

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

October 22, 2023

Keep the Faith



When Adam and Eve were in the Garden, satan revealed a few key things about himself. He knows God’s Word very well; he loves to be logical in the way he thinks, and once we engage, using a logical way of thinking, he is empowered to tempt us to live independently of God (Genesis 3:1-7). He did the same with Christ (Luke 4:1-11). He did not care that Christ is the Word. He still gave Jesus a verse. He used a logical way of thinking to get Christ to follow him and seek even to tempt Christ. So, since this is who he is, he will be the same towards us.

The scriptures are clear that satan is a tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5). Using the flesh (James 1:13-15; 4:1-4), if we choose to live a carnal Christian life (1 Corinthians 3:1-3) or apply logic when we make decisions, he can guide us into immorality (1 Corinthians 7:5; Galatians 5:16-19). When we continue in the flesh because we live selfishly, he can influence us to lie and become self-destructive (Acts 5:1-11). When anxiety dominates us, he uses it to stifle our spiritual growth (Luke 8:14) and to control us (1 Peter 5:7-9) if we choose not to fill that time with prayer and supplication (Philippians 4:4-7). So, in order words, satan uses different methods to steer us away from walking in the Spirit. To not walk in the Spirit, the lust of the flesh gives birth to sin and death; satan wins (Galatians 5:22-25). This is why Paul says,, “so that no advantage would be taken of us by satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.” (2 Corinthians 2:11; NASU)

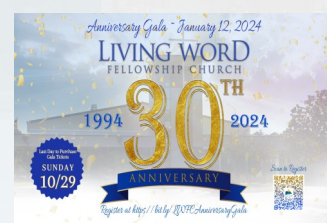
You may ask, why does God not remove us from all the above? The scriptures teach that God allows this to perfect our faith and mature us so that our walk with Him becomes one of surrender and endurance (James 1:2-4). When we live in this manner, the Lord views us as overcomers, and He blesses us as a result (James 1:12; Revelation 3:21-22) by providing us ‘the Crown of Life.’ The Church of Smyrna and the Church of Philadelphia experienced tremendous trials because of satan’s attacks, and they did not turn away, so the Lord blessed them powerfully and eternally (Revelation 2:8-11; 3:7-13).

This is why Paul would say after all the attacks of satan on his life, “I am already being poured out as a drink offering....I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:6-8; NASU)

UPCOMING Events



DEACON FAMILY FELLOWSHIP—10/29 CHILI COOK-OFF
Living Word Family, join us Sunday, October 29th After **ONE SERVICE at 9:30 a.m.** for our Annual Church Picnic and Deacon Family Fellowship. Wear your favorite Game Day attire and come ready for amazing praise and worship followed by free food, fun, and fellowship! For more information contact Rashaud Hudson or Keron Brown at keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS
Join us January 12, 2024 for our 30th Anniversary Gala. This is a formal event including mocktails, entertainment, fellowship, and more! Tickets are selling out fast for \$85. Final Installment Payment DUE Sunday October 29th. Tickets and Tables available until sold out! Visit bit.ly/LWFCAnniversaryGala to purchase your tickets today. For more information, contact the church at **(281) 260-7402**.



HARVEST FEST 2023
It’s almost that time Living Word Family for HARVEST FEST. Join us on Tuesday, October 31st at 6:00 p.m. at Living Word Christian Academy **6601 Antoine Drive Houston, TX 77091** for **FREE** fun, food, games, bouncers, slanted house, an arcade room, and much much more! We can’t wait to see you there!



LEADERSHIP TRAINING—11/4 8:30 A.M.
Calling all elders, deacons, ministry leaders and coordinators. Leadership training is Saturday **November 4th at 8:30 a.m.** in the Legacy Sanctuary. Attendance is mandatory so we can plan and lead in excellence for the rest of 2023 and start 2024 off with 30 Years of God’s Faithfulness! Register at <https://tinyurl.com/36sx3ka5>



LWCA KARATE CLASSES
LWCA is offering Karate Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-7 pm at the Living Word Christian Academy at **6601 Antoine Drive Houston, TX 77091**. The cost is \$40 per week. To register visit the events page of the website or for more information call the church at **(281) 260-7402**.



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Visitor’s Welcome

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses


Special Music

“Stretched”
1 Thessalonians 3:5

Click “Sermon Notes” on the Website

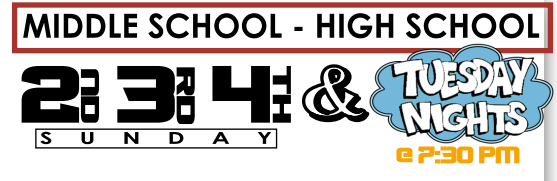
Call to Discipleship
Please remain seated at this time

Benediction



Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children’s wing.

