

1 Thessalonians 3

Jesus

God's Love in Action

- **Ch. 1** Growth through Faithful Preaching
- **Ch. 2** Growth through Faithful Pastoring
- **Ch. 3** Growth through **Faithful Exhortation**

Exhortation parakaleō lit. to call to one's side for the purpose of building up

1. **Establish**
2. **Encourage**

- Forced to leave you/Hearts still w/you/**Hindered coming to you...**

I. Check-Up

1 Therefore, **when we could no longer endure it**, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, 2 and **sent Timothy**, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ...

Urgency: We have to know...Are you standing firm in the faith?

- **Paul stayed in Athens but kept busy...**

Hanging out at Athens Mall reasoning w/Jews/Gentiles...

Acts 17:18 Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers **encountered him**. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took [Paul] and brought him to the Are-op-agus [lit Mars Hill], saying, "May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? 20 For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." 21 For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there **spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing**. 22 Then Paul stood in the midst of [Mars Hill] and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD [Preached Jesus/resurrection] ... **32** And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "**We will hear you again on this matter.**"

2b [I sent Timothy...] to **establish you** and **encourage you** concerning your faith, 3 that **no one should be shaken** by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. 4 For, in fact, **we told you before** when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. 5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to **know your faith**, lest by some means the **tempter had tempted you**, and our labor might be in vain.

Paul sends Timothy to Establish/Encourage. **Why?**

Satan sought to shake their faith by frightening them w/fear of suffering

- **Christianity is not for the faint of heart**

2 Timothy 3:11...persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the **Lord delivered me.** 12 Yes, and **all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**

- **Timothy struggled with fear**...Paul encouraged him

2 Timothy 1:7 ...God has **not given us a spirit of fear,** but of **power** and of **love** and of a **sound mind.**

- **Interesting:** Even though Tim struggled w/fear Paul sent Him to help others
 1. **Brother** in the Lord
 2. **Minister** for the Lord
 3. **Laborer** of the Lord

I sent a guy I know can do the job because he knows the Word and will Live it
...even when its uncomfortable or really, really hard

- **Satan's Whisper:** You were meant to be happy. You don't have to suffer
 1. **Devil:** You can have the Kingdom w/out the cross
 2. **Peter:** You can have the Kingdom w/out the cross

Matthew 16:23 ... **"Get behind Me, Satan!** You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny himself, and take up his cross,** and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

- **Take up our cross:** No Crown w/out the Cross

Acts 14:19 Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead. 20 However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, **they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch** [what?], 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, **"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."**

- They heard of Paul's suffering/tempted by Satan to say forget it

You know that we are appointed to this

We told you before when we were w/you that we would suffer tribulation

1 Peter 2:21 ...to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should **follow His steps...**

- **No crown w/out the cross:** Jesus knew. Paul knew. Peter knew. We should know it.

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, **do not think it strange** concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you

partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy... **19** Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, **as to a faithful Creator.**

- **Salvation/Suffering Package Deal:** Buy one get one free

Philippians 1:29 ...to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to **believe in Him**, but also to **suffer for His sake...**

Without a good understanding of the truth concerning the place of suffering in the life of the believer, we are in great danger of being shaken in our faith. [Guzik]

- **Fact:** Suffering gets our attention
- **Fact:** Suffering is what God uses to train His kids...

Hebrews 12:5b... "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 **If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons**

- Chastening-Discipline-Disciple-Learner-Son

Paul's concern? Will suffering cause them to lose faith/turn back?

- Idolatry
 - Sexual Sin
 - Laziness
 - Drunkenness...
1. All mentioned w/in body of this letter
 2. All a constant temptation of devil
 3. All an enticement to abandon faith rather than suffer

Paul: We have to know...Are you standing firm in the faith?

We do know from Chapters 1 and 2...They stood strong

1 Thessalonians 1:9 [Timothy's report] ...you **turned to God** from idols to serve the living and true God

1 Thessalonians 2:13b... you **received the word of God** which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but **as it is in truth**, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

They had stood strong...Timothy doesn't waste the visit

- **Purpose:** Help them continue to stand/Not be shaken/Become even more stable
 1. **Establish:** *stay-rid'-zo* lit. make stable, place firmly, **immovable**
 2. **Encourage:** *par-ak-al-eh'-o* Comfort call to one's side
- **Establish:** Make the church/individuals to stand; i.e., **Built up in the Word/Faith.**

**NOT MOVED BY ANYTHING/ANYONE APART FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD
FINISHING THE RACE STRONG**

Acts 20:24 [I know suffering awaits me] But **none of these things move me**; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may **finish my race with joy**, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

It ain't about how hard you can hit... It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done. [R. Balboa]

- **Establish:** Build them up. Able to take the hits
- **Encourage:** Holy Spirit within us coming along side others

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH. I GET IT. HERE IS HOW TO WIN.

SUMMARY Check-Up. Are you standing in the faith?

II. Standing Fast Immoveable

6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and **brought us good news** of your **faith and love**, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you— 7 therefore, brethren, **in all our affliction and distress we were comforted** concerning you by your faith. 8 For now **we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.**

We heard the Good News...**We live** because you Stand Fast

- Helping others to win/take hits **is why we live**
- **Stand fast** *stay'-ko* similar to *establish* but to even fight back/continue standing

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand** [*gr. his'-tay-mee be established/immovable*] against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand** [*gr. anth-is'-tay-mee to resist/actively oppose*] in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand**. [*gr. his'-tay-mee be established/immovable*]

1 Corinthians 16:13 Watch, **stand fast** in the faith, be brave, be strong.

9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and **perfect what is lacking in your faith?**

- **Complete what is lacking in their faith?**

You are doing well but always room to grow in one area... **Love**

SUMMARY Standing Fast

III. Prayer Abound in Love

11 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, **direct**

our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you...

▪ **Paul's Prayer:**

1. v 11 **For him** See them again
2. v 12 **For them** Abound in Love

- **Abound** *per-is-syoo'-o* lit. Over and above the accepted amount
IOW's whatever you think...more than that

Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that **your love may abound** still more and more...

- **God answered Paul's prayer:** They did abound in love. God listens/acts

2 Thessalonians 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your **faith grows exceedingly**, and **the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other...**

- **We always have room for an increase in love**

John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Love one another [Christians]...and all [Heathens] v12

Matthew 5:46 [So what if you love those who like you] For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren [lit. friends] only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

We will be in good shape when Jesus returns if we are found loving
Paul's Prayer: **Abound in Love...**

13 ... so that [God] may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up together with them in the clouds** to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

SUMMARY Prayer for the Church

Everything we see Paul doing re. new Thessalonian believers is an expression of God's love

- **Ch. 1** Growth through Faithful Preaching
- **Ch. 2** Growth through Faithful Pastoring
- **Ch. 3** Growth through **Faithful Exhortation**
- **Paul sends Timothy**

1. Establish them
2. Encourage them

- **Paul prayer for them?** Abound in love ready to meet Jesus in the air

One day the hits will stop forever and forever will begin without end. All will be forgotten when we see His face and hear Him say "Enter in to the joy of your Master, your Savior, your Friend". [NJC]