



**Believers Are Family
Get Used to It
A Family Reunion Is Coming Soon
1 Thessalonians 2:13-20**

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Last time together we reviewed the physical condition of the evangelistic team as they arrived in Thessalonica after their very recent issues in Philippi.

There are expectations that the people of Thessalonica would have had concerning any traveling speakers when they arrived in town.



Paul and the team failed on all the accounts we discussed and instead were following the lead of the Holy Spirit in their approach.

When you show up bruised, bloody and beaten there might be a few who decide that what you have to say is not all that important.

Paul and the team had the same thing to overcome that we must overcome as well, life, which does tend to get in the way from time to time.

Paul and the team are entering a new field, a new location, a new culture. They know the message but will they and the evidence of what they just went through, get in the way.

I think about that too. If something can go south in preparing to teach, it will, usually the same day I am teaching.

For Paul, he was wondering what kind of greeting he would get in the synagogue.

Persecution was evident, they just encountered it a week ago. Will this be more of the same? How bad will it be? Where will it come from this time? How long do we have before we must leave again?

All of that is floating through their minds as they begin the mission in this new city. They are watching the audience to see what the reaction will be, they are also looking for the other things that are going on around them at the same time wondering when it might be time to duck. Will anyone listen and will anyone come to Christ?

They were determined to remain faithful no matter what, but after being beaten, I am sure they were a bit more situationally aware.

I know as I prepare and teach, I have other things going on as well that could get in the way and take over my thoughts. As I begin to teach, I look out and see folks walking in as well as those who are simply walking by. I too wonder if I have prepared sufficiently or not.

I too am simply being faithful to what He has called me to do. But I am also still aware of the room and what is going on outside too.

I am still concerned today about the same things as I prepare to teach as I was when I was an intern at First Baptist Sepulveda teaching 5th graders. I always felt totally unprepared, desperately desiring to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and wondering, when all was said and done, did anyone respond to the gospel today? Did the lesson make sense, did I make sense, and was Jesus there? And then there are those moments of introspection afterwards where the enemy whispers those lies, I have heard before, you were in the way Ken.

Paul dealt with the same. I believe some of the things he wrote about, were also to himself. I know I speak to myself all the time.

In fact, anyone who is stepping out in faith to teach the word in a public venue, no matter the age of the listeners, the location or time, is “aware of many things, and if we’re not careful, we’ll become subtly unaware of the main thing—we are mounting the pulpit to share the very words of the living God.” (Fullerton 2020, 41)



If you lead a group, teach a class or share one on one with another, remember, we are allowing the Holy Spirit to use us. The words we speak become those words Jesus would use to communicate Himself to whom we are speaking to.

We all like to think of Paul, his team, really, all the disciples, as super men of some sort specially enabled to do what they were doing. We think there is no way we could ever be that equipped and fearless as they were.

But here is the thing, they were operating under the same promises that we operate under as we serve the Lord today. They had the same sin nature, fears, challenges and concerns we have.

Paul reminded himself and us of this when he wrote Romans.

Romans 8:28–39

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. **What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (ESV)

They had the same concerns, fears, roadblocks, teaching blocks and distractions that we have today. Satan still uses the mundane day to day things of this world to try and distract us from what it is Jesus has called us to do. He also still preys on our fears and worries too. You can hear a bit of the concern in Paul’s voice.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

“For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of mere men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which also is at work in you who believe.” (NASB 2020)

After all the concerns the team had about looking and being different from what was expected and whether anyone would listen, they were blown away by the response they did receive.

Anyone who has ever been used of the Lord, despite us, experiences the same. God is so good that He has even used me...wow! I am like that every time.

It is truly humbling when God uses us. He promises, we should expect it, but we are so thankful each time He does.

