

Paul continues his word of encouragement. He has given them revelations of the future regarding the outcome of the difficult times they were experiencing. Words that have comforted and encouraged many, many believers down through the centuries since this was written and included in the New Testament. How encouraging to have him give thanks for them, and in writing no less. How they would be inspired to stand fast and to make sure of the ground they stood upon and to hold it unwavering despite the attacks of the wicked one.

Not only does he publically give thanks for them he actually asks for their prayers for him. He is no less dependant upon the Lord than they. We all need the prayerful support of one another. Each of us is dependant upon the Lord for any fruit we might bear in our lives and any service we might render for Him.

John 15:5 *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

2Corinthians 12:9 *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

Philippians 4:12 *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

We certainly need His daily support and strength to stand for the truth and against the wicked one, and the error he seeks to introduce into the midst of the Lord's people. He uses unreasonable (or absurd, bad, injurious) and wicked men to attack the saints. Men that are taken up in pride of learning, pride of accomplishment, pride of position, of course all independently of God. All men have not faith. Probably this is better translated "not all men have faith." However that fact is so obvious, given the persecution and deception they were experiencing, we wonder why Paul says it. Some render it "not all men have **the** faith." Not all have the truth that Paul has just urged them to hold fast. For man indulges his "faith" in all kinds of false gods and superstitions and religions. Men today contend for the "right to choose" the faith they will hold, or even whether to hold any faith at all. They declare their right to the tolerance of others in whatever they choose to believe. And they indeed are ready to tolerate all other faiths — except the faith of the crucified, risen, ascended Christ who, sent by the Father, came down from heaven. Pride, self esteem and self indulgence have blinded them to their need of a Savior. In all ages the preaching of the gospel divides those who hear it into two classes, the believers and

unbelievers. Well, that's obvious! But here, early on in his apostolic written ministry the Apostle of Christ states this elementary fact for us. No, not all will become believers. Not all men will be saved despite the offer of grace to "whosoever." Jesus said this, repeating it to leave no doubt.

John 8:21 *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.*

8:24 *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

As early as the story of Cain and Abel, the Old Testament shows that not all will believe and be saved. Cain chose his way, "the way of Cain," and perished.

Paul was probably in Corinth when writing this. He had experienced much resistance there and in Athens before that. He had been about to give up and move on when the Lord told him to stay for He had much people in that corrupt city, Acts 18:10, people that were yet unsaved. He stayed 18 months preaching and teaching. Many were saved and became the assembly at Corinth before he moved on to visit Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem.

No, not all have faith. But Paul assures them the Lord is faithful. They were not even left to rest upon their faithfulness, but His.

- He will establish (set fast, turn resolutely in a certain direction, confirm, fix, establish, steadfastly set, settle, strengthen).
- He will keep (guard by isolating) them from evil (harm, and the evil one).

This was His intent from the beginning.

John 17:16 *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

Paul then expresses his confidence in them that they will indeed do what he has commanded, for that is the way of showing our gratitude and love for the Lord.

John 14:15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

What he commanded them was what they were already doing. Yet don't we need reminders and encouragement to even keep on keeping on. He prays that the Lord will direct their hearts into the love of God and into the patience (steadfastness, perseverance) of Christ. A hearty, cheerful, hopeful, patient awaiting His public presentation as rightful Lord of all and King of kings.