

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

## I THESSALONIANS 3:1-13

### LESSON: A NEW AFFECTION—March 10, 2019

#### INTRODUCTION:

**1<sup>ST</sup> 2:13-20** Paul and his companions thanked God unceasingly, for the Thessalonians received the Word of God readily when they heard it from them, and accepted it as truth, not as men's words, but as the Word of God which inwardly effect those that believe. Paul calls them brethren because they became followers of the churches of God; also suffering like the others, even from the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets. They persecuted Paul and the others, thereby displeasing God, and showing themselves foes to all men, and forbidding them to speak salvation to the Gentiles. They piled up their sins to the limit, but the wrath of God has overtaken them to destroy them. Since Paul was not with the Thessalonians; out of their presence, but not in heart, he endeavored to return to see their face again. However, despite his intentions, he declared that Satan hindered them. But Paul asked the questions, *"For what is our hope, or joy or crown of rejoicing? Is it not you?"* Then at the end of this letter, he tells them that they are their glory and joy. Seeing people saved is the joy and glory of those who faithfully witness.

#### LESSON: I. TIMOTHY'S MISSION 1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-5

**Timothy's Service There:**

**1<sup>ST</sup>—3:1** **Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;**— This passage has to do with the faith of the Thessalonians. Their faith was strong and Paul wanted to make sure that it remained strong. The believers were suffering fierce persecution by both the Jewish and Gentile citizens of the city. Paul had fled to Athens, but his heart was in Thessalonica, longing for the believers who were suffering the fierce attacks of persecution. As the Thessalonians were a little new at being Christians, Paul says he had reached a point when he could no longer bear it or stand it, for it was good for him to be left in Athens alone.

**1<sup>ST</sup>—3:2** **And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;**—Paul was powerless to contain his anxiety any longer, so he decided to send Timothy to help the Thessalonians while he himself continued the work in Athens. Had they cracked under the savage attacks of persecution? Or were they standing fast? Timothy was a dependable brother and minister/servant of the Lord. If anyone could help the believers, he could. Paul sent Timothy to establish and comfort them in their faith.

- **"establish"** (*Gr stērizō*) means to stabilize or to support an already existing structure—establishing stability and soundness.
- **"comfort"** (*Gr parakleō*) means to encourage. It is the word from which we get the name the Holy Spirit in John, namely the *"Comforter."* Timothy would come alongside of his brothers and sisters in Christ for the purpose of providing them with continual comfort and assurance.

Thus, Timothy's essential task was to ensure that the Thessalonians would stand sound in their faith, and be comforted; that they would not be **"cajoled** (persuaded) **with smooth talk when they were in the midst of persecution and difficulties"** (Morris, 63).

**1<sup>ST</sup>—3:3** **That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed**

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE



**thereunto.** There is an appointed time for everything; also affliction. So, don't be moved when it happens. "**Moved**" (*gr sainō*) means usually "**wave**", "**wag the tail**." Perhaps here it means "**wobble**" and thus "**collapse**." Paul says no man should be moved by these afflictions. Thus, despite the shameful treatment and savage attacks, the believer is not to be moved away from Christ. Timothy would continue to help them.

**1<sup>ST</sup>—3:4** **For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.** The Thessalonians were already told about what they would have to endure. But when the attacks are so severe and savage, **how can the believer keep from being moved?**

1. The believer must know that he is appointed to persecution; and that is, he will suffer.
  - a. *Believers are persecuted because they are not of this world.* [They are "*the called out*" of the world].
  - b. *Believers are persecuted because they strip away the world's cloak of sin.* [They live and demonstrate a life of righteousness].
  - c. *Believers are persecuted because the world does not want to know God nor Christ.* [The world wants no God other than themselves and their own imaginations. They want to do just what they want]. However, believers want God!
  - d. *Believers are persecuted because the world is deceived in its concept and belief of God.* [The world conceives God to be the One who fulfills their earthly desires and lusts (Jh.16:2-3). However, the true believer teaches against their concept of God].

