

Discussion Questions

Date: September 27, 2026

Preacher: Josh Ratliff

Sermon Outline

Joy in Distress **1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:10**

Where true glory and joy are found (2:17-3:5)

- Our hope, joy, and crown are the souls of those we lead to Jesus. (2:17-20)
- Fellow believers are a gift in the momentary trials and persecution we must experience in this life. (3:1-5)
- **Question:** How does it encourage you to know that Paul faced doubt and anxiety about his own effectiveness and mission?

Encouraging news in the midst of distress (3:6-10)

- We "really live" as Christians when we know our brothers and sisters are standing strong in the Lord. (3:6-8)
- We have a duty to "supply what is lacking" in our brothers' and sisters' faith. (3:9-10)
- **Question:** Are we so committed to each other that we "really live" only when knowing our brothers and sisters are standing firm in the Lord?

Bottom Line: The believer's life must be marked by responsibility for our brothers and sisters.

Talking Points

- * Name the believers that you pray for and care about with the kind of concern and love that Paul had for the Thessalonians.
- * How have other believers strengthened your faith in times of trial? Write down a reminder to thank one of them this week.
- * What doubts do you have about your effectiveness and mission? Let your group speak into those doubts with the truth.
- * How can you cultivate this level of concern for one another in your group?
- * Consider going around the room and naming how different people have encouraged your faith.
- * Is there someone you need to text or call in order to see how they are doing?
- * Does supplying what is lacking in someone else's faith feel like a duty or a delight? Why?
- * Take time to praise God for how you are encouraged by one another and pray for the maturing in the faith that each of you needs.

Understanding Scripture

1. Read the passage aloud.

- Question: How would the original audience have understood this passage?
- Question: What was God's desire for them?

2. Reread key verse(s) aloud.

- Question: What does this teach us about the human soul, desires, or behavior?
- Question: What does this teach us about the nature, desires, or behavior of God?

3. Ask if anything is difficult to understand in the passage, or simply point it out yourself.

- Back up from the confusing verse and reread the whole section slowly—highlight the author's flow of thought.
- Ask everyone, "What are some possible interpretations?" Encourage curiosity!
- If needed, provide clarification, but admit if you don't have a satisfactory explanation, and volunteer to research answers. Share your findings over text or at the next meeting.

4. Summarize the passage in 1-3 sentences to refocus the group ("Okay, so far we've seen in Amos...")

- Question: What does this say about our relationship with God and/or each other?
- Question: How do the teachings, actions, or person of Jesus shed light on this passage?

Prayer Requests