Infants—6th grade



Stretched
1 Thessalonians 3:5

A. Three Strands are Better than Two (v. 5a):

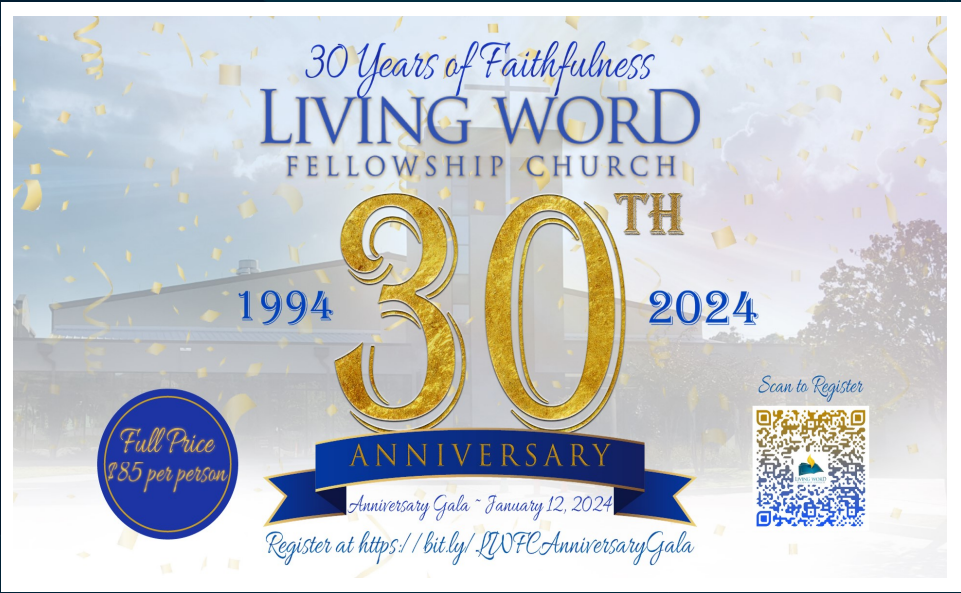
- 1. “To strengthen them in their faith so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions” – these afflictions seem to be what the believers of Thessalonians were experiencing (2:14-15).
- 2. In the midst of much grievous affliction, distress, and a great pressure due to the burden of the spirit which led to deep anguish.
- 3. These believers sincerely loved their founder and were concerned about the distress he was experiencing from pressures of ministry, plus the oppression that was placed upon him by his oppressors. These afflictions were like the pressing of grapes in a wine press.
- 4. They had problems at home, in the community, and from the Jews.
- 5. Paul could not bear up under the pressure of the unknown. He knew these believers were going through a lot (1:6). Because of how faithful they prove to be, after accepting the Gospel (1:3-8), Paul was concerned that because of the extreme circumstances they might return to paganism (1:9).
- 6. Paul was so concerned he told Timothy to basically drop everything and go learn what is taking place with these believers. Paul loved these believers dearly (2:7-8).
- 7. Paul directed Timothy to get a complete intellectual understanding of all that was taking place among these believers.

B. Faith Holds Us (v. 5b):

- 1. Paul was doing a temperature check on whether these believers who he described as having a sincere, “work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope,” may, because of extreme circumstances, were emotionally, mentally, and spiritually no longer able to have an intense trust and complete confidence in Christ any longer. He was concerned that their deep conviction in Christ and full surrender to Him may have cooled off.
- 2. Paul wanted to make sure that these believers’ full surrender to God remained steadfast, especially since their confident intense trust in God was an example to many (1:7).
- 3. These believers proved to have a sincere faith because their faith deepened under pressure (3:6-10). Their sincere faith was preserved and did not succumb to temptation.
- 4. Paul is very concerned that because of their severe afflictions at any time they may turn away from being as fervent as they were, especially since Paul had several individuals turn away from the faith (2 Timothy 4:9, 14). Even Timothy struggled under much pressure (2 Timothy 1:6-9).

C. Satan, the Enemy (v. 5c):

- 1. Because they are experiencing extreme pressures Paul was concerned that they may become susceptible to the solicitation of satan to sin.
- 2. The pressure of their trials may cause their confident trust in God’s ability to become lukewarm which allows satan the opportunity to try to prove that their love for the Lord was not sincere in the first place thus causing them to sin. Paul knew all his schemes (2 Cor. 2:11).
- 3. All of Paul’s stramineous tiresome exertion would have served no purpose for the kingdom of God. This was a church that Paul started (2:9-12).
- 4. Satan cannot change God’s kingdom plan when faith holds us even while being stretched.



PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Derek Boykins & family, Patricia Deckard & family, Ogneta Polk & family, Mary Ngwazini / Oralee Fields and their families, the family of Ella James, Elaine Bates & family, Pam Farris & family, Sheryl Crowe & family, and Telisha Brown & family.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Lisa Roberts, Birdie Williams, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Betty Goode, Latifah Brown, Tanisha Collins, Eric Prichett, Rufus Hadnot, Pat James, Kevin Carey, Lori Lee, Nikisha Doyle, Sherri Love, Betty Cunningham, Wanda Turk, Dorothy Price, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Calvin Wilson, Patsy Gatterson, Luke Miller, Curtis Johnson Jr., Joseph Guillory, Carol Hines, and Raven Banks.



1 Thessalonians 3:5