

Getting Ready For The Rapture?

LOVE AS JESUS CHRIST LOVES !

1 Thessalonians 3

Spiritual Love Cares!

- Caring for those you lead to the Lord▪
- Caring for those you teach▪

Conference in Athens verses 1-5 Decision concerning Paul verse 1

¹

Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, (the plural) **we** (the missionary team was composed of Paul, the leader and bible teacher; Luke, the secretary and physician, Silas- teacher and singer, and Timothy the young student.)

One of the great blessings of God throughout history is how He puts various people and various gifts and human talents together. He does this with husbands and wives and missionary teams and local churches.

The words **we thought** expresses resolve and effect on the soul as in 2:8...**well please**

Decision concerning Timothy

²

and we sent (Aorist Active Indicative *PEMPO* which stresses the relationship of Timothy with Paul. Timothy is being sent under the authority of Paul and for a specific purpose.... stated in this verse.)

Timothy, (a young convert who followed Paul as a student. Timothy was from a mixed marriage, between a Jewish Mother and Gentile Father. These marriages were unlawful but by this time were common. He was reared in the teaching of Scripture by his mother and grandmother.)

Next Timothy is described:

our brother (He was a believer in Jesus the Christ)

and God's fellow worker (This is one of God's great blessings to put believers together for the purpose of the gospel. It can be a great challenge to the ego and has, therefore, caused many personal conflicts between believers. One of the remarkable blessings is the number of years that Cliff Barrows and Beverly Shea worked with Billy Graham – over 60 years all three together. And I am thankful for everyone who serves the Lord in spreading the Gospel here at SVBC. Jim Passmore has been here over 41 years. and he still serves the Lord here.)

Timothy; our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, (we have noted 'our gospel' 1:5 and 'gospel of God' 2:2; 2:8-9; and now 'gospel of Christ" In 2 Thessalonians 1:8 'gospel of our Lord Jesus" And we have noted these all refer to the same gospel with different emphasis. Now we come to the purpose for sending Timothy the reason for the sending of Timothy: Pauls love and concern, not purpose)

to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, (This is a powerful phrase between believers in the **ANGELIC CONFLICT.**)

Let us note what needs to be accomplished and how it is accomplished **to strengthen** (The Greek word emphasizes the mind, it means to make steadfast in mind.)

Ok, what does '**STEADFAST**' mean?

To firmly fix in their minds the truthfulness of what they are doing. To fix in place so they will not change. And why is this Paul's direction of Timothy's teaching?

Coming up in verse 5. **Because of 'THE TEMPTER'**

People, every believer in JESUS CHRIST is in the **ANGELIC CONFLICT** and needs to be warned, be alerted and be strengthened against three enemies to your spiritual welfare:

the World
and
the Flesh
and
the Devil.

All three of these forces work together to destroy your spiritual life,
your marriage,
your church,
anything or anyone in your life
who is an encouragement to your Spiritual growth,
and
your witness for Christ.

And Remember Your Soul
and
Your Physical Bodies
Are in Their Line of Target.

Next:

to encourage (As we have seen and will continue to discover this assembly in Thessalonica are doing it right. They are living in the Holy Spirit, they are growing in the Word of God, and because they are doing it right. They are under unbelievable pressure, therefore, are in need of encouragement.) In 1 Thessalonians alone they are encourage 3 times: 2:11; 3:2; 4:1 and 4:18.

There is a beautiful trail of encouragement in the New Testament
Acts 4:21-22

21

When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened;

22

for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

3

We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater;
(we will cover this great verse)

4

therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

And now in our current passage of 1 Thessalonians 3:2

2

and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, (for the purpose) **to strengthen and encourage you** (now pay close attention as to what exactly is to be encouraged): **as to your faith,**

We have so much to learn about Faith in 1 and 2 Thessalonians

FAITH IS THE BATTLE

not learning doctrine
although that is a spiritual struggle

NOT BEING MORAL

although that is a spiritual struggle

But the Reason Why Faith is The Battle is

**Because Learning Doctrine Depends On Faith
and
Living A Righteous Life Depends On Faith.**

1 Timothy 6:12 ... **fight the good fight of faith**

And then Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:7

**I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the course,
I have kept the faith;**

1 Thessalonians 3:3

so that no one (not one of the believers)
would be disturbed (moved away from walking by Faith)
**by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we
have been destined for this.** (When you are in the Spiritual
warfare you can expect tribulation.)

