I Thessalonians 3:1-13

Review...

- As we conclude this first section of the book INFORMATION about the church...
 - o We have looked at the ORIGIN of the church and the GOSPEL given to the church chapter 1
 - o The PREACHING of Paul and the HOPE of Paul for the church chapter 2
- Although Paul had been separated from the church persecution from the Jews...
 - o He eagerly desired to return and see them face to face...
 - o From the moment he moved onto Berea Paul began to look for ways to go back...
 - o He endeavored (diligently) more eagerly (persistently) to return to Thessalonica...
 - o Because like a Father to a child he did NOT want to leave them orphaned!
- The HOPE / JOY of Paul was not just to see them face to face for a moment...
 - o He wanted to see them at the RETURN of Jesus Christ at the RAPTURE of the church!
 - o What REALLY would made Paul happy was to see them in the presence of the Lord!

IT IS ALL ABOUT FAITH... (5 THINGS)

- 1ST The concern regarding their FAITH... vs. 1-2 (3 POINTS)
 - o A word about FAITH...
 - The word FAITH is used 8x in the whole book 5x just in JUST this chapter!
 - It goes with saying that Paul is going to address the issue of FAITH...
 - FAITH pistis 244x in NT belief with the idea of TRUST or CONFIDENCE...
 - We know the JUST shall live by faith Habakkuk 2:4 / Romans 1:17 / Galatians 3:11
 - Living by FAITH means TRUSTING the Lord for today...
 - So often it feels like we are walking through life blind no idea where we are going...
 - The reason is because we are trusting in what we can see but we cannot see far...
 - If only we could see tomorrow we might make very different decisions...
 - Making decisions by what we can see is in truth walking around blind...
 - But Jesus sees it all and if are willing to trust Him we will always know where to go...
 - Trusting in the Lord who sees all that is walking by true sight waking by FAITH!
 - II Corinthians 5:7 "For we walk by FAITH, not by sight."
 - Living by FAITH means trusting the Lord for our eternity...
 - We cannot see God have never been to heaven have not seen Jesus…
 - It is only through FAITH we believe the Gospel is true has the power to save us...
 - By FAITH we believe that life is not only about living here on earth...
 - By FAITH we believe one day God will take us to be with Him forever in heaven!
 - **Hebrews 11:1** "FAITH is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
 - o 1st When Paul could endure it no longer... vs. 1
 - Paul was concerned about the FAITH of the believers in Thessalonica...
 - He had been taken away $aporphaniz\bar{o}$ literally orphaned them **1 Thessalonians 2:17**
 - He had been taken away because of the PERSECUTION of the Jews Acts 17:8-10
 - From the moment they moved onto Berea Paul began to look for ways to go back!
 - And as he prepared to depart for Athens he could not ENDURE it any longer...
 - He had to know how the FAITH of this young church (only there for three weeks) was doing!
 - o 2nd The solution of Paul... vs. 2
 - Paul sent Timothy to check on the FAITH of the church Acts 17:14
 - TIMOTHY *time Theos* one who honors God...

