

1 Thessalonians

Chapter 3

Introduction:

1. Chapter 2 largely dealt with Paul's ministry among the Thessalonians when he first visited Thessalonica and started that local assembly.
2. But according to Acts 17, Paul had to leave Thessalonica very suddenly because of persecution and danger that arose. During the night, Paul fled to Berea, and then from there to Athens.
3. Chapter 3 deals with the events that transpired after Paul arrived in Athens.
4. This chapter reveals the deep love and affection Paul had for the Thessalonians. He truly cared about them and their spiritual welfare.
5. What a blessing to have fellow believers in our lives that truly love us and care about us. This is what a local assembly should be all about - believers who have been brought together as a spiritual family. **1 Timothy 5:1-2**

Verse 1

1. While Paul was at Athens, he couldn't get the Thessalonians off of his mind. He kept waiting, hoping to receive some word as to how they were doing.
2. Paul received no word and the silence was too much. Paul decided it was time to take action. He could no longer "*forbear*." This word carries the idea of waiting patiently. Paul decided that he had waited long enough.
3. Let this be a lesson to us. There is a time to wait, but there is also a time to take action. Paul said, "I think it's a good idea to get proactive and do something."

Verse 2

1. What did Paul decide to do? This verse reveals that Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica to check on these new believers, encourage them, and continue to root them in sound doctrine.
2. Who was Timothy? He traveled with Paul, and Paul describes him as:
 - "*Our brother*" (spiritual brother in Christ).
 - "*A minister of God*." This is the word that we get our English word "deacon." It means "one who runs on errands, an attendant."
 - "*Our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ*." Timothy's life was committed to the spread of the gospel, just like Paul.
3. Paul also refers to Timothy in other places as his "*son in the faith*." Timothy was Paul's right hand man and Paul had the utmost confidence in him.
Philippians 2:19-24
4. Timothy was a huge help to Paul in the daily duties and grind of ministry, yet Paul was willing to sacrifice the service of Timothy so that he could go and minister in Thessalonica.
 - Paul did what he thought was for the good of the ministry, not his own personal benefit.
5. Timothy's mission when he arrived was to establish these new believers (root them in sound doctrine), and comfort them concerning their new faith. Why would they need comfort? The next verse reveals the reason.

Verse 3

1. The Thessalonians had encountered some afflictions since believing the gospel of Christ. They were a persecuted church. 1:6, 2:14; **2 Thessalonians 1:4, 6-7**
2. It seems very possible that some of them had even lost their lives due to their faith in Christ (4:13), so they desperately needed comfort and encouragement (4:18).
3. Paul did not want to see these believers "*moved*" by these afflictions, but rather he wanted to see them standing firm against these pressures. vs. 8
4. Timothy was to remind them that afflictions, persecution, and suffering are a part of life, and the Christian is not exempt. In fact, when a person trusts Jesus Christ and lives a life that is sold out to Him, some degree of persecution is to be expected.
2 Timothy 3:12; Philippians 1:29

Verse 4

1. In the initial discipleship of these believers, Paul warned them that suffering and tribulation would come.
2. Sure enough, it came to pass, and Paul says, "Now you know firsthand what we were talking about."
3. Isn't it interesting that Paul did not paint a picture of worldly prosperity for these new believers? He never assured them that if they would just exercise enough faith, they would be healthy, wealthy, and prosperous.
4. Paul told them just the **opposite** of what you hear so often today from "name it and claim it" television preachers.
5. It goes back to 2:5-6. Paul wasn't trying to get in these people's pocketbooks or win a popularity contest, or sell books, or increase TV ratings.
6. He loved these people dearly and desired for them to know the **truth** so they could be prepared for the problems and afflictions of life.
7. The teaching today that is so popular that God wants to bless you with material blessings, and you can expect special favor from everybody, is a result of **wrongly** dividing God's Word and is diametrically opposite of Paul's teaching to the church.