

1 Thessalonians 3:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

Analysis

For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord—hoti nyn zōmen ean hymeis stēkete en Kyriō (ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν Κυρίῳ, 'because now we live if you stand fast in the Lord'). This startling statement equates the Thessalonians' perseverance with Paul's very life. Zaō (ζάω, 'to live') isn't mere biological existence but abundant life—purpose, joy, fulfillment. Stēkete (στήκετε, present imperative, 'stand firm/be steadfast') indicates continuing action: keep standing firm despite ongoing pressure. The phrase en Kyriō ('in the Lord') locates stability's source—not human strength but union with Christ.

Paul's statement reveals pastoral priorities: spiritual children's welfare matters more than personal comfort. He could endure affliction (v. 7) if the Thessalonians stood firm; their apostasy would devastate him more than persecution. This parent-heart reflects God's own grief over Israel's unfaithfulness (Hos 11:8) and Jesus's lament over Jerusalem (Matt 23:37). True spiritual fathers measure success by disciples' perseverance, not personal achievements. The conditional 'if ye stand fast' isn't doubt but emphasis—their perseverance is his life's meaning and joy.

Historical Context

Paul's emotional investment in the Thessalonians reflects his brief but intense ministry there. Forced to flee after only three weeks, uncertain if persecution destroyed the young church, he endured months of anxiety. Timothy's report that they 'stand fast in the Lord' released Paul from death-like distress into renewed life and purpose. This pattern marks apostolic ministry: Paul 'died daily' (1 Cor 15:31)

through hardships but 'lived' through converts' perseverance. His joy wasn't in comfortable circumstances (he had few) but in fruitful ministry producing believers who endured to glory.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What evidence demonstrates that your spiritual children's perseverance matters more to you than your personal comfort or success?
2. How do you 'stand fast in the Lord' when circumstances pressure you to compromise or abandon faith?
3. Why does Paul equate the Thessalonians' steadfastness with his own life? What does this teach about ultimate values and priorities?

Interlinear Text

ὅτι	νῦν	ζῶμεν	ἐὰν	ὕμεῖς	στήκητε	ἐν	κυρίῳ
For	now	we live	if	ye	stand fast	in	the Lord
G3754	G3568	G2198	G1437	G5210	G4739	G1722	G2962

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 1:23 (Parallel theme): If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

1 Corinthians 16:13 (Parallel theme): Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Revelation 3:11 (Parallel theme): Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Hebrews 10:23 (Parallel theme): Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Philippians 1:21 (Parallel theme): For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Hebrews 4:14 (Parallel theme): Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Revelation 3:3 (Parallel theme): Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Hebrews 3:14 (Parallel theme): For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Acts 11:23 (References Lord): Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

Ephesians 3:17 (Parallel theme): That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,