



1ST THESSALONIANS 3

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.

- 1 Th 3:7-8

It can be said that those who have a burden to teach but not a burden to study, only have a desire to perform. While this may fit many 'preachers' today, this was not Timothy. Timothy was called a minister of the gospel, and was sent by Paul to the Thessalonians to establish and encourage them. What stands out about Timothy is that he is known for being both serving and studious in scripture. Not only would he teach, exhort and encourage, but he would study so that his teaching would not be reduced to a performance. His mentorship with Paul was valuable to him, as Christians we should strive to find and to be a mentor like Paul. With this in mind, each christian is still called to their own unique ministry in the body of Christ and we find our true brotherhood in those who not only live their call but live their faith. Timothy was more than a student. Through his servanthood in faith, he was a brother sent to the church in Thessolonica, his extended family, in need. The Thessalonians were enduring great trials. They were under much scrutiny for breaking off from what the world would consider normal and following Christ. Scripture, like this chapter, reminds us that tribulation is a mark of the believer who truly lives for the Lord. Nobody will persecute you for living like the devil, they may even encourage you, or fund your sin. However, to live like Christ is offensive to a world that rejects God.

Timothy's report of the Thessalonian church was their remarkable faith and love. Pastor Steve called this the 'birth marks' of the believer. These are the things that draw people to Christ. Through adversity, clinging tightly to faith, exhibiting hope, and love we create Gospel opportunities. But without Christ we are unable to do any of it. We can fake hope, and love, but it will fail. This world tries to replicate love, but without God it is empty and selfish. In the midst of trial the world will see the genuine hope and love that can only be found in Christ, and they will be drawn in by our actions, but only if we don't quit.

The process of sanctification is a life long process to forge us closer to the image of God through fire, heat, and struggle.

Discussion Questions

1. Timothy was a man of 'excellent character'. How does your life look like Timothy's? How can we look more like Jesus?
2. What is the True Gospel? What are some of the 'False Gospels' that Pastor Steve listed? Why are these dangerous to mix in with the true Gospel? (Steaks seasoned with rat poison?)
3. What are the differences between 'Saving Faith' and 'Living Faith'?
4. Trials can deepen our faith, but only if we are steadfast in the Lord. What Old Testament stories connect with this principle? Are there any New Testament teachings that connect with this concept?
5. The enemy comes to steal kill and destroy. How do you see this played out in your life? How do cling to the Joy of Christ during those times?