<sup>1</sup>How a person gets through difficult times will often tell about just where their relationship with the Lord really is. If a person has no deep root in the Lord, they will be blown away by difficult times. They will walk away from the Lord and join those people who say, "**Well, I tried Christianity, but it didn't work for me.**" The problem isn't that Christianity didn't work; it's that a person wasn't clinging to Jesus in the difficult times. We often want to keep people from having to go through trials. We'd like to rescue them from their hard times, like a parent that constantly holds the child's hand to keep them from falling. But sooner or later you need to let them walk on their own. Sooner or later they will need to experience a scraped knee or two. It's the trials that refine our faith, that make us stronger. Keep these reasons in mind. They will help us to stand against persecution when it is launched against us.

**1<sup>ST</sup>—3:5** **For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.** "**For this cause**", Paul again states his reasons for sending Timothy:

1. Paul had to know that the Thessalonians were surviving the temptations of Satan
2. And that Paul's work in them had not been in vain.
2. The believer must know that the temptation to cave in to persecution is of the tempter, of Satan himself. This is the very reason Satan had launched the persecution: to strike fear in the believer and silence them. Satan wants the believer to hush up about Christ and to desert Christ.
3. The believer must know that the labor and message of the minister is not empty.

*Christ died for our sins that we might not perish. Christ gives us eternal life—gives us the privileges of living forever and ever in the new heavens and earth that He creates.*

The work of the minister and of those who have taught us will have been useless if we give up and desert Christ. We must stand fast in afflictions, no matter how severe and savage. Standing fast in persecution is the sign of a strong faith.

## II. TIMOTHY'S RETURN 1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-10

Response to Timothy's Report:

**1<sup>ST</sup>—3:6** **But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:—**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/52%201Th/2000/521Th01-03.htm>

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE



Timothy met Paul in Corinth and as soon as he had told Paul and the others about the faith of the Thessalonians, the news brought them comfort and much joy because they had been so anxious and worried for the Thessalonians. The report of Timothy pleased them so much because it was "good news." This good news was of their faith and charity (love) and their fondness or remembrance toward Paul. Three things were noted: faith, love, and remembrance.

1. The believers were standing fast in their faith in Christ. They were not buckling under persecution nor to the temptation to be silent about Christ. They were not forsaking their worship of Christ. In practical terms, they were continuing to study the scriptures, pray and worship together. And when possible, when it would not arouse opposition, they were sharing Christ and the promise of eternal life with all who would listen.
2. The believers were standing fast in love—love for Christ, each other, and their fellow men. They were ministering and meeting the needs of all those who would receive their help. And they were doing all they could to demonstrate love and care and good citizenship toward all.
3. The believers also remembered their pastor, Paul, with the deepest of affection. They longed to see him just as he longed to see them. What a dynamic testimony!

## **1<sup>ST</sup>—3:7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:—**

To hear this news of the faith of the Thessalonians stirred the heart of their pastor Paul and his fellow associates and he began to write this letter. Note four significant points of the faith of the Thessalonians:

1. The faith of the Thessalonians believers meant a lot and stirred strength in Paul and the others, for they desperately needed comforting themselves. The word "**comforted**" (*paraklethemen*) means encouraged and strengthened. Why did Paul need encouragement and strengthening? It was not because of the Thessalonians, for Timothy's report had already comforted Paul's concern over them. But, Paul says, that he was in some affliction and distress. "**Affliction**" (*ananke*) means choking, intense pressure, and stress. "**Distress**" (*thlipsis*) means crushing trouble. **The point is this:** the testimony of the Thessalonians was strong, and God used it to help Paul in his time of need. What a lesson for us! Our faith is used by God to strengthen and encourage others in their time of need. Therefore, we must stand strong and grow stronger in faith.

## **1<sup>ST</sup>—3:8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.**

2. The faith of the Thessalonians stirred renewed life and purpose in Paul and the others. Paul had been discouraged, not defeated, but discouraged because of the difficulties confronting him in Corinth. The news of the Thessalonian believers ignited a renewed burst of life and purpose in them. He was stirred to minister and share Christ as never before. The Thessalonians were a testimony to all of them. They were suffering terrible persecution and remaining steadfast. Therefore, their steadfastness stirred Paul to bear the affliction and distress launched against them. Because the Thessalonians were standing fast in the Lord, life was worth living. for Paul and the others. Their faithfulness was stirring him in one of those times when he needed encouragement.

