can get trained when they're older, we don't believe that because our teenagers today are in a spiritual battle and we're not interested in sending our teenagers out to the world to get devoured.
So we take teaching and training and equipping our young people seriously but no matter how seriously we take that, our church will never be a substitute for teenagers themselves being in the word every day studying and praying and hopefully prayerfully learning from their parents at home. Guard against deception. Take the truth of God's word seriously. That's what Paul says to the church of Thessalonica.
He says, you've got opposition all around you? You've got false teachers coming at you? Know the truth. Don't be shaken by false teaching.
[20:20] Be established in what is true. And just maybe one more practical word here to moms and dads especially that are raising kids.

I know that teaching your children and training your children, it can be hard. Sometimes it can feel intimidating. Let us help you with that.
Let us do what we can. If you need help with that, reach out to us. Let us help you to be trained and equipped to teach your children and guard your family against deception.
This, by the way, is one of the greatest motivations behind our Men's Institute that we do. We want husbands and fathers to be trained and equipped to lead their families and to protect their homes. We want people who know the truth that can guard against deception. That needs to be true individually. That needs to be true in your home and that needs to be true in our church.
[21:29] The second thing Paul says is not just guard against deception, but know what is coming. Know what is coming. Back to verse three.

Let no one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.
So what we know when you look at the whole New Testament is that there are, the Bible says in 1 John, for example, many antichrists, meaning there are all kinds of false teachers, all kinds of people who are trying to lead the church astray.
But that will culminate in one man who will be the antichrist and it will be the climax of all of these forerunners who have tried to lead the church astray and destroy the church.
When you think of the last days, so we're in the last days, biblically speaking, ever since the resurrection of Christ. When you get to the end of the last days, you're talking about a movement and a man.
[22:47] You're talking about what the Bible calls the great apostasy and the antichrist. And Paul wants this church to understand and be established to know that there are always going to be false teachers, always going to be opposition to God's people.

And you don't have to think that you've missed what God has promised you just because there is suffering or the presence of false teachers. That's going to always be around. And he says in verse 3, when we get to the very end of the church age, when you're going to have the lifting away that chapter 4 in 1 Thessalonians talked about, and then you're going to have this rebellion that takes place.
this man of lawlessness who will be revealed. So just to help you kind of keep this straight, when we talk about the lifting of the church, the rapture of the church, that's what we call a signless event. That can happen anytime. That can happen today. That can happen next week. It can happen before lunchtime. Nothing needs to happen.

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Nothing needs to be fulfilled. It's imminent. It may be in 100 years. It may be in 500 years. It may be in 15 minutes.
[24:15] It's a signless event. It can happen anytime. But before you have the second coming of Christ, when he comes and is here and divides the nations and the sheep and the goats into the millennial kingdom, before that happens, there are a number of signs that will be fulfilled.

And that's what Paul is reminding this church of. So Paul is telling them, you've not missed the snatching away of believers and the struggles they're going through are real, but they're not the climactic events that will eventually be revealed in Revelation 6 to 18 during the time that we know as the great tribulation.
And so Paul says don't be led away by false teaching, be on guard against deception, and even know what's coming.
This is so interesting to me because so many times in churches when people think about eschatology, they're one of two kinds of people. They're either people who that's all they want to talk about and every headline they're convinced is some kind of revelation that something's about to happen, or they're on the other side of it and they just say, I don't want to know about it, I don't want to talk about it, makes me kind of nervous, makes me kind of anxious, I don't even want to think about the return of the Lord, I don't even want to think about those events, but biblically I want you to see what Paul is saying here is that rightly understood, the return of the Lord brings clarity, and it brings purity, and it brings joy.
One of the greatest things you can do for your own heart, mind, and soul is to think often about the return of Christ.
[26:19] Think often about eternity. And if you say, but it makes me nervous, could it be that the reason it makes you nervous is because you're holding too tightly to the things of this world?

Could it be it makes you anxious because you've just simply not read what God's word says? The Bible is clear that the knowledge of the return of Christ is to comfort God's people and to bring joy to God's people?
So verse 3 says, when you get to the end of the end, you're going to have this great rebellion, this man of lawlessness will be revealed, this son of destruction, verse 4, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called God or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.
Here's what we see when you just study history. You get a society that rejects God, that society has a race to the bottom to say how much like the world and how much sin can we not just tolerate but celebrate and then complete chaos and confusion fills the culture and then a leader arises to try to bring some kind of sanity from the chaos.
Happens over and over and over. In the end, that will happen to its fullest extent. It will be rejection of the things of God like never before.
[28:22] Anarchy like never before. Opposition like never before. Chaos like never before until eventually a leader emerges like never before.

