

# 1 Thessalonians (ch. 2 & 3)

## The Fight of Faith

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### Ch 3 Paul's Concern Was Their Faith - & If They Were Standing Firm

1Th 3:1-13 NIV So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. 2 We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, **to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, 3 so that no one would be unsettled by these trials.** For you know quite well that we are destined for them. 4 In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. 5 For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, **I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.** 6 But Timothy has just now come to us from you and **has brought good news about your faith** and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. 7 Therefore, brothers and sisters, **in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. 8 For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.** 9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? 10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and **supply what is lacking in your faith.** 11 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. 12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. 13 May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

### Why This Concern for Their Faith

#### **Saved by grace through faith**

- Eph 2:8 NIV For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

#### **Faith Produces Work**

- 1Th 1:3 NIV We remember before our God and Father your **work produced by faith**, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **Faith Produces a Changed Life Evidenced by Serving God**

- 1Th 1:8-9 NIV The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia--your **faith in God has become known everywhere.** Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, (9) for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how **you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.**

#### **Salvation comes IF YOU CONTINUE IN YOUR FAITH**

- Col 1:22-23 NIV But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- 23 **if you continue in your faith**, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel...

## How Their Walk in Faith Began

1Th 2:13-20 NIV And we also thank God continually because, when **you received the word of God**, which you heard from us, **you accepted it** not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which **is indeed at work in you who BELIEVE**.

### **You RECEIVED the word of God**

- **Received** = to receive near, that is, to associate with oneself (in any familiar or intimate act or relation)
- Same word is used here --- Matt 1:20 Joseph **TOOK** Mary to be his wife

### **You ACCEPTED the word - as it actually IS the word of God**

- Rom 10:17 ESV So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
- Today is an unprecedented attack on the scripture
  - “The bible was written by man”
  - “The bible is full of contradictions”
  - Cultural pressures challenge our faith
  - Bible Illiteracy - Moehler Article

### **It is at WORK in you who BELIEVE**

- Php 2:13 NIV for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

### **WAYS THE WORD OF GOD WORKS IN ME** Psa 19:7-11 KJV The law of the LORD is perfect,

- 1) converting the soul - REVIVING THE SOUL - Back to the starting point
- 2) making wise the simple - [ie foolish]
- 3) rejoicing the heart - to cheer up the heart...the inner core
- 4) enlightening the eyes - clear understanding - light to see on the journey
- 5) by them is thy servant warned - enlighten or teach
- 6 )in keeping of them there is great reward - great compensation

## Their Will Be Attacks on Faith From Others

14 For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: **You suffered from your own people** the same things those churches suffered from the Jews 15 who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone 16 **in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved**. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

## Their Will Be Attacks on Faith From Satan

17 But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. 18 For we wanted to come to you--certainly I, Paul, did, again and again--but **Satan blocked our way**. 19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? 20 Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

## What Do I Need? -- Sometimes I NEED THIS, sometimes I need to BE THIS

1Th 3:1-13 NIV

- 1) Accept the word of God as it is in truth the word of God
  - a) You can be your biggest enemy
  
- 2) Recognize that trials CAN have a way of unsettling me
  - a) Paul - bonds and afflictions await me, but NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME
  
- 3) Acknowledge that I need people in my life who will strengthen and encourage my faith
  - a) Sometimes we NEED a "Timothy" - sometimes we need to BE a "Timothy"
  
- 4) Remember we have an enemy who wants to tempt us and destroy our faith - but we have a Savior who is interceding
  - a) Luk 22:31-32 NIV "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, **that your faith may not fail**. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."
  
- 5) God wants to use others to supply whatever is lacking in my faith
  - a) At the end of the day God has called us into relationship. We are part of His family...and while we don't underestimate the work of the the Holy Spirit in our lives, or the power of the word of God to work in us, we cannot deny that OTHER PEOPLE play a role in helping us. Paul tried to come, Paul sent Timothy, Paul wanted to see them face to face...do not isolate yourself from the body of Christ.
    - i) fellowship
    - ii) discipleship
    - iii) bible study
    - iv) small group