When Paul and the team taught in Thessalonica, it came from a bunch of ordinary guys; “men with real time constraints, men with self-awareness (no doubt Paul’s cohorts were aware that they were not all



equally gifted), men with illnesses (Paul with his eyes, Timothy with his stomach), men who followed the occasional rabbit trail (see Eph. 3:1–21, especially 2–14).” (Fullerton 2020, 41)

But because they were empowered by the Holy Spirit and teaching God’s Word, the words that they spoke, were not simply a bunch of guys out giving a talk. The words they spoke were accepted by those listening as the very words of God. This Holy Spirit empowered word of God attacked the strongholds of the hearts of those listening and the Spirit took it from there to convince those listening they needed Jesus. And they accepted it “not as the word of mere men, but as what it really is, the word of God.”

It is that word, used by the Holy Spirit, that then begins to work in those who believe.

Now we come to a rather controversial section of scripture. Unfortunately, the way this verse has been translated for the English-speaking church over the years has led many to believe that the Bible has a contradiction in it. That Paul and the team were antisemitic when it met their purposes and Paul was contradictory.

I have even had this verse thrown into my face by a seriously antisemitic individual who confronted me about why the church supported Israel as well.

We will discover that this is not the case at all, but we will have to examine the Greek to get there.

1 Thessalonians 2:14–16

“For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all people, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always reach the limit of their sins. But wrath has come upon them fully.” (NASB 2020)

Wow. So, what do you really think about the events surrounding the crucifixion, Paul?

Are you serious about this Paul? Or are you using the term just as John did when he used the term to represent the leadership of the Temple. Unfortunately, some have taken this translation as a support for their antisemitism, and that is simply not the case here.

Others have used this as a proof text for a contradiction in the Bible, and that is not the case either. What does the Complete Jewish Bible say?

1 Thessalonians 2:14–16

“For, brothers, you came to be imitators of God’s congregations in Y’hudah that are united with the Messiah Yeshua—you suffered the same things from your countrymen as they did from the Judeans who both killed the Lord Yeshua and the prophets, and chased us out too. They are displeasing God and opposing all mankind by trying to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles, so that they may be delivered. Their object seems to be always to make their sins as bad as possible! But God’s fury will catch up with them in the end.” (CJB)

As you can see, there is a difference from word choice into English coming from the Greek text. About this particular translation.

Even its title, the Complete Jewish Bible, challenges both Jews and Christians to see that the whole Bible is Jewish, the B’rit Hadashah as well as the Tanakh. Jews are challenged by the implication that without it the Tanakh is an incomplete Bible. Christians are challenged with the fact that they are joined to the Jewish people through faith in the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus)—so that because Christianity can be



rightly understood only from a Jewish perspective, anti-Semitism is condemned absolutely and forever. (Stern 1998)

But as we read this, from a surface level in the NASB, it appears that Paul and his team are blaming the entire Jewish nation for the death of Jesus. There is a lot going on in this verse because that is not the case. We will see that comma placement in the English text also matters as does translation word choice.

But it does not stop folks from pointing out that this verse is a contradiction to what Paul will later say in Romans 11.

Romans 11:1–6

“I ask, then, has God rejected his own people, the nation of Israel? Of course not! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin. No, God has not rejected his own people, whom he chose from the very beginning. Do you realize what the Scriptures say about this? Elijah the prophet complained to God about the people of Israel and said, “LORD, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.” And do you remember God’s reply? He said, “No, I have 7,000 others who have never bowed down to Baal!” It is the same today, for a few of the people of Israel have remained faithful because of God’s grace—his undeserved kindness in choosing them. And since it is through God’s kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God’s grace would not be what it really is—free and undeserved.” (NLT)

Back to our text. First of all, the word in the Greek at the very end of verse 14 is *Ἰουδαίων* (*Ioudaiōn*) which should be rendered, Judeans rather than Jews. Yes, it can also mean Jews as well, but context.

What Paul is doing is comparing the persecution taking place in Thessalonica at the hands of their fellow countrymen to what the Judean church was sustaining as well. The context is one of comparing their persecution to that being suffered by the Judean church in Jerusalem, both taking place because of their own brothers and countrymen who refuse to believe.