- Timothy is mentioned in 11 of the letters of Paul more than any other person...
- Timothy joined Paul at the beginning of his 2nd missionary journey **Acts 16**
- He was a young man at least in the beginning of his ministry I Timothy 4:12
- And he stayed with Paul all the way through the 3rd missionary journey!
- Paul calls him his Brother...
 - Not that he was literally a brother brother in the Lord Paul would later call him a son!
 - I Corinthians 4:17 "I sent Timothy... my beloved and faithful son in the Lord."
 - Timothy had become like family to Paul serving with him in the Gospel!
- Minister of the God...
 - Timothy had been with Paul / watched Paul and learned the ministry from Paul...
 - And like Paul he also had become a MINISTER of the Gospel...
 - I Corinthians 16:10 "Timothy...does the work of the Lord, as I also do."
 - MINSTER diakonos we often use MINISTER as a title of superiority...
 - But the word actually means a servant / a waiter / who runs errands for the KING!
 - A MINISTER is a SERVANT of God who does the *work* of sharing the Gospel for God!
- Fellow Laborer in the Gospel...
 - *Synergos* 13x in NT used 3x of Timothy (*more than any other person*) ...
 - Timothy had the same heart as Paul and cared for the Thessalonians...
 - His care for others was GENUINE it flowed out from his love for Jesus!
 - **Philippians 2:20-22** "I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare... you know how Timothy has proved himself."
- o 3rd The reason for sending Timothy... vs. 2
 - Establish you in your FAITH ...
 - ESTABLISH *sterizo* used 13x NT where we get the word steroids...
 - Timothy was stent to make sure their FAITH was strong...
 - \bullet $\;$ But the contrast might seem to suggest that it is possible to have weak FAITH \ldots
 - Matthew 8:10 Jesus talked about great FAITH Matthew 8:26 little FAITH...
 - That would lead us to believe FAITH is measurable strong / great or little / weak...
 - But Jesus would clarify in **Luke 17:5-6** when the disciples asked to INCREASE our FAITH...
 - Luke 17:6 "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree..."
 FAITH is not about quantity or quality it is about WHO we put our trust in...
 - We have strong / great FAITH when Jesus is the one we are looking to!
 - Encourage you in your FAITH...
 - ENCOURAGE *parakaleō* to call alongside / to support and comfort...
 - One of the names for the Holy Spirit is the HELPER paraklētos (same root word) ...
 - **John 15:26** "When the Helper comes... He will testify of Me..."
 - Like the Holy Spirit he was to establish their FAITH by encouraging them in Jesus!
 - The best thing we can EVER do for anyone is reminder them to look to Jesus!
- 2ND CHALLENGES TO THEIR FAITH... vs. 3-5 (3 POINTS)
 - o 1st Shaken by afflictions... vs. 3
 - The first challenge to faith comes from NOT knowing WHY we have AFFLICTIONS...
 - Shaken only here NT the wagging of a dogs tail to be unstable...
 - Afflictions *thilipsis* the crushing of a grape till the juice flows out...
 - Paul told them you KNOW (to see) that we are appointed (destined) to this!
 - Timothy was coming to make sure their AFFLICTION had not shaken their FAITH...
 - The Gospel is not a message of an easy life it is about eternal life!
 - And God uses our AFFLICTIONS to keep our focus on the Him in this life!
 - II Corinthians 1:8-10 God give us the sentence of death so we do NOT trust in ourselves!

- II Corinthians 12:9-10 His GRACE is sufficient when I am weak He is strong!
- **Romans 5:3-5** GLORY in Tribulation which produces perseverance / character / hope!
- BUT if we do not KNOW why we have AFFLICTION...
 - Matthew 13 parable of the seed and sower Jesus described the STONY ground...
 - **Matthew 13:21** "When tribulation [same word] or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles..."
 - We may fall away stop coming to church / stop reading the Bible / give up on Jesus...
 - Because our focus in not on the eternal we are SHAKEN and away from the FAITH!
- o 2nd Promise to Suffer tribulation... vs. 4
 - The second challenge to FAITH FORGETTING what was said about TRIBULATION...
 - In fact Paul had told them before (predicted) when he was still with them...
 - They would (*indicative*) SUFFER TRIBULATION *thlibo* root word of AFFLICTION...
 - They had been warned and it had happened as they KNOW (to see) ...
 - As mentioned previously the Jews caused a riot against the Christians Acts 17:5
 - Jesus gave the same promise In this life we will have TRIBULATION John 16:33
 - It is actually the WILL of God that we SUFFER I Peter 3:17 / I Peter 4:19
 - We have to go through TRIBULATION it is not an option because it has a purpose!
 - **II Corinthians 4:7-10** "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed [same word] on every side... always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."
 - If you take a clay pot and fill it up with rocks it is still a cheap pot...
 - But if you take that same pot and fill it up with diamonds its priceless!
 - We often get the impression there are SPECIAL people whom God chooses to use...
 - There are only ordinary people who believe in God making them SPECIAL!
 - We are all just clay pots the question to be asked is what is inside of us...
 - Are we full of ourselves trusting in our abilities not worth much...
 - Or are we full of Jesus believing in God having FAITH (trust) in His Word!
- o 3^{rd} The tempter had tempted...vs. 5
 - THE tempter this is unquestionably a reference to our ENEMY...
 - He has a number of names in the Bible he is the *devil* false accuser...
 - He is called the *satan* our adversary / but here is called the TEMPTER...
 - **Luke 4:1-13** satan even tried three different times to TEMP Jesus!
 - Because he would like nothing more than to TEMP us to questions the Word of God!
 - **Genesis 3** we have the first appearance of a question mark in the Bible...
 - Up until that point in the Bible every sentence has ended with a period...
 - Everything that has happened has been a statement of fact
 - Everything that has taken place has been good VERY good
 - Until satan tempted Eve and asked did God say question mark!
 - His tactics have not changed he still tries to get us to doubt the Word...
 - The Lord tells us that we ARE going to go through TRIBULATION but it has a purpose...
 - Satan subtly tires to get us to doubt the Word maybe God just does not love us...
 - He tries to keep us from listening to the Bible from believing the Word!
 - Paul HAD to KNOW their FAITH lest our labor might be in vain…
 - Paul wanted to KNOW if satan had tempted the believers in Thessalonica...
 - Was their FAITH still strong or had their labor in the Gospel been in VAIN!
- 3^{RD} The good news about their FAITH... vs. 6 (2 Points)
 - o About their FAITH and LOVE... vs. 6