And eventually this leader is going to take his seat in the temple of God proclaiming himself to be God. God, you read about this in Matthew 24, you read about this in Daniel 9, you read about this in Revelation 13, the Bible is not silent on these events.
But they're not there to frighten or scare you. They're there to steady you, to help you, to strengthen you, to know that yes, this is where the world is going, but that doesn't mean that as Christians we are to be morbid or that we are to be joyless.
Quite the opposite. Here's what we understand, that life is a gift, ministry is a gift, doing what God has called us to do is a joy, serving people, helping people, using our minds, using our hands to strengthen and bless the world and serve others is a wonderful thing and a wonderful gift.
And when opposition comes, we just sit back and realize this is part of the thing. We know that. Suffering comes, this is part of it. Doesn't mean that we like it, doesn't mean that it's not painful, but we understand it.
[29:55] The outer man wastes away, we get that. We don't like it, but we get it. We're not going to be surprised by that. We're not surprised that disease comes, we know it.

We're not surprised that death comes. We grieve it, but we get it. We're not surprised that the world is opposed to the gospel. It breaks our hearts, but we're not surprised that we know that.

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And so we steady ourselves. We strengthen ourselves. And we guard against deception by knowing the truth. We know what's coming, so we're not easily shaken.
again. And I want to show you one last thing this morning, and that is that we remember what we were taught. Verse 5, do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? Incidentally, if you think that the church shouldn't talk about eschatology in the end times, let me just remind you, Paul was just with this church for a short time.
[31:07] And in that short time, he taught them about the end times. How do we know? Because he says, remember when I was with you, I taught you these things. Eschatology is not something for the varsity.

This is for all of us. The study of the end times isn't something just for the theological elite. This is for all of us. because this is what strengthens us and steadies us and brings clarity to our minds. Things of the world get rough. It hurts. But we expect it. People oppose you because of your faith. It stings. But we expect it. It's certainly not going to be an excuse for us to quit. Because we knew this was coming. And so we guard against deception.
We know what's coming and now we must remember what we have been taught. Remember what you've been taught.
[32:15] Remember, he says, when I was with you, I told you these things. Which is helpful for us to be reminded that we must know and we must remember.

remember. God's people must know and remember. In closing this morning, I want to give you five very practical things that we must know and remember to live a life where we would not be shaken no matter what happens.
whether it is your best friend as a child who quit talking to you or your best friend in middle school that moved out of state or a girlfriend in high school that broke up with you or a job that terminated you or a disease that infected you or a loved one who despises you a spouse who has abandoned you or a world who opposes you.
If we're going to live with joy and with hope in a world that's hard, there are some things we must know and we must remember.
Number one, put yourself under solid teaching. Put yourself under solid teaching.
[34:03] Subject yourself over and over and over to the Bible being taught. that means put yourself under solid teaching on Sunday morning, on the Lord's Day, when you go to Sunday school, to people who have studied and they teach you God's Word, to people you may watch online, to books you may read, make sure that you are putting yourself under solid teaching.

Because what this does is it just builds our faith, it strengthens us. and this silly notion of what's the point of going to listen to Bible preaching, I don't remember individual sermons, I don't remember individual outlines, I don't remember meals I had two months ago, I don't remember workouts I had six months ago, but all those things what they do is it makes us healthy, it makes us strong.
I don't pretend you're going to know this outline by Tuesday morning, you don't need to know the outline, but you just subject yourself to Bible teaching and you go to Sunday school and you sit under Bible teaching and you've got some faithful trusted people that you listen to during the week that teach your mind and build your soul and it's not that you remember everything they said, but it's that you continually put yourself in a position to receive the encouragement and the strengthening of God's word.
Put yourself under solid teaching. Number two, pay attention when you're taught. If step one is to show up, step two is to stay awake.
Put yourself under solid teaching, but then pay attention when you're taught. Pay attention. I just want you guys to see.
[36:01] I wish you could all see what I'm seeing now and it'll be this way in the next service with our high school as well. But if you want to know what does it look like when moms and dads in a youth ministry in a church teaches and trains their young people to pay attention, look at what I'm looking at right now.