Paul is not being antisemitic, not at all. But what happens when the word is consistently translated into English in all major English translations as Jews, rather than as Judeans. It seems to convey that Paul and his team are antisemitic and are laying the persecution of the church in Judea as well as the death of Jesus on the Jews, and this is not the case here at all.

There is also the issue of the placement of the comma in the English translation. It reads, “...the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets...”

“This punctuation gratuitously highlights the Church’s traditional charge of deicide leveled against the Jews, because the function of such a comma is to make the predicate, “who killed the Lord Jesus,” apply to all Jews. Without a comma, it reads, “the Jews who killed the Lord Jesus,” so that the predicate specifies which particular Jews (or Judeans) are meant, namely, those who killed him, as opposed to those who didn’t. The Greek text unambiguously requires the latter understanding, that is, no comma (as any standard Greek grammar will prove in its discussion of the use of the definite article with adjectival predicates).” (Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary: A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament* 1996, 1 Th 2:14)

Paul clearly stated his view of his brother and sisters in Judea in Romans 9 and his view is not antisemitic.



Romans 9:3–4

“For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.” (ESV)

Paul was saying that unsaved Gentiles were persecuting Gentile Christians, and unsaved Jews were persecuting Jewish Christians. Therefore Paul was not referring to all Jews since the passage includes some Jews (believers in Judea, v. 14) who did not take part in these sinful acts. (Rydelnik 2008, 64)

In John 11, we see clearly it was not the nation that plotted the death of Jesus, but it was a conspiracy that consisted of members of the Sanhedrin, the leadership, not the people. The leadership are the ones who accused Him before Pilate, and they were the ones who insisted on the illegal trials and the early morning hours to prevent the people from being in the audience. Yes, the leadership packed the court and the audience as they were the ones yelling crucify Him, not the people. Rejection of their Messiah is not the same as murder, which the leadership, the Romans, Pilate and Herod were involved in. Yes, it was Jew and Gentile combined who did this.

John 11:47–53

“So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.” (ESV)

Paul had been part of that persecution. He had serious accountability for it when Stephen was martyred and then Saul was personally involved in the attempted purge of the followers of Jesus until he met Jesus while going to Damascus.

Notice where Saul went for authority for persecution.

Acts 9:1–2

“But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” (ESV)

Jesus clearly placed accountability onto the leadership in Luke 11 as He announced they were murderers whose actions would be judged.

Luke 11:48–51

“So you are witnesses and approve of the deeds of your ancestors, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. For this reason the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ so that this generation may be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation.” (NRSVue)

The Jews who persecuted the Judean churches also murdered the prophets and the Messiah and persecuted His messengers. In doing this they filled up the full measure of their guilt, resulting in



judgment. Since Jesus Himself specifically applied these things to the leaders of Israel, it is safe to say that Paul was following the same pattern. (Rydelnik 2008, 64)

All of this to say, there is no antisemitic statement from Paul. There is no controversy or contradiction.

The church in Thessalonica was suffering persecution at the hands of their own neighbors, their countrymen. No differently than what was happening to the church in Judea.

Turning from past sins to present ones, Sha'ul says that they (the Judean unbelievers) are displeasing God and opposing all mankind by trying to prevent him from ministering the Good News of Yeshua among the Gentiles. (Stern, Jewish New Testament Commentary: A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament 1996, 1 TH 2:15)

1 Thessalonians 2:15b–16

“...They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all people, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always reach the limit of their sins. But wrath has come upon them fully.” (NASB 2020)

Paul is citing, from his own personal experience, who it is that wanted to purge the Christians from Judea, it was the leadership. When he makes this statement here, he is telling us that they, just as he, were so intent on following their own interpretation of the law, that they were no longer serving the Lord like they thought they were.

It was the leadership of the synagogue in Thessalonica who partnered with gentiles to chase Paul and the team from there. They were also part of the group that continued to persecute the new church but soon, the locals needed no further encouragement from the synagogue.

