

## 1 Thessalonians 3: 1-13

### “Standing In The Faith”

#### I.) Intro.

#### II.) Vs. 1-4 Established in the Faith

#### III.) Vs. 5-9 Encouraged in the Faith

#### IV.) Vs. 10-13 Exceeding in the Faith

#### I.) Intro.

Paul has explained how the church in Thessalonica was born and cared for. He had spoken about the work of leadership through the gospel. Last week he spoke of how the young believers could survive by **“clinging to the word of God, fellowshiping with the people of God and longing for the presence of God.”**

Sometimes I wonder how much better it would be if the church was more like the insect world. When ants are born they get right to work, they don't have to change dippers, pick up the little ant messes. No, every ant that comes out from the larvae is equipped immediately for service. There is no trial run. Almost immediately they become fruitful for the ant kingdom. Can you imagine giving birth to a totally independent baby” Where right after birth they say. *“Thanks, for the birth Mom, I'm off to work!”* Paul is going to deal with the work of growing in Christ in chapter 4. In the 2nd letter to the Thessalonians (2:13) Paul says that he, *“...gave thanks to God ... because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,”* In Paul's first letter he implements some principals so that they would grow, then in the 2nd letter he thanks God for the success of that growth. This reveals that:

- 1.) **God is not interested in you being an infant Christian:** He wants to see you through to maturity! Philp 1: 6 says, “...*He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*”
- 2.) **The same two ingredients that led us to salvation in Christ are also involved in our maturity,** “...*through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.*”
  - a.) Our growth in Christ is by His Spirit, just as was our salvation!
  - b.) And our absolute trust in Gods truth, (the Word of God)!

*So we grow by the Spirit of God at work in the Word of God making us mature as the children of God!*

## II.) Vs. 1-4 Established in the Faith

Vs. 1 “*Therefore*” is one of those linking words in the Bible that links this section with the section before it. Paul had just spoken of how he and his team had to leave and was hindered by Satan from returning to make sure that they were growing in grace. Paul did two things to ensure their growth in grace.

- 1.) Vs. 1-4 **He sent Timothy:** Paul sent a qualified servant of God to **fellowship** with them. This reveals several things concerning Paul’s plan to see that the church was going to grow.

- a.) Vs. 1 Paul was into to people, not numbers. He was not just about getting people in the door he was about caring for those once they were in the door. So much so he was willing to be left alone in Athens and the word he uses to describe this means to be “*bereaved*”, to be left alone at the death of a loved one. Though Paul had some huge crowds there in Athens, he felt as if he was widowed!

- b.) Vs. 2a Second, it reveals the character of person we ought to be. As Paul calls Timothy:

- 1.) **Brother:** Timothy was a brother, he was like minded he had gone through persecutions and had trusted Christ through them.

- 2.) **Minister:** This word here is deacon. Timothy was a man who because of his nature in Christ when he saw something that need to be done he had to do it.
  - 3.) **Labor:** Timothy was a team player! There was no job too small for Timothy and he had no problem in the role of an assistant. He was involved in whatever way he could to get people to follow Jesus!
- c.) Vs. 2b The plan of Timothy was to cause growth in the church. The

plan had two parts:

- 1.) To establish you ... concerning your faith: This word “*establish*” means to support or to “*set fast*”. Timothy came to first to set the church firm in their faith. According to verse four one of the truths that Timothy brought to them was that life is not fare and people are weird. Timothy did not first encourage or comfort them. No he first made sure they were applying the Word of God in their lives!
  - 2.) Encourage you concerning your faith: Timothy “*comforted*” them, but he did so concerning their faith *not* their situation. What was happening to this church was not their fault yet he encouraged them to stay the course!
- d.) Vs. 3-4 The outcome of Timothy’s ministry was **twofold**:
- 1.) Vs. 3a That they would not be shaken by the afflictions: The word “*shaken*” or “*moved*” means to wag the tail. The Jews were the ones that had caused the persecution against the Thessalonians but now they were coming to them saying, “*You poor things, why don’t you just renounce Jesus and become Jewish?*” Timothy seeks to establish them to stand on the truth

and not **sacrifice obedience to the truth of the Word of God for comfort!**

2.) Vs. 3b-4 They would see the afflictions as an appointment not an accident: Timothy desired *that they would not see the situation and circumstances as accidents but instead as appointments*. The first reaction most have to difficulties is, “*Why is this happening to me?*” Saint’s, what you are going through is not an accident it is an appointment. In John 16:33 Jesus said, “*In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*” In James 1:2-4 we ought to, “*...count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*” God allows trials to come upon us to mature us.

### **III.) Vs. 5-9 Encouraged in the Faith**

Vs. 5 The words “*for this reason*”, imply that Paul wanted to know whether or not the enemy had ripped them off. God was using the trials to deepen their walk with Him, while Satan was attempting to use the same trials to draw them away from God. Saints, if you are going through some tough stuff, the choice is up to you: You can either draw near to God or you can do your own thing walk away from him. When Paul was there they had responded to the gospel with a profession of faith, but the proof of that profession was to be seen in what they did when things got tough!

Vs. 6-9 Paul not only sent Timothy for fellowship, he sent them this letter based upon Timothy's good report. This letter of encouragement is the Bible!

a.) Vs. 6 Paul calls their news, "the gospel" or good news to him because the very thing he had been concerned about, "their faith" was growing.

- 1.) Their faith was growing because they had "good remembrance" of Paul because they ***still regarded what Paul taught as truth.***
- 2.) They not only regarded it as truth they were applying it as "their love was obvious." No body had been able to rip them away from the love of the Lord as it was seen in their love for each other.

b.) Vs. 7 The praise of the Church in Thessalonica applying the Word was just what Paul needed during his own difficulties. There is nothing more encouraging to a Bible teacher then to hear that people are applying the Word of God in their lives as a result of the teaching. It makes the difficulties easier!

c.) Vs. 8 Paul felt as though his wellbeing was tied to their practice of the truth! The Bible is not just a good idea or good advice it is a living book that will change your life if applied. 2 Tim 3:16 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for ***doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,***"

- **DOCTRINE tells us what is right**
- **REPROOF tells us what is not right**
- **CORRECTION tells us how to get right**
- **INSTRUCTION tells us how to stay right!**

d.) Vs. 9 Paul says here that He thanked God for their application of the Word of God. The most useful tool in applying the Word into your life is to PRAY IT IN!

The outcome of this will be peace and joy. To Grow in grace you need:

**Fellowship, the Word of God and Prayer!**

#### IV.) Vs. 10-13 Exceeding in the Faith

Vs. 10 Paul says here that he prayed for them night and day for **four things that would cause them to grow:**

- 1.) Vs. 10 **Perfect** what is lacking: The word here means to “*mend nets*”. Paul prayed that they would continue to adjust their lives to the Word of God, so that nothing would fall through. Our lives in Christ are constantly changing and we will need more adjusting to His will!
- 2.) Vs. 11 **Direct** our way to you: Paul desired to continue to feed these young Christians the Word of God. We will never arrive a point where we will know all that there is in the Bible as such there will always need to be a hunger for the Word.
- 3.) Vs. 12 **Inject** love abounding: We can see growth the easiest in our actions towards others. Paul is careful here to say not only that we ought to love fellow believers but every one even those who are persecuting or hurting you.  
**The truth is we will never mature past our ability to love others!**
- 4.) Vs. 13 **Erect** hearts in holiness: Paul prays that their conduct would be in line with the Word of God. Notice here that it is the return of Jesus Christ that ought to motivate us to a holy life! Where a person is applying the Word of God there will be stability, love and holiness. These will provide complete assurance in His presence.