4

**For indeed when we were with you, we kept
telling you in advance that we were going to
suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you
know.**

Do not allow the suffering of others to bring down your
faithful walk (walking by Faith).

We have already noted our Lords words in John 16:35
**...in the world you have tribulation, in me you
may have peace**

Remember that Satan is the temporary ruler of the world and if you try
to live the Spirit Filled Life you will suffer, but even in that suffering you
may have inner-peace – this depends on whether or not you walk by
FAITH in the Holy Spirit and receive His Fruit of Peace.

The enemy of temptation, not to commit some. sin but to be tempted to walk away from living the Spirit Filled Life and growing in the Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST.

4

For this reason, when I could endure *it no longer*,

(A dedicated bible teacher cares about those he teaches.)

I also sent to find out about your faith, (Were they still walking by being Filled with the Holy Spirit?)

for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, (we have already been introduced to Satan in 2:19 now we meet him again by a name of one of his tactics against believers.)

Satan **THE HINDERER** 1 Thessalonians 2:18;

Satan **THE TEMPTER** 1 Thessalonians 3:5

We will study him again:

Satan **THE DECEIVER** 2 Thessalonians 2:9

Here in 1 Thessalonians 3:5, Paul is concerned that he will Temp them to leave living a life worthy of God (2:12)

»»» that is walking by the Filling of the Holy Spirit and

»»» growing in the Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST.

Satan has a multitude of ways to temp believers away from living for JESUS CHRIST.

and our labor would be in vain.

How can teaching the Word of God be in vain?

When believers do not use it in their lives, and then they just walk away from it.

One of my biggest hurts in life is to remember the people I have seen who walk away from listening to the Word of God.

And I don't mean go to another teacher, I mean just leave any assembly altogether.

Report from Timothy 6-9 "good news" read verse 6-9

6	But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you,
7	for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith;
8	for now we <i>really</i> live, if you stand firm in the Lord.
9	For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account,

Verse 6: The Report:

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news (you guessed it, this is the word we use for 'proclaiming the gospel' *EUAGGELIZO* bringing good news; the gospel is good news!

When you give someone the gospel don't ever be ashamed, you are bringing them good news of Eternal Life in JESUS CHRIST.)

Timothy's report consisted of four things:

(1) **of your faith** (Paul was so concerned about their walking in Faith in verses 2 and 5. And he was concerned whether or not the tempter had tempted them away from walking or living a life worthy of God; concerned that they continued to walk by being Filled with the Holy Spirit; trusting God and trusting the Word of God.)

(2) **of your love** (Spiritual Love; fulfilling the **New Commandment** by our Lord in the Gospel of John 13:34-35)

Here is the secret to walking worthy of our Lord and of making it through the distractions, temptations and difficulties of life.

As Paul says in Galatians 5:6

...The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love (NIV)

(3) **and that you always think kindly of us,** (or) **good memories of us** (they were so hungry for the Word of God and God sent Paul and they were so happy to hear the truth of doctrines necessary for the Church Age; Up to this point all they had were the Old Testament Scriptures and they were so excited about all the good things Paul taught them. About Eternal Salvation, about walking in the Holy Spirit by Faith, about growing in the Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, etc. Oh, yes they had good memories of Paul and his teaching.)

(4) **longing to see us just as we also long to see you,**

(There is nothing richer than fellowship in the Word of God.)

Paul's response to such an encouraging report: 7-10 read 7-10

- (7) **for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith;**
- (8) **for now we *really* live, if you stand firm in the Lord.**
- (9) **For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account,**

7 for this reason, (such an encouraging good-news report from Timothy) **brethren,** (fellow warriors in the conflict) **in all our distress and affliction** (the Greek word for distress does not refer to depression, but even Paul came under distress and affliction.) **we were comforted** (Aorist Passive Indicative of that beautiful word we use for the ministry of the Holy Spirit (*PARAKLEO*) What I don't want you to miss, that here is the great teacher... Paul, and under pressure, under affliction— this comfort from the good-news about their walk of Faith. Paul is comforted by news of their continual walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.)