These young ladies aren't going to know this outline if you ask them Wednesday morning. They don't need to know the outline because the truth has been poured into their hearts because they put themselves here and if they're paying attention which every one of them are and they're listening and they're absorbing it, the Holy Spirit used that to strengthen and to build them.
This is what it looks like. Expect your child to pay attention. But mom and dad model it for them.

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It's one thing to show up. It's something else to pay attention. It's important. Number three, we must know and remember to then practice what we learn.
So we receive the instruction, we listen carefully, it's good, but now we must practice it. These young girls at the front here listening, taking notes, paying attention, it's a beautiful thing, but when they go home, they need to practice this, they need to do this.
[37:27] Don't go home, young ladies, and disrespect your parents and say, but I took notes in the sermon. It's not the answer. What you listen to, what you pay attention to gets lived out.

Put yourself under solid teaching, pay attention when you're taught, practice what you learn. Now for those of us who are old like me, this must be true of us too.
It's so easy for us older people to always think, why don't these young people listen? Why don't these young people obey? Why don't these young people do what they're supposed to do?
Well, it may be because they came from us. And so we've got to remind ourselves, us, let's listen, let's study, but let's obey.
Let's obey. Number four, prioritize time with the Lord. Prioritize time with the Lord. So part of our spiritual development is that we come to church, we listen, we take notes, we learn, we live it, but that's just a part of it.
[38:47] There's got to be more to our spiritual life than just what you get within these walls. Every day, prioritize time with the Lord.

If that feels overwhelming to you, if that feels complicated to you, reach out to us. We've got people all over our church who are trained who would love to help you with that.
Number five, pray to be faithful and hopeful in all things. Pray to be faithful and hopeful in all things. But let me just conclude by showing you how this is exactly what Paul said of the church and exactly what you and I should do in a world that's often hard and complicated.
Paul said to the church, don't be led astray. Keep putting yourself under solid Bible teaching, not false teaching.
[39:55] He said, pay attention to what you're taught. Think back to what I told you and then act on it. Don't be alarmed.

Take your faith, take what you've been taught, and put it into action. So tomorrow, when life is hard for you, next week, when things unravel in your own personal world, take what you've been taught and practice what you learn.
Remind yourself, we know there's going to be opposition. We know the world is hard. we know that we're going to face death unless the Lord comes for us first.
It's not that we're cavalier about that. It's not that we don't grieve and cry about that, but we understand it. We've got perspective. We understand the world's going to be opposed to us.
It doesn't mean that we rejoice in it, but we get it. We know that. We're not here to applauded by the world. We're here to be faithful and expect it to be difficult.
[41:17] You can enjoy life even when it's difficult. You can enjoy the presence and nearness of the Lord even when suffering breaks out. Prioritize time with the Lord and then pray that you would be faithful and hopeful.

Pray to be hopeful. I understand sometimes when you read what's on the news, it's discouraging. We all live in that world. When people hurt you, it stings.
We've all experienced that. Someone says something untrue about you, it hurts. We've all been there. Someone breaks a promise to you, you feel that.
But you pray through that to be faithful in the moment and hopeful in all things, knowing that Christ rules over all and that the worst this world can do, the worst they can do, would simply lead you into everlasting life.
And even that is under the sovereign care of God. So Paul tells the church, don't be distracted, don't be shaken, don't be alarmed, know the truth, guard your heart against deception, know what's to come, I taught you about it, and remember what you've been taught.
[42:54] and day by day, trust the Holy Spirit to feed your soul to keep you faithful and make you hopeful so that we enjoy all the Lord has given to us.

That's His word of the church, and that's how we let our light shine in the midst of a dark world.
Lord, Your word is helpful for us, it's convicting to us, it's motivating for us.
We pray that You would use it today to strengthen us and to help us. We pray, Lord, that You would, even this day, call sinners to Yourself as we've seen through baptism for those who would

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repent of their sin and trust in You, that that would happen as they remember and recall the truth that Your Son lived a perfect life, died in our place, was raised back to life, and bring salvation to those who would call upon His name.
Pray that You would bring encouragement and hope and strength where it's needed today. In the name of Your Son, we pray. Amen. Evening service, 5 o'clock tonight.
Back in here looking at John 1. Encourage you to come back at 5. Love you, church. God bless you. You're dismissed. Thank you so much for joining us via live stream this morning.
[44:26] 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.

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'd be a joy to serve you in that way.
But thank you again for joining us via live stream today. Have a great day. Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thanks. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye.
Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. fathers. fathers. Bye. Bye. Thank you.
[46:05] Thank you.

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