Here Paul revealed what offended the religious persecutors of the Thessalonians so much. They were outraged that Gentiles could be saved without first becoming Jews. This exclusive attitude filled up the measure of their sins. (Guzik 2013, 1 Th 2:14-16)

We still see this bias today. A bill was proposed last January to make it a crime to share Jesus in Israel. By the way, “this United Torah Judaism-sponsored bill, submitted at start of every Knesset, is not meant to become law, says spokesman — but millions of Christian supporters of Israel globally have taken notice.” (Berman 2023)

The bill was introduced in January (2023) by a pair of ultra-Orthodox Jewish lawmakers, including Moshe Gafni, who heads the parliament’s Finance Committee. It says soliciting someone to convert their faith should be punishable by one year in prison and solicitation to convert a minor would be punishable with a two-year sentence.

“Recently, the attempts of missionary groups, mainly Christians, to solicit conversion of religion have increased,” it said. (The Associated Press 2023)

This reality is no different than what we see in other nations in the world. Here in our own nation, there are attempts, on a regular basis, to remove Jesus and Christian ideas from the public forum.

“The ideas become intolerant when they are expressed in the public square and not if they stay in the head of the conservative Christian. This is likely connected to the belief of these activists that conservative Christians rely on an outdated, religiously based mode of thinking that should not be imposed on the rest of society.” (Yancey and Williamson 2015, 88)



Really, in this country? Yes, just look at some of the rhetoric that took place when an outspoken believer in Jesus Christ became the new Speaker of the House.

Syracuse Law lecturer David Cay Johnson posted a viral reaction to a photo of Johnston praying on the House floor, stating, "@HouseGOP members praying on the House floor offends both our Constitution and the New Testament, which denounces public displays of devotion. The blasphemy of the new Speaker, who says God ordained him, is just as disgusting." (Hays 2023)

Unbelievers do not want to hear about the good news. So, the solution many times is to make it illegal to tell others, and if that fails, to simply make faith illegal. Welcome to North Korea and China.

So far, in this country, the discrimination is more subtle and, in most cases, has not raised to the level of flat-out persecution. But belittling, absolutely.

Unfortunately, that seemed to end in some states during the pandemic as churches fought back against meeting mandates. Yes, some of the more egregious cases have been overturned in the courts, but now we know where the state is headed.

Paul is letting the church know, that God knows, and His wrath will come to those who have been busy hindering the gospel and persecuting His kids. Paul may have been referring to some recent historical events such as the expulsion of all Jews from Rome in 49 AD. He may also be referring to the events of Passover that same year when an event took place resulting in 20,000 dead at the Temple in Jerusalem, per Josephus, at the hands of the Romans.

We need to remember what Paul is telling the church. It is not our job to return persecution and discrimination with that of our own. God is the one who will take care of it. Leave it up to Him.

He knows and He sees what the culture is doing and where it is going. The culture is in the same pit it has been in since Genesis 3.

We must remember that we are privileged to be living in these last days and because we are here for such a time as this, we are salt and light to this culture, no matter what they think about it.

His judgement on this culture and those who are busy attacking believers is indeed active.

So far here in Thessalonians 2 we have learned several things that we can take away for those ministries the Lord has us involved in today.

1. As we do ministry, whatever it may be, we need to be doing it the way the Lord would have us do it, not necessarily the approved methods that the world expects. Spirit filled and Spirit led.
 - a. It is our job as parents and grandparents to model, lead, mentor and guide our children, not social media, television, radio, the schools or the world.
 - b. It is our job as believers to make disciples.
 - i. It is our privilege as believers to tell others what Jesus has done for us.
 - ii. It's the Holy Spirit's job to convince them of their need after we tell them.
2. As we lead, teach, disciple and serve others, don't be shallow.
 - a. The team went beyond milk and taught new believers about last things.
 - b. They followed the Spirit's model, not the world's model.
 - c. It isn't about entertainment; it is about discipleship.
 - d. Worship is to and for the King, not to make a name for yourself.
 - e. Be humble. Always.
3. Love those you serve.