- Timothy had already returned from his trip to Thessalonica...
- He came after Paul arrived in Corinth Acts 18:5 where he wrote this letter...
- And he brought GOOD NEWS euangelizō of their FAITH and LOVE!
- The church had NOT stumbled / had NOT forgotten / and NOT been tempted...
- There were two evidences of the GOOD NEWS about their FAITH and LOVE
- o 1st Always have good remembrance... vs. 6g
 - The church ALWAYS had good remembrance of Paul and his companions...
 - REMEMBRANCE 7x in NT more often translated as mention...
 - In other words they were always talking about Paul and in a GOOD way...
 - Since they were talking GOOD about Paul it meant they were OK with Jesus who was in Paul!
 - The number one result of sin is separation first from God Isaiah 59:2
 - But it also separates us from believers because we do not want to be reminded of our sin!
 - We start to avoid our Bible / avoid the church / warry of anyone who might convict us...
 - Because our FAITH has faltered and we have gotten our eyes off of Jesus!
 - I John 1:7 "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another."
- o 2nd Greatly desiring to see us... vs. 6
 - The church also had a GREAT DESIRE epipotheō to see Paul...
 - They were not HUYA about Paul coming they were ecstatic to see him again!
 - They joy at the return of the APOSTLE spoke volumes about their FAITH!
 - Often we try to reason with God how far away from the world do we need to be...
 - Can we at least look at the world how about touch just a light touch...
 - We do not want to be in the world just really close is that OK God...
 - The truth is if we are not drawing closer to the Lord then we are drifting away...
 - We can reassure ourselves that we attend Bible studies /attend church on Sunday...
 - But where is our heart are we excited / or just going through the motions...
 - It is not worth the danger to play around with the love of this world...
 - It is far too easy to fall in love with this world and become HUYA towards Jesus!
 - II Corinthians 13:5 "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith..."
- 4TH COMFORTED BY THEIR FAITH.... vs. 7-9 (4 POINTS)
 - o 1st He could call them brethren...
 - BRETHREN used 16x in the book 5x in chapters 1 and 2 / 10x in chapters 4 and 5
 - But this is the FIRST and ONLY time in THIS chapter...
 - The subtle hint is that Paul was NOT sure if they were brethren in the FAITH…
 - And to say the least he was VERY encouraged when he was able to call them BRETHREN!
 - o 2nd In affliction and distress... vs. 7
 - Paul was comforted parakaleō in his tribulation thilipsis!
 - The same things that Paul had sent Timothy to do for the church in Thessalonica...
 - The believers did to Paul comfort him in his tribulation and distress by their FAITH!
 - The Christian walk is NEVER a one-way street ministry goes both ways!
 - When we reach out to minster to others we often end up the ones who are blessed!
 - Proverbs 11:25 "He who waters will also be watered himself."
 - o 3rd But challenged them to continue in FAITH... vs. 8
 - For now we live IF (third class) you standfast (subjunctive) in the Lord...
 - Paul was encouraged by the GOOD NEWS he received from Timothy...
 - But that did not mean the battle was over the race was not won yet…
 - And Paul could only rest (*live*) IF they stand fast (*persevered*) in the Lord to the end!
 - Following Jesus is not a sprint it is more like a marathon…

