

## I Thessalonians 3:1-13

### Chapter 3 – Hope That Purifies

#### Verse 1

*Therefore* – Because of his great desire to learn of their spiritual condition.

*Endure it no longer* – Paul's concern had reached a point where he must take action.

*Best to be left behind at Athens alone* – Paul was willing to give up the fellowship and support of his fellow ministers for the sake of the Thessalonians.

#### Verse 2

*We sent Timothy* – Because of his character and also perhaps because he was part Gentile (Acts 16:1-3).

Note three characteristics of an effective worker:

1 – *Our brother* – Timothy was a believer!

2 – *And minister of God* – The word for minister is *diakonos* which means “servant”. Timothy was willing to work!

3 – God's fellow worker – Timothy was a team worker! It was God's work, not his.

*To strengthen and encourage you as to your faith-*

*Strengthen* - This word is used again in verse 13 and is translated “establish”. It is the Greek word *sterizo* a form of *stereos* which means strong, firm, solid or rigid. We might say that hearing and applying the Word of God is like giving ourselves a spiritual shot of steroids!

#### Verses 3-4

*So that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions* – Trials and afflictions are sometimes misunderstood by new believers.

*Disturbed – Moved, KJV; Unsettled, NIV, Shaken, RSV.* This Greek word only occurs here in the N.T. and literally means “to wag the tail” or “to flatter, fawn upon”. The idea is that Satan often *flatters* the believer in order to lead him astray. He told Eve she would be like God if she ate the fruit.

*We have been destined for this* – The truth is that Scripture tells us that trials, persecutions, and afflictions are to be expected! Note passages like Philippians 1:29-30, 1 Peter 4:12-14, James 1:2-4. Jesus tells us the proper attitude toward persecution in Matthew 5:10-12. Note also John 15:18-21.

*We kept telling you in advance* – The correlation between godliness and suffering was constantly preached by Paul (2 Timothy 3:12, Philippians 3:10, Romans 8:17-18, 2 Corinthians 3-7, etc.).

*That we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know* – Affliction and suffering is promised but the good news is that God is always there for His children (Psalm 34:19, 35:10, Psalm 119:50, 71, 2 Cor. 4:17).

#### Verse 5

*I sent to find out about your faith* – Speaking of Timothy's visit.

*The tempter might have tempted you* – Satan could use a misunderstanding about affliction to tempt them.

*Our labor should be in vain* – The thought of his spiritual children not growing to maturity or lapsing back into a sinful lifestyle was very difficult for Paul. Note the same concern in Galatians 4:11.

#### Verses 6-8

*Good news of your faith and love* - The word for *good news* is the same word that is translated

45 times in the N.T. as *preach the gospel*. It means to bring good news. Their maturity in Christ was like hearing the good news of the gospel to Paul. It is the same word the angel used in Luke 2:10 when he proclaim the *good news of great joy* about Christ's birth.

*For now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord* – Paul could really live, enjoy life, because of the report of their standing firm in the Lord. The “if” here is a 1<sup>st</sup> class conditional which could be translated “since”.

1<sup>st</sup> class = If, and it is assumed to be true.

2<sup>nd</sup> class = If, and it is assumed to be false.

3<sup>rd</sup> class = If, maybe true, maybe false.

*If you stand firm in the Lord* – Of the nine uses of this word seven are used by Paul (Romans 14:4, 1 Corinthians 16:3, Galatians 5:1, Philipians 1:27, 4:1, 2 Thessalonians 2:15).

-Stand firm in the faith, 1 Cor. 16:13.

-Stand firm in freedom, Galatians 5:1.

-Stand firm in one Spirit, Phil. 1:27.

-Stand firm in the Lord, Phil. 4:1, 1 Thess. 3:8

-Stand firm in teaching (truth), 2 Thess. 2:15.

### Verse 9

The report from Timothy caused Paul and his companions to give thanks to God for the joy it brought to them.

### Verse 10

*As we night and day keep praying most earnestly* - Paul models in prayer what he will later in 5:17 exhort them to do; *pray without ceasing!*

### Verses 10-13

Paul specifically prays for four things.

1 – That he might see them face to face, verse 10 and verse 11.

2 – That they might continue to mature in their faith, verse 10.

3 – That they might increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, verse 12.

4 – That they might live a life of holiness and purity, verse 13.

### Verse 13

*Establish your hearts* – This word is translated “strengthen” in verse 2. The context is the coming of the Lord and James 5:8 gives a parallel using this same word:

*“You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”*

*At the coming of our Lord Jesus* – In the context of the letter this coming is referring to the Lord coming for His church at the rapture. Paul will give specific teaching on this in chapter 4.

*With all His saints* – Paul elaborates on this in 4:14. This may also include angels although it seems the verses about angels (Mark 8:38, 2 Thess. 1:7) refer to the second coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation. It seems that the Judgment Seat of Christ is in view. If they continue to mature in their faith, increase in love for one another, and live a life of holiness and purity then when Christ comes they will be rewarded before Christ and the Father. Notice this chapter ends the same as chapter 2 with the promise of Christ's coming to reward those are faithful to Him.

**The coming of Christ is a hope that purifies!**