

# 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.

### Verse 5

1. This verse teaches us a valuable truth that we need to understand. Satan hates new believers and will attempt to undermine their faith in Christ.
2. Paul basically says, "When I couldn't stand it any longer, I had to send Timothy to you to find out how you were doing in your faith."
3. Paul's greatest fear was that Satan had discouraged these people to the point that they had given up and were no longer walking by faith in God's Word.
4. Paul had invested so much spiritual energy into discipling these people that he knew that if they had quit, all of his labor would have been in vain.
  - This was a constant concern of Paul regarding those he discipled.
5. Isn't it interesting that Paul didn't care about their finances, their physical health, their happiness, or their numerical growth? Paul said, "...I sent to know your faith..." Paul had one concern, "How is your faith doing?"

6. The greatest reward a preacher can have is when his people go on to serve the Lord and their faith continues to grow. It is then that you realize that your labor is not in vain.

### Verse 6

1. Timothy came back from Thessalonica with good tidings (good news).
2. Timothy saw firsthand that the Thessalonians' faith and charity was not waning, but rather, growing. **2 Thessalonians 1:3**
3. Not only this, but Timothy informed Paul that they had "*good remembrance*" of Paul and his co-laborers, and they longed to see them.
4. Paul must have breathed a sigh of relief and rested much easier that night. His spiritual children doing well and his heart was ecstatic.
5. What a blessing to read about the relationship Paul had with these people. What mutual love and respect they had for one another.

### Verse 7-8

1. As most of us do, Paul had his own set of problems he was dealing with.
  - The word "*affliction*" means "pressure."
  - Sometimes in life, you can feel like you are in a pressure cooker.
2. Christians are not exempt from the daily pressures of life, but the Christian is different in the way he deals with them. There is a powerful resource **within** (Christ in us) to deal with the pressures **without**.
3. When Paul heard of **their** faith, it comforted him in all of **his** problems.
4. The Thessalonians were Paul's spiritual offspring, and a part of him, and a part of his heart, was now in them. This is why Paul says in verse 8, "*For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.*"
  - The good news of their faith had breathed life and energy into Paul.
5. Christian, you never know the effect your life is having on another person. God can use your faith (even in difficulties) to serve as a great inspiration to other believers. You never know who is watching you.
6. When you see another believer "rock solid" during trials, it makes such an impact.

### Verse 9

1. Paul exclaims, "*For what thanks can we render to God again for you.*"
2. Paul was basking in the good news that Timothy brought as he prayed before the Lord.
3. I love the way Paul uses the word "joy" as a noun and a verb in this verse.
  - He mentions all the joy he had in his heart, but then he took that joy and he said, "*...we joy before our God.*"
4. How it must thrill the Lord when we come before Him with thanksgiving and actively joy before Him. Are you ever so overwhelmed with God and His goodness that the joy just spills forth as you pray?