## **1<sup>ST</sup>—3:9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;—**

3. The faith of the Thessalonians stirred thanks and joy in Paul. Paul just burst forth praising and thanking God and wondering what else could he do for them for they were joyful for their sakes before **our** God.

## **1<sup>ST</sup>—3:10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith? —**

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# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE



4. The faith of the Thessalonians believers stirred continuous prayer in Paul. He said night and day that they prayed to see their face, and to pray for their fellowship and growth in Christ. Paul longed to be with them to fellowship so that he could continue to build up what's lacking in their faith; whatever weaknesses they might have. What a pastoral heart! That's a heart to always proclaim and teach Christ until we are all perfected into the image of Christ.

## III. PAUL'S PRAYER 1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-13

This is Paul's great prayer for the Thessalonian church and its believers.

**1<sup>ST</sup>-3:11a** **Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ,**— Paul invokes and petitions help from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the beginning of his prayer and reminds us of John 10:30 which says **"I and my Father are one."** This was the time to fix their eyes on the One they spoke of and the One Paul taught about. Prayer is not always to get something from God, but prayer will humble and mature the one praying. It did not happen at this time. Paul prays both to God and Christ, and in so doing, he reveals who God is and who Christ is. **The point is this:** Relationship allows one to ask the Almighty God and Christ for help; the only power who can help when no one else can. The Father and Son co-existed eternally, having equal power. Paul revealed that God Himself is our Father and that Jesus Christ Himself is our Lord God from heaven—that both the Father and Son have the God nature. For this reason, Paul prayed for his answer.

- to God Himself: the Supreme and Majestic Being of the universe, the Supreme Intelligence, the Creator and Maker of all things, the Giver and Sustainer of life and of everything else; the Person who dwells everywhere in perfect and supreme power, knowledge, and being.
- to God our Father. God is a Father to all of us, intimately involved in our lives. He is not just in outer space ruling and reigning and being far removed from us. No, God our father is right here with us. He is actively participating in our lives just as an earthly father participates in the lives of his children. Therefore, Paul, as a child, approaches God our Father, and asks Him for certain things and when he asks, he knows that his Father will hear and answer. He knows because God is not only able to answer, but God is **his** Father that hears. And that's what the Father does.
- to our Lord Jesus Christ. The word **"Lord"** means **"Master"** (guardian; trustee); Adonai' and also the title **"Lord"** is used for God the Father and God the Son. He is Lord over all that receive Him. The word **"Christ"** means **"Messiah"** and **"Savior"**, the Anointed One; our way to the Father. The title Christ identifies Jesus as the Anointed One who deserves respect.

**1<sup>ST</sup>-3:11b** **...direct our way unto you.** Paul asked the Father and the Lord Jesus to direct and guide his way to the Thessalonians. He wanted both God and the Lord Jesus working to open the door for him to return to the dear believers at Thessalonica. Remember Satan had created some terrible problems and obstacles to keep Paul from returning to the church (1Thess.2:18; 3:7). But Paul longed to return, therefore, he wanted both the Father and the Son working on the matter. Hence, he addressed their equal power.

**1<sup>ST</sup>-3:12** **And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:**—The great need for which Paul prayed is the supreme need of every believer—the need for love, and to grow in love more and more. The word **"increase"** (*pleonasa*) means to abound, to multiply over and over. The word **"abound"** (*perisseuai*) means to excel and overflow. **But note the crucial point:** the love being spoken about is not what the world means by love. This is seen in two significant points.

- The love that we must grow in is the love that makes us love *all men*, not just one another. The love we are to have is the love that reaches out and overflows and multiplies toward everyone. This means...
  - the unattractive
  - the ugly
  - the orphan
  - the sick
  - the hateful
  - the enemy
  - the murderer
  - the unclean
  - the homeless
  - the prisoner
  - the diseased
  - the spiteful
  - the oppressor
  - the poor
  - the unclothed
  - the widow and widower
  - the sinner
  - the opponent
  - the dictator

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# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE



How is it possible to love those who do evil to us and who treat us as enemies? How can we increase and abound in love for them? Is it even practical to ask us to love all men? Is it even humanly possible? No! It is not possible for us to love those who hate us and who stand as enemies against us—not humanly possible. But there is a way. However, there is only one way. That's why Paul prayed to our Father and our Lord. This is the subject of the next point.

