



Bethany Bible Study & Discussion

I Thessalonians (Part-3) (Chapter 3)

Paul's burden and Timothy's mission (1-5): Why did Paul choose Timothy? What was Paul's concern about Thessalonica church? What ministry was assigned to him? What was his message to the church? How do you respond when your faith/ministry is under fire/tested? What is testing designed to accomplish? Can our ministry be in vain?

Timothy's report (6-9): What was Timothy's impression of Thessalonica church? How did Paul react to the report? Do we inquire about the spiritual life of other believers?

Paul's prayer (10-13): What was Paul's prayer request? Were the prayers answered? What can we learn from Paul's prayer life?

Personal reflection: *What % of our personal prayer time is devoted to interceding for others & the church?*

I Thessalonians 3

Paul's burden &
Timothy's mission
(1-5)

Timothy's report (6-9)

Paul's prayer (10-13)

Paul's burden & Timothy's mission (1-5)

Why did Paul choose Timothy?

What was Paul's concern about Thessalonica church? What ministry was assigned to him? What was his message to the church? How do you respond when your faith/ministry is under fire/tested? What is testing designed to accomplish? Can our ministry be in vain?

Paul's longing (1)

Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

Wherefore, ...connects with Ch.2 and specifically, Paul's eagerness to return to Thessalonica

... Paul was hindered by Satan from going (2:18)

... but "could no longer forbear" (1,5) Paul is anxious to check on the welfare of Thessalonica believers;

"We" could refer to Paul/Timothy/Silas

... since Paul cannot visit, he sends Timothy

Why did Paul
choose Timothy?



Why did Paul choose Timothy?

Timothy's prior experience at Philippi

¹⁹ But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.
²⁰ **For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.** ²¹ For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. ²² But ye know the **proof of him**, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. (Philippians 2:19-22)

Delegation of Lord's work should not be taken lightly ...
ministry work should be passed on after much prayer.

(children of church leaders should not be assumed to be leaders)

Athens

left at Athens alone (1);

also alone (Acts 17:14-20)

Paul fled from Berea to Athens due to opposition.

Timothy and Silas were to join him later so Paul was alone for a season in Athens.

Paul was distressed at seeing idols and preached Christ in the synagogues and market place. He was accused of being a 'babbling' and bringing a 'foreign God', but some were curious and receptive.

With Timothy leaving, he will be left alone again or perhaps with Silas (1)

Timothy's lofty titles (2)

And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

Our brother

Our minister of God

Our fellowlaborer in the gospel of Christ

Co-laborers

(with other
believers and the
Lord)

⁶I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. ⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. ⁹ For **we are labourers together with God: (I Corinthians 3:6-9a)**

We cannot do the Lord's work alone!

Timothy's mission (2)

Timing/Context:

Faith under Fire in Thessalonica due to persecution

Believers could benefit from counsel of mature believers

Mission:

- 1) To know about their faith
- 2) To establish/strengthen their faith and
- 3) To encourage/comfort to remain strong in faith

Paul & Timothy's message

³ That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

⁴ For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

Trials, Afflictions, Persecutions are part of believer's life

Without such teaching, believers will be confused, and question or even reject their faith during hard times.

Sympathy for trials must be complemented with teaching from God's word so that believers have the right perspective.

Similar message given by Paul (**Acts 14:21-22**)

Paul's concern and anxiety (5)

For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

Young believers may grow weary and weak in their faith in God when faced with trials.

At the extreme, young believers may depart from their faith

If so, His labor among them will be in vain

Do we have such concern for fellow believers?

Can our labor for the Lord be in vain?

Labor in vain

Our labor will be in vain, when it lacks God's plan and power.

We are also warned that the enemy may snatch away or dilute or distract believers from faith

- Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. (I Peter 5:8-9)
- False teachers and prophets that prey on weak/young believers (Mathew 7:15)

Believers'
Suffering ...
Part of calling
and path to
blessing

In this world, ye shall have tribulation
(John 16:33)

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ
Jesus shall suffer persecution
(II Timothy 3:12)

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

Believers'
Suffering ...
Part of calling
and path to
blessing

we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope

(Romans 5:3-4)

if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us

(Romans 8: 17b, 18)

may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

(I Peter 5:10)

What does
testing by
God
accomplish?

Exposes our weaknesses and reveals the quality of our faith (Deuteronomy 8:2, I Peter 1:7)

How do we respond to trials? Israelites often murmured and showed lack of faith

Purifies us (Psalms 66:10, Isaiah 48:10, Job 23:10)

For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver (Psalms 66:10, NIV)

Matures us (James 1:2-5)

Trains us to counsel others (II Corinthians 1:4)

Qualifies us for Rewards (crown follows the cross)

Word of God keeps us
grounded during storms

Timothy's report (6-9)

What was Timothy's impression of Thessalonica church? How did Paul react to the report? Do we inquire about the spiritual life of other believers?

Timothy's report (6)

But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:

Believers are remaining true to Paul's teaching on faith and love

Believers have fond memories of Paul

Believers desire to reunite with Paul

Impact on Paul (7-9)

⁷ Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

⁸ For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. ⁹ For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

Paul is comforted/encouraged by the news and rejoices in their growing faith.

For now we live! (8)

Do we rejoice when we see other believers growing spiritually (or are we Jealous and Covet)?

Paul's prayer (10-13)

What was Paul's prayer request? Were the prayers answered?

What can we learn from Paul's prayer life?

Paul's prayer

Meet in-person (10,11)
(prayer answered, Acts 20:1-5)

minister to their spiritual needs for what is lacking (11)

Increase and abound in love toward one another and all men (12)

Hearts strengthened so that they will be blameless in holiness (13)

- Positional holiness is attained at Salvation
- Practical holiness (Sanctification) must be a lifelong discipline

Room for growth?

Always!

Paul commends the Thessalonica believers several times (1:3,7; 2:13, 20; 3:6) but there is always room for improvement.

Paul's desire is that the believers excel in their faith. **We must be ambitious believers and not settle for low standards.**

Paul had high spiritual ambition ... "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, " (Philippians 3:12)

What can we learn
from Paul's prayer
life?

**HOW IS OUR PRAYER
LIFE (for others)?**



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