

## The Hope of Heaven

### 1Thessalonians 3:1-6

#### V1-6

- **V1-2** back in **2:17-18**, Paul shared with the Thessalonians that he desired to come to them multiple times but was hindered through spiritual warfare from returning. But although they weren't able physically to be with these believers they still kept them in their hearts by praying for them constantly, and when the opportunity presented itself Timothy was sent to them.
- This was the next best thing Paul could do for them was to send his trusted protégé and fellow worker Timothy to strengthen and encourage them in the faith. This was still a very young church which is why Paul for their sake didn't come to them because it would have no doubt brought upon them tremendous persecution and hardship and he didn't know if they could handle it, so he stayed put in Athens and therefore sent Timothy in his stead.
- Notice it cost Paul to sacrifice in this manner because he wanted to come himself, but sometimes not always but sometimes it's for the church's best interest for other's to take the lead and not the leader himself. This is going to benefit both young Timothy as He'll learn to lead and endure while the young church will learn to stand and receive from others.
- **V3** Back in **V2** we saw one purpose of Timothy's visit was to "**encourage**" another was to "establish" notice the Thessalonians were being rocked by affliction and Paul was concerned that they'd be "**shaken**" this word gives the picture of someone becoming unstable in their thinking and with their balance. It comes from a word that means to "flatter like a dog wagging his tail" when you see that you drop your guard and think he's friendly not dangerous.
- This word is used to describe the Devil flattering us into thinking Christianity should not be that difficult, it should bring ease-comfort not pain - inconvenience something must be wrong. This stumbles people right out from following the Lord, for as soon as they get a taste of some persecution for what they believe they immediately start to fall away > **Math 13:4-9, 21-22**.
- **Col 2:7**- speaks of us being rooted and grounded in our faith, why? Because we can become unsettled in our thinking, out of balance with our standing and on the brink of falling if not for others coming alongside of us to strengthen and confirm us in our faith, this is what Timothy did. **V4-5** so Paul says even though he had warned them he knew that they needed reinforcements and therefore he sends both Timothy and this letter to reassure them.

- I want to go back to **V2** where Paul gave a little description of Timothy as he called him **1<sup>st</sup> his “brother”**- meaning he was reliable and approachable, **2<sup>nd</sup> “a minister of God”**- he was also a servant of God, meaning whatever they needed to grow in their faith Timothy would provide. Minister of God literally means **“table server”** he is one who waits on others, to serve others, his job is to sacrifice in order for others to be served, and yet that’s not what happens in today’s ministry, people actually go into the ministry in order to be comfortable or get rich > **Lk 11:43**.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> fellow laborer**- meant he was a team player, not looking to go solo, he didn’t see ministry as some stepping stone to enhance his career, therefore he was always modeling submission and not authority > **Lk 20:45-47. V6** Paul goes back to chapter one when he spoke of their **“faith” “love” “hope”** as Timothy has brought back the good news of how well the new church is doing.
- This is all based upon how they’re handling trials and temptation; if you ever want to know how you’re doing in your Christian walk you need look no further than your last trial. Your response in and to the situation will reveal what is going on with your presently and how you deal with that will determine where you’ll go spiritually in the future, so trials take the guess work out of how were doing as we’ll know, just like Timothy and Paul knew how this church was doing.