The Ready Church Is:

• An Alive Church
• An Energized Church
• A Sharing Church

1. Speaking-up To Please God
2. Building Loving Relationships (Like A Mother)
3. Living What We Preach
4. Taking Time With Individuals
The Steadfast Church Is:

- The Church That Doesn’t Give Up or Give In
- The Church That Holds Onto Their Faith – Continuing In Their Mission Even As Tough And Troubling Times Are All Around
Paul’s Outreach Ministry Was Filled With Many Challenges & Hard Times

Acts 13-17 Tells Of Paul’s Journey To Thessalonica

**Read:** Acts 14:21-28

**Read:** Acts 17:1-9

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 6:3-10
Paul is motivated by a concern for the steadfast faith of the Church at Thessalonica.

The key: Without a persevering faith that focuses on the future (and not only on the present) they will not do well.
• There Is A War Going On – A Spiritual Battle

(Ephesians 6:12 NIV) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
1 Thessalonians 3:1-5 (NIV)

1 So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens.
2 We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,
3 so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them.
4 In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.
5 For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.
Paul Gets A Great Report Of Their Unwavering Faith

1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 (NIV) (6) But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. (7) Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. (8) For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.
I Thes. 3:9-13 (9) How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? (10) Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. (11) Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. (12) May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. (13) May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.
THE STEADFAST CHURCH

MARKS OF A STEADFAST CHURCH:

1. Not Surprised By Opposition
2. Not Swayed By The Tempter To Give Up Or Run Away
3. They Are Steadfast In Faith And Love
4. They Persevere And Encourage Others
5. They Know That No One Can Keep Them From God’s Future
• The Steadfast Church Must Learn to Endure Persecution

• (Matthew 5:10–12 NIV) 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
PERSECUTION — the hatred and affliction that follows the witness and holy life of God’s people in a hostile world.
--Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary

Persecuted = “Harassed”
Blessed Are The “Harassed”
(2 Tim 3:12 NIV) … everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
Jesus Informed His Disciples That They Would Be Persecuted Because Of Their Identification With Him.

That Has Not Changed Today
• Jesus: “Rejoice & Be Glad—Your Reward Is Great In Heaven”
• It Is Not The Persecution That Is Blessed or Full of Joy
• It Is The Result of Persecution That We Celebrate

(Adapted From The Life Application Commentary)
John 15:18-20 (NIV)  

18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

• The Persecution We Face In The U.S. Is Very Insignificant Compared To What Some Other Countries Are Facing
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH WORLDWIDE IS UNDER ATTACK

“The most severe abuses included genocide and other mass atrocities, killings, enslavement, rape, imprisonment, forced displacement, forced conversions, intimidation, harassment, property destruction, the marginalization of women, and bans on children participating in religious activities or education”

ChristianNews.net
THE STEADFAST CHURCH

- **Persecuting Countries cited include:** China, Iran and North Korea, Burma, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Syria, Vietnam Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia, Turkey

- **Increasing Persecution And Opposition Is Beginning To Surface As The Forces Of Evil Step Up Their All-Out Attack On The Christian Faith In The USA**
THE STEADFAST CHURCH

• Many People Reject Christ And Any Form Of Christian Morality Because They Want To Live Their Lives w/o Accountability Or Responsibility

• A Nation That Was Once Close To God And Enjoying His Blessings Is Now In Danger Of Being Completely On Their Own
10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Lord, Help Us To Live A Life By Faith That Will Not Rubberstamp The Sin And Evil In The World

Help Us Share Our Faith So That Others, Even Those Who Vehemently Disagree, Hear The Truth That Sets Them Free
How To Handle Persecution

1. Live A Holy And Forgiving Life (Mat 5:44; 1 Pet 2:12)
2. Rejoice In Suffering (Rom 5:3-5)
3. Rely On God’s Grace To Endure (Heb 13:6)
4. Know That God’s Presence Is With You (Heb 13:5)
5. Keep On Praying (Eph 6:18)
THE STEADFAST CHURCH

• Through The Blood Of Jesus And The Word Of Our Testimony -- We Are More Than Conquerors

• Satan May Wage War Against Us -- But He Cannot Defeat Us!
THE STEADFAST CHURCH

- Trouble Can Make Us or It Can Break Us
- Adversity, Troubles, And Hardships, Causes Some To Break and Others To Break Out
In Times Of Trouble Go To God – He Will Help You be Steadfast

Pet 5:7 (NIV) "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

He Doesn't Want You To Fail -- He Cares For You
What We Thought Was Going To Defeat Us -- God Can Turn Around And Use For Victory In Our Lives (Church)

Rom 8:28 (NIV)  "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
• In This World You Will Face Trouble And Adversity
“But Take Heart! I Have Overcome the World” (Jn. 16:33)

• (Psa 34:19 NIV) A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all;
The Steadfast Church

• (Rom 8:18 NIV) "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

• The Pain And Troubles That This World Throws In Our Face Can't Compare With The Glory That Will Be Revealed In Us When We Are Steadfast To The End

• Don't Give Up -- Don't Give In! Be STEADFAST!!

• It Will Be Worth It All When We See Jesus!