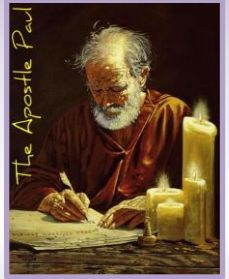


THESSALONIANS

There Is Hope!



Lesson 05: Purifying Hope: Part I ... [1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-13]

PREVIEW

Paul sent Timothy to encourage and fortify the faith of the Thessalonian believers. The good news that Timothy brought back regarding their development strengthens the apostle. He prays that he will be able to return to help the believers grow to completion. Specifically, he prays that they will grow in love and holiness and that they will be ready at the coming of Christ Jesus with His saints.

PAUL'S CONCERN: 1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-5

Verse 1 begins with a *"therefore"*, which provides a link to the last thought of the last chapter, namely that Paul was expressing how he longed to see the Thessalonians. The nexus thought at the start of this chapter is Paul's response, that is, he and Silas remained in Athens while Timothy is sent to Thessalonica.

TIMOTHY'S CREDENTIALS

In verse 2 Paul lays out Timothy's qualifications; he is our brother (*adelphos*), and minister (*diakonos* - *deacon*) of God, and our fellow laborer (*synergos*) in the gospel of Christ. Timothy came to serve; not to be served.

TIMOTHY'S MISSION

In verses 2 and 3 Paul presents the reason for Timothy's visit. His expressed purpose was to establish (*strengthen*) the Thessalonian believers, to encourage (*comfort*) the faith of the believers, so that none in Thessalonica would be shaken by the afflictions they were facing.

At the end of verse 3 Paul affirms that the believers in the Thessalonian church know that *"we are appointed to this (afflictions)"*. Paul was commissioned personally by our Lord Jesus Christ in Act 9 to be a chosen vessel, to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel, and to suffer for Christ's name.

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." -- Acts 9:15-16 ... NKJV

How do the verses above align with the false teachings of the "Prosperity Gospel" movement? ... [Matthew 10:16-26]

In verse 4 the tribulation suffering predicted by Paul has to do with "distress; trouble; affliction by external means". Jesus gave us a similar warning and a word of encouragement, in John 16:33.

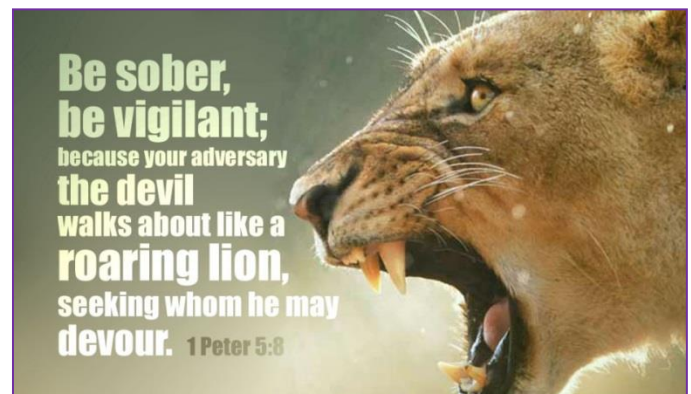
³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." --- John 16:33 ... NKJV

This is not the Great Tribulation in view here – Paul will address this topic in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

In verse 5 Paul explains that his concern for the Thessalonian believers had reached a point where he could no longer endure it. Because of this great concern for their faith, Paul sends Timothy to ascertain the state of the Thessalonian believers' faith.

How concerned are you for other believers?
Do you have great concern for the faith of others?

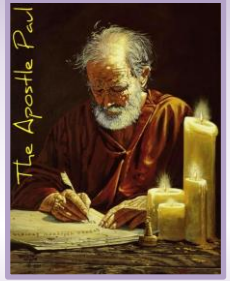
In particular, Paul is worried that the tempter may have tempted the believers to depart from the faith. Paul was lamenting that if this in fact happened, then the labor of his missionary team would have been in vain (*useless or worthless*).



Be sober,
be vigilant;
because your adversary
the devil
walks about like a
roaring lion,
seeking whom he may
devour. 1 Peter 5:8

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PAUL'S COMFORT: 1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-10

In verse 6 Paul informs us that Timothy has returned with good news regarding the faith of the Thessalonian believers. Timothy's report card included excellent marks for their faith and love, and a mention of their fond memories of Paul and his team, along with a longing to see them face-to-face.

The "therefore" that starts verse 7 links the good news from the previous verse with the comfort expressed by Paul in this verse; even in Paul and Silas' affliction and distress, they were comforted with the good report of the Thessalonians' faith - conveyed to them by Timothy.

Paul concludes this thought, in verse 8, with a declaration that he and his team "now live" (*exceedingly emboldened*), since the Thessalonians believers are standing fast in the Lord. The believers were enduring the persecution and afflictions. They were remaining strong in their faith.

Paul was consumed with the spiritual welfare of other believers.

Can you say the same?

We are to comfort one another -
Not compete with one another!

In verse 9 Paul is overwhelmed with inexpressible joy ("What thanks can we render to God for you?"). He is prayerfully rejoicing for the Thessalonians ("We rejoice for your sake before our God") and he is praying for an opportunity to see the Thessalonian believers once again, face-to-face ("Night and day praying exceedingly (continuously and abundantly) that we may see your face and perfect (complete) what is lacking in your faith").

⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

--- Philippians 1:6 ... NKJV

WHO WILL COMPLETE THE GOOD WORK IN YOU?
AREN'T YOU GLAD IT DOES NOT DEPEND ON YOU?

PAUL'S 2ND COMING PRAYER: 1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-13

In verse 11 notice Paul always presents God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ as co-equal members of the trinity (along with the Holy Spirit).

Scripture teaches that anyone who denies Jesus is the Son of God is not a Christian; this is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith.

²² Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. --- 1 John 2:22-23 ... NKJV

Paul confesses that it is God who directs our paths – reminiscent of Proverbs 3:5-6.

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

--- Proverbs 3:5-6 ... NKJV

Paul prays that God will make a way to Thessalonica for him and his team.

In verse 12 Paul prays that the Lord (*Holy Spirit*) will filled the Thessalonian believers to overflowing, namely make you increase in (*Agape*) love to one another and to all (*growth*) and abound in (*Agape*) love to one another and to all (*overflow*).

Paul adds, "just as we do to you".

Paul never asked others to do what he was not willing to do!

In the last verse, Paul prays that He, the Holy Spirit, will establish the believers hearts blameless in holiness (*condition*), before our God and Father (*location*), at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (*time*) with all His (*Jesus'*) saints (*together with*). Notice the references to the Trinity in this last verse.

Trinity Alert!

