



Faith That Inspires (1 Thessalonians 3:1-13)

Paul Can't Take it Any Longer

“Therefore, **when we could no longer endure it**, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and **sent Timothy**, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, **to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions**; for you yourselves know that **we are appointed to this**. For, in fact, **we told you** before **when we were with** you that **we would suffer tribulation**, just as it happened, and you know. **For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith**, lest by some means **the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.**” 1

Thessalonians 3:1-5 NKJV

Scripture 1:1-25

☑ “Therefore, **when we could no longer endure it**, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and **sent Timothy**, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of

*Christ, **to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith**, that **no one should be shaken by these afflictions**; for you yourselves know that **we are appointed to this.**” I*

Thessalonians 3:1-3 NKJV

☑ **No longer endure what?**

☑ “But we, brethren, **having been taken away from you** for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly **to see your face with great desire**. Therefore we **wanted to come to you**—even I, Paul, time and again—but **Satan hindered us.**” I Thessalonians 2:17-18 NKJV

☑ Paul simply could not take it any longer, not knowing how his young disciples were doing in Thessalonica.

☑ Since he could not get there himself, continually being hindered by Satan, he sent Timothy.

☑ **Timothy’s Assignment**

☑ To solidify and encourage their faith!

☑ To help stabilize them in the midst of persecution!

☑ To recognize that Paul was told when he was called that tribulations were guaranteed to part of his ministry.

☑ “For, in fact, **we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation**, just as it happened, and you know.” I Thessalonians 3:4 NKJV

☑ **Paul visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22).**

- ☑ In Acts 17:1-9 we see how he was received and the persecution that caused him to leave the city prematurely.
- ☑ We do not specifically see in that short narrative what exactly Paul told them about his necessary suffering; we simply see his present persecution.
- ☑ It is here in his letter to the Thessalonians that we learn he told them that suffering was a necessary part of his ministry.

☑ ***“For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.” 1 Thessalonians 3:5***
NKJV

☑ **That is the reason...**

- ☑ This part of his letter reads almost like a love-letter. It is not for doctrinal purposes, but instead reveals Paul's deep love and compassion, his father-like qualities. To me it is astounding what Paul's conversion caused in him. From a hard-hearted, inflexible, ruthless persecutor of Christians,

to a man so in love with those to whom he ministers that he is desperate know how they are getting along.

- ☑ He needed to know the condition of their faith and that is why he sent Timothy.
- ☑ He was in anguish with the thought that the enemy might have come against them to such a degree that their faith had wavered, which would have caused the fruit of his labor to rot!

A Good Report

“But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and **brought us good news** of your **faith** and **love**, and that you always have **good remembrance of us**, greatly **desiring to see us**, as we also to see you— therefore, brethren, **in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.** For **what thanks** can we render to God for you, for all **the joy with which we rejoice** for your sake before our God, night and day praying exceedingly **that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?**” I Thessalonians 3:6-10 NKJV

Scripture 1:26-50

- ☑ *“But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us **good news** of your **faith** and **love**, and that you always have good **remembrance of us**, greatly **desiring to see us**, as we also to see you— therefore, brethren, **in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith.**”* *1 Thessalonians 3:6-7 NKJV*

- ☑ **Timothy has returned with good news!**

- ☑ Your faith is strong...
- ☑ Your love is apparent...
- ☑ You have good memories of us...
- ☑ You desire to see us (as we you)...

- ☑ **This type of testimony is like oxygen to me!**

- ☑ Paul has been through so much suffering and this makes it all worth it!
- ☑ When those to whom he has ministered are standing strong in their faith, it like breath in his lungs, fuel in his gas tank.
- ☑ It gives him the energy and encouragement to keep going!

- ☑ *“For **now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.**”* *1 Thessalonians 3:8 NKJV*

☑ **Paul's values have changed!**

- ☑ I want you to close your eyes and imagine what has become most valuable to Paul.
- ☑ Think about how you would complete this sentence... "I can live knowing..."
- ☑ Paul completes it by inserting... "that you are solid with the Lord!"
- ☑ He has come from a life which valued these things most: doctrine, theology, education, stature, systems, religion, authority, traditions, and maintaining status quo (the existing state of affairs, especially regarding social, political or religious issues). Now what he values most are people, their current welfare and their eternity!
- ☑ *"For **what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?** Is it not even **you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?** For you are our glory and joy." I Thessalonians 2:19-20 NKJV*

- ☑ *"For **what thanks can we render to God** for you, for all the **joy** with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, night and day **praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?**" I Thessalonians 3:9-10 NKJV*

☑ How can we thank God for the good news?

☑ We rejoice constantly!

☑ *“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. **Be thankful to Him**, and bless His name.”* Psalms 100:4 NKJV

☑ *“...Do not sorrow, **for the joy of the Lord is your strength.**”* Nehemiah 8:10 NKJV

☑ We still pray fervently that we will get to see you face-to-face one day, so we can fill in anything that is missing and bring your faith to maturity!

Prayer

“Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, **direct our way to you**. And may the Lord **make you increase and abound in love** to one another and to all, **just as we do to you**, so that **He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness** before our God and Father **at the coming of our Lord** Jesus Christ with all His saints.” I Thessalonians 3:11-13 NKJV

Scripture 1:26-50

☑ *“Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, **direct our way to you.**”* I Thessalonians 3:11 NKJV

☑ Paul still wants to go see them...





- ☑ Even after the good report from Timothy, Paul is still hopeful he will be able to go back to Thessalonica, which he seems to have done briefly on the return leg of his third missionary journey.
- ☑ “And may the Lord make you **increase and abound in love** to one another **and to all**, just as we do to you, so that **He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness** before our God and Father **at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** with all His saints.” 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 NKJV

☑ Love

- ☑ Paul identifies love as the greatest of all things.
 - ☑ “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but **the greatest of these is love.**” 1 Corinthians 13:13 NKJV
- ☑ John identifies love as the very nature of God. “God is Love.”
 - ☑ “Beloved, **let us love one another, for love is of God;** and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.** In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us** and

*sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ...And we have known and believed **the love that God has for us. God is love**, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” I John 4:7-11, 16 NKJV*

Blameless and holy

-  Blameless: this call to pure perfection is Paul’s expectation of God’s people, no better said than later in this letter. And no better assurance that it will happen!
-  “Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify you completely**; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be **preserved blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.**” I Thessalonians 5:23-24 NKJV
-  Holy: Separated, set-apart for God in all things! Peter affirms this calling in his first letter reference to Leviticus.
-  “but as He who called you is holy, **you also be holy in all your conduct**, because it is written, “**Be holy, for I am holy [Lev. 19:2].**”” I Peter 1:15-16 NKJV

NEXT TEACHING

Purity and an Orderly Life (I Thessalonians 4:1-12)