- As a result we often start off well in our race but we do not finish well...
- **Hebrews 12:1** "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us..."
- o 4^{th} Thankful for the joy that comes from their FAITH... 9
 - The apostle could hardly contain his joy over hearing about their continued FAITH...
 - Every time he went to pray he overflowed with joy and thank because of them!
 - "How we thank God for you! Because of you we have great joy as we enter God's presence." (NLT)
 - One of the hardest things as a pastor is when people make choices that take them from God...
 - With brokenness a pastor comes before the Lord heart breaking for a wayward sheep...
 - But one of the greatest blessing for a pastor is when people choose to walk in FAITH...
 - The joy BEFORE the Lord is inexpressible as we give thanks for what God is doing!

• **5**TH - The prayer for their FAITH... vs. **10-13** (4 POINTS)

- o 1st Praying to prefect what was lacking in their FAITH... vs. 10
 - Night and day Paul prayed can also be translated as implored / to want or desire...
 - Paul wanted exceedingly to see the FACE of the believers in Thessalonica again...
 - To PERFECT that which was LACKING in their FAITH…
 - PERFECT $katartiz\bar{o}$ to equip / complete / to finish...
 - What was lacking in their FAITH that Paul wanted to COMPLETE / FINISH the WORD!
 - **II Timothy 3:17** "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete [same root word], thoroughly equipped for every good work."
 - That is why it is so important for us to be constantly in the WORD II Timothy 2:15
 - Because it is THROUGH the WORD that we are PERFECTED in our FAITH Romans 10:17
- o 2^{nd} Praying for God to DIRECT ... vs. 11
 - Paul PRAYED for our God and Father and our Lord Christ DIRECT our way to you...
 - DIRECT 3x in NT a word that means to make straight remove any distractions...
 - Life has a lot of distractions things that keep us from following after Jesus...
 - And if we are not careful we can slip and fall into any number of sins…
 - But as we look to the Lord He keeps our feet safe on the right road!
 - Matthew 7:14 "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life..."
- o 3rd Praying for abounding LOVE... vs. 12
 - Paul PRAYED for the Lord to make (optative) them increase and abound in LOVE...
 - Increase used 9x NT to SUPERABOUND not just a little more / a LOT more...
 - Abound 39x NT to OVERFLOW they would increase so much their LOVE would overflow!
 - One to another (believers) but also to ALL men (unbelievers) just like Paul towards them!
 - If I told you I wanted you to fill a pitcher with water from the ocean not problem...
 - What if I told you to put all the water in the ocean in that one pitcher WOW!
 - When we experience all the LOVE that God has for it is IMPOSSIBLE for us to contain it...
 - It will overflow us onto others Galatians 5:22 it will mark us as Christians John 13:35
- o 4^{th} Praying to establish their hearts blameless in holiness... vs. 13
 - Timothy had been sent to ESTABLISH sterizo by pointing them to Jesus...
 - But ONLY Jesus could ESTABLISH sterizo their hearts BLAMLESS in HOLINESS ...
 - BLAMLESS without accusation meaning all our sin has been FORGIVEN Hebrews 10:17
 - HOLINESS the noun form of the adjective HOLY HOLINESS as a quality...
 - Who makes us HOLY Hebrews 2:11 we are sanctified (made HOLY) by Jesus Christ!
 - The PRAYER of Paul was they be FOGIVEN and made HOLY when Jesus returns!
 - Which should be the prayer of EVERY believer to KNOW we have been forgiven by Jesus...
 - And to be set part HOLY for Jesus till they day He comes to bring us HOME!