

## 1 THESSALONIANS 3 READY FOR THE RETURN

**Chapter two ended with these sweet words:** 17 Dear brothers and sisters, after we were separated from you for a little while (though our hearts never left you), we tried very hard to come back because of our intense longing to see you again.

18 We wanted very much to come to you, and I, Paul, tried again and again, but Satan prevented us.

19 After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you!

20 Yes, you are our pride and joy. **Therefore...**

**3:1** Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, 2 and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, 3 that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.

### I TOLD YOU SO

4 For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.

5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain. **(Never!)**

- This always reminds me of the Prophet Isaiah speaking on behalf of the lord in **55:8-11** - 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. 10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the Sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; **It shall not return to Me**

**void**, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in *the thing* for which I sent it.

- I'll say it again... You just cannot go wrong sharing the Lord and sharing His word with your loved ones... and even with strangers!
- Might it be a bit awkward? Scary? Uncomfortable? Sure!
  - But pray... believe... and be ready and the Lord will give you opportunity to share His word, AND IT WILL NOT BE WASTED TIME!
  - Just this week someone who I have been praying for many YEARS mentioned to me that they were going to church with a friend...
    - I felt as if from heaven God winked at me and said:” **I was listening...**”

## TIMOTHY'S ENCOURAGING REPORT

6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your **faith and love**, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you—

7 therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith.

- Like a worried parent the Apostle Paul worried about his spiritual children. He was being persecuted and pursued by enemies of the gospel.
- But it was worth the pain and suffering when he heard that the Thessalonians had the faith and the love that the gospel brings.

8 For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

- **CEV** - Your strong faith in the Lord is like a breath of new life.
- I can totally relate to this... There is just nothing that encourages me more that to hear of people's faith being deepened and refreshed in the Lord!
- I guess it is why I love Camp & testimonies so much!
- Tomorrow I will lead a memorial service for a man who I had

the privilege of baptizing 10 or 12 years ago – I honestly do not remember it – Bur HE DID, and his family does. What a blessing to know that CCSV was used by God to make a difference in his and in his family's lives.

- Recalling and rehearing testimonies about how God is working is life and breath to me also!

9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

- Where are the night and day prayers out there?
- We really should make some shirts or something... We don't want praise for praying in the wee hours of the morning... Maybe some coffee... BUT, if you cannot sleep – PRAY! You won't be tired in the morning if you pray at night!
- Paul's love for the Thessalonians motivated him to be a good prayer warrior.
- Paul knew his loved ones too. He knew where and how they needed to mature in the Lord – how to “perfect” or complete their spiritual growth...
- How did he know them so well? Time. Time spent with them. Conversations... Work projects... Studies... Meals... Rides... Service... If he had the chance to get a Calvary Chapel Magazine I have no doubt Paul would have turned to the last pages and prayed the missionaries listed there...
- Paul loved his Thessalonian believers...
- Listen to how much he wanted to see them some more...

11 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

- I love that the Apostle asked God to direct his path...
- We believe at CCSV that where God guides, God provides.
- This is a righteous way to pray... Please God, guide me where I ought to go... HE WILL! And you might be surprised where He leads you...

## LISTEN TO THIS SWEET PRAYER...

12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, 13 so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness (**Sacred, moral, consecrated**) before our God and Father (**WHY?**) at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

- Once again the Apostle mentions the return of Jesus.
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- **Guzik** - Paul was reminded of Jesus' return, because nothing can encourage us to holiness like remembering that Jesus might come today.

I hope He does come back today... AND if He does I hope that you are ready for His return. I hope that the next time we share communion it will be WITH Him in heaven. Just in case it is let's practice for that moment by taking communion together today...