



David Chadwick | January 26, 2025

Message Title: “Love in the Body of Christ”

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

Context:

- Thessalonica is a grossly pagan city
- Into this culture, Paul, Silas, and Timothy went and preached the gospel
- For three straight weeks
- Next, to the Greek/Gentile culture
- And the church was established

Opposition arose:

- Jews from Philippi
- People in the city (**Acts 17:1-9**)
- Newly converted man named Jason was at the center of it
- Paul, Silas, and Timothy were forced to leave - possibly due to threats against Jason? Threats against his life and livelihood if Paul doesn't leave?
- Paul concluded (last week's verses) that Satan “hindered” his return to Thessalonica because of threats against his Thessalonian friends?
- Paul wouldn't place his friends in a difficult position of persecution
- Satan is a creature, God's providence oversees all

- If Satan hadn't "hindered" Paul, we would not have **1 and 2 Thessalonians** today
- Think of the millions who have read these two books over the centuries and been encouraged in Jesus!
- Paul is now in Corinth writing the Thessalonians two separate letters
- Since he/they couldn't be together face to face
- Paul is a pastor and his pastoral heart oozes forth in every word he writes. He truly loved this church. They loved him.
- He wanted to return to be with them face to face but he couldn't
- His biggest question about the Thessalonians: **Are they still standing strong for the Lord?**

1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

***1** Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, **2** and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, **3** that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. **4** For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. **5** For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.*

- Paul could bear it no longer to know how the Thessalonians were doing
- He was willing to be left alone in Corinth and send Timothy back to them
- Timothy: a 1) brother and 2) a coworker to Paul in the gospel of Christ
- Timothy was sent to Thessalonica to continue to establish and exhort them in their faith amidst persecution and threats

2 Timothy 3:12

***12** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,*

Matthew 10:24

***24** "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.*

- Paul warned them that this (persecution/affliction) would happen when he was with them
- Note this happened *BEFORE* they accepted Jesus
- Asking people to follow Jesus today
- The dangers of the prosperity gospel (my definition: the promise that by believing in the gospel you will always have prosperity - primarily in health and wealth)
- Paul: “We are destined for this...”...for persecution! It needs to be known when we come to faith

Story of soldiers breaking into a worship service

- When Paul couldn't bear it any longer, he sent Timothy to them
- A sacrificial gift from Paul to the Thessalonians - he was alone in Corinth to preach the gospel!
- He wanted to check on their faith
- Wondering if “the tempter had tempted you” to walk away from the faith
- Satan can only tempt; he cannot force any of us to do anything
- But he studies our game film; he knows our weaknesses
- He can and does set traps to ensnare us and render our witness for Jesus impotent
- Satan as one who hinders and tempts...but he does: to kill, steal, and destroy

The story of a python in a missionary's house in Australia

1 Thessalonians 3:6-10

6 *But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you—* **7** *for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith.* **8** *For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord.* **9** *For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God,* **10** *as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?*

Timothy has returned to Corinth and told Paul these truths:

- Their faith is strong
- Their love abounds (love: the preeminent virtue) - it is the necessary ingredient for a church to be strong and stand firm in the faith
- **John 13:34-35**
***34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*
- The Thessalonians had NOT forgotten about Paul (no rejection!)
- Paul was comforted by this news - always a parent!
- They *are* standing firm in the Lord
- The joy this brought to Paul's heart (he's a pastor!)
- He prayed day and night to return and meet them face to face - a specific prayer!
- Pray specifically: What do you want? Paul wanted to come to them and see them face to face
- He wanted to fill in what was lacking in their faith: What does this mean?
- MOHC's Core 4:
 1. Scripture
 2. Theology
 3. Wholeness
 4. Outreach

Hope U in February (spaces filling up, please register this week)

- Like Paul looking at one or two areas they were lacking in and knowing they needed teaching there (only in Thessalonica a few things)
- Me too (I'm a pastor!): to fill up what is lacking in you
- Paul breaks out in prayer for his beloved Thessalonian church:

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

***11** Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, **12** and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, **13** so that he may establish your hearts*

blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

- Paul prays for the Thessalonians - a model prayer for us too:
 1. Pray to *our* God and Father (communal)
 2. Pray to *our* Lord Jesus (communal - two persons in the Godhead here - praying to each person in the Godhead)
 3. They increase and abound in LOVE toward one another
 4. And LOVE to "all" - the world, your enemies - ALL
 5. And God establish your hearts holy and blameless:
1 Peter 1:16
16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."
 6. This is how Jesus wants to find us when he returns - different from the world and its lies and deceptions (fueled by Satan)

Let us be lights in this dark city

Standing for truth

Living for Jesus

Loving one another deeply

A holy people, ready for Jesus's return (IMMINENCE)