

Confirmation Sunday - May 5, 2018 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17
“Some Certainty in an Uncertain World”

Finally! We've arrived at the month of May. These first 5 months of 2019 have taken forever, haven't they? What will the next 7 months of this year be like for you? Will you have an eventful summer with waterparks and roller coasters? Maybe it includes a part-time job or helping around the house with chores? High school will be a brand-new adventure. What will that be like? Will the classes challenge you? Will meeting new people and making new friends go smoothly? What will you do with your after-school hours? Athletics? Band? Choir? Robotics? Homework? Video games? Nap?

It seems there's a lot of uncertainty for you, doesn't it? But God's Word on your Confirmation Day offers you: **“SOME CERTAINTY IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD.”** It tells you with absolute certainty that: *1) God chose you, cherished you and called you. So that you would want to: 2) Serve him with your every want, word and work.*

It's been two decades since Jesus' ascension, and we find the Apostle Paul in Corinth, in southern Greece, and he's writing a second letter to the congregation he had started in Thessalonica, in northern Greece. We read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17.

Rumors! Sometimes they're harmless. Sometimes they're not. They can be devastating. Rumors catch our eye and sell magazines in the checkout line when we buy groceries. Rumors can spread quickly on the internet, or with a text on a cell phone. Why am I talking about rumors? It was rumored that the Christians in Thessalonica had completely missed Jesus' return. Can you imagine why that news would be so devastating? Either they had been left out or left behind by their Lord!

Unfortunately, this wasn't the first time a rumor caused heartache for them. In his first letter he had to calm them down because there was a rumor that their Christian brothers and sisters who would be alive when Jesus returned, would get a head start on their heavenly celebration before

those who fell asleep in Jesus. Paul told them don't worry. They'd all meet together when Jesus returns.

This latest rumor, that Judgment Day had already taken place, led Paul to immediately write his second letter, put this rumor to rest, and give them some certainty in an uncertain world: **But we (Paul and his fellow missionaries, Silas and Timothy) ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, loved by the Lord, because from the beginning GOD CHOSE YOU to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He CALLED YOU to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Did you catch what Paul was telling them? *“Uncertain days are coming, but don't worry about them. God the Father chose you. God the Son cherished you, and God the Holy Spirit called you. It's going to be ok!”*

Did you catch what Paul was telling you? As you journey through the rest of 2019 and beyond: *“You'll have uncertain days, but don't worry - those same certainties ... God chose you, cherished you and called you will be your daily comfort, as well. It's going to be ok!”*

GOD THE FATHER CHOSE YOU! That's what it says right here! It's not luck or an accident that you trust in Jesus. From the beginning - before the Apostle Paul, before baby Jesus in the manger, before Adam and Eve, before heaven and earth - from the beginning God had his heart set on you. He chose you so that long after 2019, long after your death, long after this world has burned in ashes - you will live with him. How's that possible, since you're sinners? Well

GOD THE SON CHERISHED YOU! That's what it says right here! Was it because you were so cute or so smart that God chose you? No! Was it because you were less sinful than others? No! You are dead in sin. We are dead in sin. Was it because

Jesus was your choice? No! The Bible says that God made you his choice for two reasons: his love as your Father and the hard work of his Son.

- God cherished you enough to send his perfect Son at Christmas and credited his holiness to you.
- God cherished you enough to make his only Son's sacrifice on that Good Friday cross scrub you completely clean of your sins.
- God cherished you enough to guarantee his powerful Son's Easter victory over death would also be your victory over death one day. How do you know that this applies to you? Well

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLED YOU! That's what it says right here! Do you want evidence that you are safe in your Father's everlasting arms? The Holy Spirit got you baptized, didn't he? The Holy Spirit taught you to know that Jesus died for your sins, right? The Holy Spirit will soon use Jesus' body and blood to strengthen your faith, correct? And he wrote it down, too: **God chose you in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined you to be adopted as his sons and daughters through Jesus Christ.** There's no uncertainty there!

2019 and beyond is going to be great for you. So, I guess you can relax! You completed your public examination on Wednesday. In minutes, you'll be confirmed. So, there's no need to remember your baptism. There's no need to learn more than what you were taught in "Christ Light," Sunday school and Confirmation class. There's no need to come to church. There's no need to dine at the Lord's Supper again – once is enough. There's no need to read devotions from God's Word on your own.

You know better than that, because your Savior has taught you to know better than that: **"Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching."**

The very thing the Thessalonians were concerned about – Jesus' return on the final day is the same thing your God wants you to be concerned about now. That's why Paul told them and he tells you:

Stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. Stand firm! Hold fast! That's your Confirmation promise to never want to miss church. To always want to be at the Lord's Supper. To always want to stay connected to God's Word.

Paul has these final words for you: **May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved you and by his grace gave you eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts** (make you WANT to do what's right) **and strengthen you in every good WORK and WORD.** The certainty that God chose you, cherished you and called you makes you want to serve him with your every want, word and work.

SERVE GOD WITH YOUR EVERY WANT. This is the reminder to keep an eye on what your eye sees and what your mind stores. Fight the temptations the devil is bombarding you with each day. Be the person God has called you to be. Someone who thinks about others before self and prays for them often.

SERVE GOD WITH YOUR EVERY WORD. This is the reminder to keep an eye on what comes out of your mouth. Fight the temptations to use the language the world around you uses. Jesus has made you a new person. Someone who uses words to compliment not criticize, to say: *"I'm sorry," "I forgive you," "Please,"* and *"Thank you"* often.

SERVE GOD WITH YOUR EVERY WORK. This is the reminder to keep your eye on what you're doing. Fight the temptations of your own sinful nature to be selfish. The Holy Spirit has called you to do kind and considerate things for others, often.

With so many uncertain things in your future and in our world, your God wants you to know with absolute certainty: You were chosen, cherished and called by him! He'll be at your side and on your side every day!