What comforts you?

You hear about someone you love, the news that they are doing well, physically, financially or that they are doing well in walking in a manner worthy of God?

about you through *or by means of your faith;* (I know how Paul feels, it excites me when someone tells me they now know what it means to walk by Faith, to live by Faith. The Faith of the believer is so important to Paul [and any teacher who knows

the truth] that this is the fourth time that we have a reference to the Faith of the Thessalonians.)

Verse 10 records the result of the good news report and the first thing we see is the persistence in prayer.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **as we night and day keep praying most earnestly.** Often Christians wonder about praying the same prayer over and over; they reason, *“isn’t it enough to ask God but once?”*

And for God, this is true; but remember that prayer BRINGS US close to God and REMINDS US of our dependence on Him. So we come daily and even throughout a day and sometimes with the same prayer request or praise.

Keep praying most earnestly (this is a strong Greek construction)

praying exceedingly, earnestly, exceedingly, intense earnestly (the Greek word carries the idea of over and above, more than enough; and again, this is not for God but for us. I always loved when my mother would pour more than enough chocolate icing on a cake.)

That (here is what is heavy on Paul’s soul) **we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?**

What was lacking was some further information on The

Rapture. They were afraid that their loved ones who had died were going to miss The Rapture. So Paul is going to give them even more teaching on The Rapture in this letter and in 2 Thessalonians.

Verses 11-13 Paul is going to speak on The Rapture.

- | | |
|------|--|
| (11) | Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; |
| (12) | and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also <i>do</i> for you; |
| (13) | so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. |

11 **Now may our God and Father Himself**

Oh, people why do we contend, and fight with One Another? He is the God of each one of us; your husband, your wife, your children, your parents. We can know God as our Father and pray to Him as Father, because we are in union with His Son, JESUS CHRIST. This is something that did not occur throughout all the Old Testament, they knew Him as Father but never prayed to Him as Father. We have this rich privilege because we are in His Son by Faith.

and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you;

Jesus is our Lord, but remember that the Holy Spirit is our Lord and GOD the FATHER is our Lord. Our Lord, the Holy Spirit, takes us to our Lord Jesus who in turn takes us to our Lord GOD the FATHER. Note carefully the singular **direct** GOD the FATHER and JESUS

CHRIST work as one.

Note again the relationship of GOD the FATHER and JESUS CHRIST—they do everything together and the HOLY Spirit is the one who ministers their directions.

And note again, Paul's desire to be with these believers who love the WORD of GOD and walk in a manner worthy of God

¹² and may the Lord (This refers to our Lord the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who pours in Spiritual Love.
May the Lord cause you to increase (This is a rare occurrence of the optative mood and it expresses an obtainable wish or desire. Here is a prayer that God can and most likely will grant.

As for the word **to increase**;

This Greek word covers some 10 columns in the Greek lexicon. And it basically means more, to have or cause to have much.

and abound (I hope that you can see how powerful this is even in the English. First —**MAY CAUSE YOU TO HAVE MUCH** then Paul adds another verb—**to abound**.

Now what is it that Paul prays for them
to have well more than enough of ?

Not doctrine, but Spiritual Love.

in love AGAPAO -or- not just love; but this is a love from the Holy Spirit, therefore Spiritual Love.

for one another, this is the same root word JESUS CHRIST used

in giving the NEW COMMANDMENT in John 13.

ALLOS which refers to “another of the same kind” which means another born again believer.

Years ago when I started teaching on Spritual Love, many were upset; “well, are we not to love unbelievers?”

And the answer is OF COURSE we are.

And then I pointed out I did not use this Greek word, JESUS CHRIST uses it –**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one-another** (That is another of the same kind... other believers.)

People, it is easy to love an unbeliever, especially when he/she does something sinful or hurtful to you...we do not expect more from an unbeliever; but let a born again believer hurt you or sin in some sin that offends you and then this is when it is most difficult to love them as JESUS CHRIST loves you.

And the next phrase covers unbelievers.

and for all people, abound in love for One Another—
(believers)

and for all people (unbelievers, but it means more than just unbelievers, it contextually refers to those who are causing you distress, causing you tribulation, those trying to hurt you.)