The source of love is the Lord. There is no other source, not for the kind of love that can love all men. This is the reason Paul went before the Lord and requested such a love. Paul knew that it was impossible for him or the Thessalonians to work up the kind of love that could reach out and abound toward all men. A love that could love those who could ignore, neglect, abuse, and shamefully mistreat us, could only come from God. There are **four kinds of love**:

1. There is passionate love or **eros** love. This is the physical love between sexes.
2. There is affectionate love or **storge** love. This kind of love that exists between parent and child.
3. There is endearing love or **phileo** love. This is the love of a husband and wife for each other.
4. There is selfless and sacrificial love or **agape** love. This is the love of the will rather than emotions.
  - a. It loves a person even if he does not deserve to be loved.
  - b. It actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.

**1<sup>ST</sup>—3:13** **To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.** The great result of love is to be presented unblameable before God when Christ returns to earth. This is the most glorious result imaginable. The word "**stablish**" (*sterixai*) means to prop, support, confirm, fix, make, fast, set. It is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who stablishes our hearts before God. No one else has the right or power to set us before God. No one else can make us acceptable to God. The word "**heart**" here refers to the whole person or personality of man. The word "**unblameable**" (*amemptous*) means to be free from fault and blame; to be free from all charges. The word "**holiness**" (*hagiosune*) means to be set apart and be separated to God. He alone can free us from the faults and charges of sin. He alone can present us unblameable and holy before God. Just think about it: who else has such power? Do you know such a person? Man's only hope is Christ—that He truthfully has the righteousness and power to set us unblameable and holy before God.

When is this glorious presentation to God going to take place? - When Christ returns with all His saints; that is with all the holy and glorified people of God; He will present all believers—every single one of us, to God:

- All the believers who have died and gone to be with the Lord; who are raptured when He returns.

What a coronation, the glorious day of our presentation before God—meeting Him face to face and being presented to Him unblameable and holy—to be with Him forever and ever! It is the promise of God Himself and therefore it cannot be stopped! And no man should want to stop it. On the contrary, all men should prepare and welcome it.

## SUMMARY:

The apostle Paul calls to remembrance events both during and after his previous visit to Thessalonica. The action during his visit: Paul warned the church that they could expect future persecution because of their faith in Christ; this soon came to pass. The action after his visit: In Athens, he experiences great concerns over the spiritual welfare of the church in Thessalonica. Therefore, he sent Timothy to minister to them. Timothy brings back the joyous news that the Thessalonians are growing in faith and love. Paul is greatly comforted by this news.

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The one thing needed by Christians is faith: a faith that honestly knows Christ and knows what it is to walk in

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE



Him day by day, and trusting Him. He stressed their faith five times in the first ten verses. Paul...

- wanted to comfort—that is, strengthen their **faith** so he send Timothy (3:2).
- wanted to know if their **faith** was standing against the tempter's temptation (3:5).
- received word that their **faith** and love were strong from Timothy (3:6).
- was comforted over their **faith** (3:7).
- received renewed life as the Thessalonians stood fast in the Lord (in faith) (3:8).
- wished to perfect their **faith** (3:10).

Paul then knew all that was done for the Thessalonian believers was not done in vain as he continued to pray for them. He now lifts up a twofold prayer request. Paul asks God for himself to permit him to go visit the church again. And a prayer for the church—that their love will both increase and overflow—that their hearts would be strengthened and be unblameable in matters of holiness before God (3:11-13).

## APPLICATION:

Strength comes to you while you're strengthening someone else. Keep the Word of God before you when going through the challenges of life. An encouraging word is always comforting to those you haven't seen in awhile and those you see everyday! Begin to make that a priority! You'll never know who needs it!