- a. It is all about Him, not you.
4. When you encounter opposition, leave it to the Lord to care for and deal with.

1 Thessalonians 2:17–20

“But we, brothers and sisters, having been orphaned from you by absence for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and Satan hindered us. For who is our hope, or joy or crown of pride, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Or is it not indeed you? For you are our glory and joy.” (NASB 2020)

Did you know that you and I both belong to a rather sizeable family. In fact, in Christ, we all belong to the same family.

As we move through this book, we will get to that place where Paul talks about a pending family reunion we are destined to be involved in as the entire family, past and present, gets together with Jesus as He comes to take us to be with Him. Just as He promised to do.

John 14:1–3

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.” (NRSVue)

But until then, as members of this family, Paul and the team seriously miss those who they were privileged to bring into the family there in Thessalonica.

As with any family, they want to see them, be with them, and find out what has been going on since they were forced to leave them years before.

We are brothers and sisters in Christ. It doesn’t matter who you are or where you are from, in Christ, we are family. Now there are some, like in most families, who will try and use that relationship to their advantage. But we tend to see through that, discernment you know.

The great thing though is that as we grow in Christ, the tendency to want to do that, begins to disappear. On social media, I have discovered that we have brothers and sisters all over the planet. Most simply want fellowship, a few, are looking for money. But those who are in it for fellowship, simply desire to know that there are others praying for them and the ministry they are involved in.

We see the same thing in churches, so this is not a social media problem only. There have always been those who become part of a fellowship, feigning relationship with Christ, solely to obtain an advantage from those in the body.

Many, but not all, go by the title of false teacher. But we have also seen the rise of those who enter the fellowship looking for a business advantage. It looks good on the resume and the body becomes a ripe field for marketing purposes.

Peter recognized this early in the life of the church.

2 Peter 2:1 – 3

“False prophets appeared in the past among the people, and in the same way false teachers will appear among you. They will bring in destructive, untrue doctrines, and will deny the Master who redeemed them, and so they will bring upon themselves sudden destruction. Even so, many will follow their immoral ways;



and because of what they do, others will speak evil of the Way of truth. In their greed these false teachers will make a profit out of telling you made-up stories. For a long time now their Judge has been ready, and their Destroyer has been wide awake!" (GNB)

Paul clearly identified who it is that was the primary one involved in hindering the ministry in Thessalonica. You would expect him to speak evil of the local synagogue or of specific individuals in the local community who have been involved in persecution. What about the Romans who looked the other way while this was all going on?

Paul identified the one who hindered him, and the others, from coming back to Thessalonica as being Satan. Not a person, group or persons. We know from Acts that those who chased Paul and the team from Thessalonica also chased them from Berea. But that is not whom he lays accountability on.

We are in a spiritual war as we step out in ministry. Opposition is a real thing and Satan will use any and everything to hinder us from being effective and faithful. We become so focused on the physical that we forget about the supernatural enemy who wants to prevent anyone from being saved.

If you are a believer and you are serving the Lord in any capacity at all, you are engaged in spiritual warfare. In some cases, you know all about it, in others, you may not see it.

Satan's goal is making us ineffective for Jesus and if he can do that by having others block us, then that is what he will do.

The enemy knows that when the time of gentile evangelism is up, Jesus removes His church and the 70th week. That means God's attention turns back to Israel, and their time would be very short indeed. So, for now, delay, delay, delay.

Here is the thing, "the ongoing activity of Satan, demons, and the fallen gods not yet imprisoned makes sense if the goal is impeding and forestalling the fullness of the gentiles. In other words, opposing world evangelism allows them more time to spread misery and destruction among humanity, the objects of God's love and plan. This is the only definable "victory" the powers of darkness can hope to accomplish. It is the only conceivable way they can hurt and grieve God. In this context, their resistance is comprehensible." (Heiser 2020, 263-264)

Yes, preventing Paul and the team from doing ministry is indeed spiritual warfare. Preventing you and me from doing what it is the Lord has called us to do is also, spiritual warfare. Don't get angry with the person who stopped it, get angry at who they are listening to. And here is the really bad news, sometimes it may be well meaning Christians who are self-centered and listening to other voices.

