

1 Thessalonians: Standing Firm

Lesson 3 “Established in Faith”

I. Review and Introduction - This church was founded on Paul’s second missionary journey in 51 A.D. after he left Philippi. Paul taught in Thessalonica for three Sabbaths and was then run out of town by unbelieving Jews. Paul then travelled to Berea and began to minister there, but the Jews from Thessalonica traveled there and ran him out of town there also.

A. Paul wrote *1 Thessalonians* about six months after he planted the church in Thessalonica to strengthen, comfort, and ground this church in truth.

1. This was probably the second letter Paul wrote and he wrote it because he couldn’t get to the Thessalonians in person because of Satan.
2. Satan’s hindrance actually ended up causing God to write through Paul and bringing a greater impact. We now have this letter we study thousands of years later as we do *Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, etc.* What the enemy means for evil, God will turn for good if we’ll continue to believe and stick with God.

B. Paul wrote to help them understand how to deal with the basics of life: how to relate to one another, the purpose of work even with the return of Christ coming, sexual morality, and various other exhortations.

1. Last week we wrote about how Paul had to defend his ministry because of the accusations of the Jewish critics that ran Paul out of town. They said he was a coward, only in it for the money, and deceived.
2. Tonight we are going to dive into a major reason Paul wrote which was to establish this church in faith. **He wanted to get them rooted.**
 - a. It’s one thing to get started in faith, but it’s another thing to get established. Trees that grow their roots down deep can stand strong in storms. They aren’t blown all over the place.
 - b. Also, in order to be a large fruit bearing tree, the roots have to go down deep below the soil. In some cases they can go 20, 30, feet or more for a large tree. If they grow 100 ft, with a 1 ft root system, they’d fall over.
 - c. Like trees, once we get saved, we must get rooted in faith. That’s why we read the word, come to church, etc.

II. Established in Faith

A. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

1. *Verses 1-2 Acts 17* records how Paul, Silas, Timothy left Berea and travelled to Athens for a season. After a period of time when Paul could no longer endure, he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to check on and minister to the church.

2. **Verses 3-4** Paul said this church was appointed for affliction. These afflictions weren't sickness, poverty, depression, God not answering prayers, but rather they were being persecuted for faith in Christ. We haven't been redeemed from this.
 - a. Affliction - *thlipsis* - **affliction, anguish, persecution - this is the same word used for Great Tribulation in Matthew 24 and in Revelation.**
 - b. Many Christians says we won't go through the Great Tribulation. I'm not going to argue that point right now. I'd rather make a more pertinent point that we are being tribulated already. We need to learn to deal and not be escapists.
 - c. **Matthew 24:21-22** and **Matthew 24:34** The context of these verses is the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. which Jesus prophesied at the beginning of this passage. It's His most startling prophecy. This has been completed. While it's possible there are future fulfillments of these prophecies, the proper understanding of this passage is much of this has been fulfilled.
 - d. I do not believe Jesus has come and set up His physical kingdom on earth yet.
3. **Verse 5** Paul was concerned if they weren't prepared for our hardship it would leave their heart wounded and they would fall into the snare of the devil.
 - a. John the Baptist example - **Matthew 11:3** *are you the one who was to come or should we look for another.* **The offended heart is the breeding ground for deception.**
 - b. **Mark 4:16-17** the heart that doesn't let the word take root and becomes offended.
4. **Verses 6-8** Timothy brought back good news of this church's faith and love.
 - a. evangelizo - good news. Same word is translated gospel 10 times in the New Testament.
 - b. Apparently Paul was worried about nothing. They were doing good. Sometimes we assume the worst and the stress can get us in a panic.
 - c. I do understand Paul's worries as a Pastor. The one good thing is while it was wrong of Paul to worry as much as he did, it does demonstrate his heart was for the people. ***We live if you stand fast in the Lord. Paul loved others more than himself.***
5. **Verses 9-10** Paul loved these people so much that he rejoiced and gave thanks because of hearing Timothy's report. He loved the Thessalonians more than himself. **This caused him to pray that he could get back to them and pray that he could perfect/complete that which lacked in their faith (knowledge of scripture/the things of God.)**
6. **Verses 11** Paul prays the Lord would direct him back to Thessalonica. We saw in **1 Thessalonians 2:18** how Satan had been hindering this. God did answer this prayer and Paul returned to Thessalonica about 4 years later. **Hebrews 6:12**

7. *Verse 12* Paul prays this church will increase and abound in love to one another just as Paul abounded in love. Paul is essentially praying, “give them the overflow you are giving me.”

8. *Verse 13* Out of the overflow of God’s love, God establishes our hearts blameless in true holiness (set apart). The way to be set apart comes from the love of God.

III. Conclusion - This chapter is about establishing in truth so we can establish our hearts in faith for the main purpose of love. The whole purpose of everything is love because God is love. He so loved He created us and so loved He gave everything for us.

A. Call Up Prayer Team

B. Pray Closing Prayer