

# *Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians*



## Lesson 3-Concerns and Care for the Church

**Focus:** 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

- **Paul expresses and explains his care for the church in Thessalonica (v.1-4)**
  - Paul had previously been driven to Athens from his work in Thessalonica. The opposing Jewish community in Thessalonica had chased him out of there. He then went to Berea. Soon however, the Jews from Thessalonica also came there to chase him out and to raise up trouble for him. That's when he went to Athens. From Athens, with great concern for the church and believers in Thessalonica, he decided to send Timothy back up to meet with them. (The Jews did not have the same alarm against Timothy as they did against Paul). Silas was also with Paul at Athens. But soon, Paul sent Silas up into another part of Macedonia (Perhaps Philippi). Later, both Silas and Timothy came back to join Paul in Corinth (for Paul moved on to Corinth from Athens). It was from Corinth in AD 51 that Paul was writing this first letter to the church in Thessalonica.
  - (v.1) The “we” in verse one would have been Paul and Silas.
  - (v.2,3) Paul's great concern was for the new believers in Thessalonica to become “established and encouraged” in their faith. It takes time to grow and become very strong and knowledgeable in the things that we believe. Paul sincerely wanted to help these believers. He was concerned for their faith and also for how they were taking to their new faith, in spite of so much persecution and disruption from both the Jews and other Gentiles in that city.
  - (v.3,4) Paul reminded them that they had been previously warned of the persecution that would come because of their new faith! Following the Truth of Jesus, the truth of God, and the truth of life in a dark and evil world which hates truth—a world that loves sin more than truth—will not always be the easiest of things. **It requires sacrifice and determination to do what is right, no matter what the cost!** Living faithfully towards God should be even more valuable to us than life itself—for even Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice and offering for us to purchase our forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. Consider the following texts:
    - “...all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).
    - Jesus promised that persecution would come, but the help, love, support, and joy of God will be our strength (See Matthew 5:10-12; John 16:33; Mark 10:28-30).
    - If they did it to Jesus, they will do it to us (Matthew 10:21-26). That is promised, **but Christ also offers us hope and solutions.** We should be faithful. **We are to “take up our cross” and follow Jesus** (Luke 9:22-26).
    - Those who are faithful at last will be faithful even unto death (if it comes for their faith). (See for example, the Daniel's friends, Daniel 3:13-18; Also see Revelation 12:11; Matthew 10:28; 16:24-26).
  - **Our faith “should NOT be shaken by these afflictions” because we know that they were promised to come to the faithful followers of God (v.3).** We will face trials and difficulties in this life and world, but we should be of good cheer for Christ has overcome this world.
- **The Apostles' care and love for the believers in Christ (v.5-10)**
  - (v.5) Waiting in anguish is a hard thing to do. Waiting with no word of hope or cheer is difficult. Waiting and worrying about the condition of those you love and care for is a hard experience!! Paul had the brethren at Thessalonica deeply upon his heart and

mind. He had been chased out by strong persecution, but what of the welfare of the other believers who were still there (and young believers at that!)? Paul was praying for them ever so earnestly! Finally, it was too much to resist anymore! He sent Timothy to go and check on them, and to help them! Likely, things had settled down a bit there by now, but still this mission back to Thessalonica needed to be a bit quiet and under cover. Timothy was a better choice to send for keeping a low profile.

- (v.6,7) Upon Timothy's return to Paul (who was now in Corinth) the news he shared brought joy to the heart of Paul! The believers in Thessalonica were still faithful to God! In spite of all the persecution that had arisen, they had remained faithful unto God and the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ! Paul was "comforted" concerning them and their faith! Though Paul had had "affliction and distress," a concerned mind for his beloved children in the faith, yet now he had joy, comfort, and peace brought to his mind and heart!
- (v.8-10) Prayers were made "night and day" for the believers in Thessalonica (as well as elsewhere too). Paul was greatly desiring to see them and to help bring strength and perfection to their faith by more of God's solid teachings! The pure, holy, and undiluted word of life will strengthen us much! Great thanksgiving to God was made for these believers.

➤ **Prayers, wishes, and desires for the believers there in Thessalonica (v.11-13)**

- Paul desired and prayed that God would somehow bring him to meet together again with the precious people and fellow believers in Thessalonica. He prayed and also expressed his wish here that these believers would **"...increase and abound in love to one another and to all" (v.12)**. This is the work that God desires to do in all of our hearts and minds. Because of the moral disease of sin, the human race has largely lost the concept of pure, true, deep, and selfless love for all people. Our hearts are corrupted by sin and selfishness. We do not know how to love each other as we ought to—and certainly, not as God designed. However, it is the work of Jesus Christ and the gospel to restore the image of God in man—to restore the divine character of love within our hearts and minds—both love for God and love for man. This was the prayer of Paul for the church in Thessalonica, that they would experience more and more of such beautiful love in God! **They were to have true holiness in their lives, which is love. It is righteous and pure. It is holy.** That was the prayer of the apostle. So that God would faithful people who were ready to stand before Him at His coming! Let it be so with us too. Let it be our prayer and our earnest striving to experience this in God!

*Question (s) for the Heart:*

**Would you like to have the pure and holy love of Jesus, and to be faithful to Him in all situations?**

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