**NOTHING WILL MAKE GREATER DEMANDS ON YOUR LIFE
THAN TO LOVE OTHERS AS JESUS CHRIST LOVES YOU.**

Now Paul adds **just as we also do for you;**

Paul and his team have Spiritual Love for every one of these believers in Thessalonica.

Now we come to the all-important verse dealing with The Rapture.

13 **so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.**
(The Rapture)

So that (pointing to the final goal.)

He may establish (In 3:2 this word was translated **to strengthen** and here **to establish** the verb means *to stand, to set fast, to fix firmly, to confirm, to strengthen, or confirm.*)

Now look at what is to be established:

your hearts

To what does **hearts** refer?

Look at 1 Thessalonians 5:23

23 **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body** (three dimensions of man's nature or make up)
be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (The Rapture)

Matthew 22:37

37 **And He** (JESUS CHRIST) **said to him,** (lawyer of the Pharisees) **"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."** (This gives the three dimensions of our being, who we are.)

First note the **all:**

God does not want just part of you but the whole of you!

Heart: The seat or center of our being, from heart—flows desires, feelings, affections, passions and impulses –When we are empowered by the Holy Spirit He controls all these.

Soul: That invisible part of man that comes alive at birth, when God breathes in human life.

Mind: the center of thought, understanding, intellectual faculty of our being; again directly influenced by the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

13

so that He (The Holy Spirit) **may establish your hearts without blame** (Most of the time when we think of being '**BLAMELESS**' we think in terms of sin... personal sins.

But here in this context, being) **without blame** (is directly related to and dependent upon Spiritual Love. So that when we fail to love One Another [Spiritual Love] we are at that point with blame before God.)

Spiritual Love causes us to be blameless before God.

in holiness before our God and Father We live for God, not for self, and not for man, others...

This also is closely tied to 2:12

walk in a manner worthy of the God (And what is that?)

Being **without blame and holy**

And how is this possible?

Only through and by the Holy Spirit.

Now, if we are in tune with this passage, this context of **walking worthy of the God, being without blame and being in holiness** all are closely linked with Spiritual Love; with loving One Another as Christ loves you!

at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

Here, dear people, is why we are to walk in love toward One Another. Living and loving One Another in anticipation of seeing our Lord at The Rapture. Oh, people, don't live thinking of when you die, I better do this; or that because I may die; but have in your mind the Meeting of the Lord in the Air. Meeting your Savior in the Air at The Rapture. If we allow the Holy Spirit, by Faith, to pour into us and out from us, the same love of JESUS CHRIST, then we will have an un-blamable heart of holiness when the Lord comes to rescue us to Himself "out from the wrath to come"; that is at The Rapture.

This is very close to the previous verse we studied on The Rapture.

1 Thessalonians 2:19

19

...in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?
PAROUSIA

1 Thessalonians 3:13

13

...in the presence our God and Father at the coming PAROUSIA of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

The phrase **with all His saints** is used by Paul addressing one of the problems these believers are having, and that is about their loved ones who have died before them.

They feared that these will miss out on The Rapture.

Paul will address this problem again in 4:13-18; but here he begins by comforting them by saying that **all His saints**, that is, everyone who believes in JESUS CHRIST will be with Him at His **coming.**

How you **LIVE** in time, how you **LOVE** in time, either **in the flesh** or **in the power of the Holy Spirit** (fruit of the Holy Spirit) touches time and eternity.

How you love in time, produces for all eternity.

So please learn all you can about Spiritual Love from the WORD of GOD and then allow the Holy Spirit by Faith in the Holy Spirit to pour this love in you and out from you.

**GET READY FOR THE RAPTURE...
LOVE AS JESUS CHRIST LOVES YOU**

If He Loved From His Deity...
We Cannot Do It, For We Are Not Deity.

If He Loved From His Perfect Humanity...
**We Cannot Do It, For We Are Not Perfect,
We Possess An Inherited Sin Nature.**

But Since He Loved From The Power Of His Holy Spirit,
We Can Do That For JESUS CHRIST Himself
Asked GOD The FATHER to Send Us The Holy Spirit,
And Now By Faith We Can Love As JESUS CHRIST Loves.