But how could a Christian be captivated by demonic influences like that? Well, we are all sinners saved by grace and sanctification is a participatory exercise. I have seen and learned that there are those, who reject participating, and sometimes they could very well be on staff of a church as a pastor.

I witnessed that take place between 15 and 20 years ago in a growing vibrant church when the pastor shifted gears and began believing his own press clippings, pride became a thing and, as always, look out when that happens. How did it start, he no longer had the time to pray with us as a group of men.

He also no longer had the time to mentor staff or be a pastor to the staff which became a formula for further problems. Fast forward a few years. As a result of no longer checking in or ensuring staff were accountable to him or someone else; a married assisting pastor had to resign for sexual misconduct, and he was forced out as well. Is restoration available, of course, but things would never be the same. But didn't they get owned by Satan?



The overarching point is that, while Christians cannot be owned by Satan—an idea that derives from the unfortunate “possession” language—they can be demonized. Demonization can take various forms: persecution, harassment, being captivated by false teaching, and enslavement to sin. (Heiser 2020, 256)

1 Peter 5:8–10

“Be alert, be on the watch! Your enemy, the Devil, roams round like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Be firm in your faith and resist him, because you know that your fellow-believers in all the world are going through the same kind of sufferings. But after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who calls you to share his eternal glory in union with Christ, will himself perfect you and give you firmness, strength, and a sure foundation.” (GNB)

Did you notice this in the text here in Thessalonians that when Paul refers to being hindered by Satan, he didn’t have to stop and then teach on it, in three weeks, they knew it.

Paul and the team had taken advantage of the time they had and did serious deep discipleship training in the three weeks they had in Thessalonica. They understood spiritual warfare and who Satan was and how he operated.

Paul knew that the Lord would give him the victory and he and the team would be back. They eventually did get back (Acts 20:1-5).

Here is something else to think about as well. Because Satan hindered Paul and the team repeatedly, Paul decided he would start writing letters instead. Talk about having a strategy completely backfire on you.

Is something blocking you and the ministry the Lord has laid on your heart? Pray about it, just like Paul did. What if you determine the hindrance is Satan or one of his minions using someone or something to block you. Keep going, be faithful, allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Who knows, the ministry He gives you while you are contending with Satan, may be much more than you ever dreamed.

Paul wrote letters because he was hindered. He wrote to the Thessalonians, twice, the Corinthians, twice, probably four times but we only have two letters. He wrote to Philippi, Galatia and Rome. When he wound up being imprisoned, he kept on writing.

Who knows what the Lord wants to do through you simply by remaining faithful and open to the move of His Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20

“For who is our hope, or joy or crown of pride, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Or is it not indeed you? For you are our glory and joy.” (NASB 2020)

Simply because Paul and the team couldn’t get back as quickly as they wanted to, did not mean they didn’t love the church there in Thessalonica. Paul looked forward to being with them again when Jesus returned if he couldn’t get there sooner.

Paul at this time evidently expected his ministry to end with the return of Christ rather than by his own death (v. 19). This is one of many evidences that Paul and the other early Christians believed in the imminent return of Christ. Nothing had to occur before His return. This perspective strongly suggests that Paul believed in the pretribulational rapture of the church. (Constable 2003, 1 Th 2:19)

Paul was looking forward to the day Jesus would ask him what he had done for Him, and he would get to point to the believers from Thessalonica. They would be his glory and his joy.



As you and I go about serving the Lord, we have no idea what the impacts of our faithfulness truly are. Are you being faithful financially? Who has come to Christ as a result? Have you been faithful in prayer? Who has had a life impacted because of your prayer? We have no idea in this life, but when we arrive before Jesus, either in death or through the rapture, we will know because we will see the results of our faithfulness.

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