

**I. Distressed - 1 Thess 3:4-5**

1. They were warned about persecution (**verse 4**)
    - Rea -can anything adequately prepare us for opposition?
    - Jesus never promised it would be easy
    - Rea -Jesus also warned that we would be persecuted... most shy away from this in two ways:
      - 1) we don't tell/ train believers that they will be persecuted
      - 2) we do all we can to make the gospel "acceptable" - it's not supposed to be acceptable... but true
  2. Just as Paul had said "it turned out that way"
    - the message rejected
    - the message/ people opposed
  3. He couldn't take it any longer - so he sent to find out about them (**verse 5**)
    - he sent Timothy to find out
    - Rea -note he did not send Timothy to encourage... only... he sent to find out about them
  4. Satan as the tempter
    - had the tempter tempted them?
    - Rea -had Satan "blocked" them (see 2:18)
    - presented in Scripture as a roaring lion
    - Rea -NOT passive watcher... but an active "blocker"
    - Rea -Satan is alive and well... not in Hollywood (only) but in the local church
  5. Paul is concerned their labors be in vain
    - Satan could produce disunity... sow the seeds of bad doctrine - defile the holiness God intended in His church
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
1. Are we concerned about the same thing that Paul is concerned about?
    - concerned about people... like Paul
    - concerned about Satan?
  2. Jesus said "get behind me Satan" - to who did He say these words... discuss how Satan can use even the best of us... in the local church
  3. "In vain" (verse 5) - can Satan make our work "in vain?"
    - can he "steal" your joy?
    - can he spoil our motives?

**II. Rejuvenated - 1 Thess. 3:6-10**

1. Timothy returns with good news (**verse 6**)
  - Rea -he did not bring good news about church growth or the beauty of their new sanctuary, but their faith and love
  - also, he brings good memories about their time together
  - they long to see Paul ... and Paul longs to see them as well
2. The back side of Timothy's trip (**verse 7**)
  - Paul and company are encouraged
  - even though they are in the midst of distress and persecution

- Rea -the writer mentions physical struggle, but the text does not
- Rea -does my Christian faith encourage others in their struggle?
3. We really live (**verse 8**)
- Paul is greatly “strengthened” because they are firm
- Rea 4. The danger of Christian living
- to NOT stand firm
- to slide into conformity to the world
- to drift into the false doctrines both within and outside the faith
- into depression about the “state of the nation”
5. Note that Paul was able to “really live” - a renewed sense of energy
- Rea -refers to the internal spiritual man/ woman - that (perhaps) received a boost of hope
- Rea -how greatly we affect one another... your presence and your contribution really, really counts
6. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians (**verse 9**)
- once again the joy Paul experienced was greatly affected by these remote believers
- Rea -very pointed “because of you”
- Rea -though Paul’s joy “did not depend on circumstances...” it helped him rejoice - there it is in the text
- how can we thank God enough? Paul thanks God for their work
7. Night and day they prayed for these Thessalonians (**verse 10**)
- A. Prayed earnestly
- B. Prayed to see them again
- C. So that they might supply what is lacking in their faith
- he wants to strengthen them
- he wants to help them grow (even further) in their discipleship
- Rea -is there anything “lacking” in your faith?
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
1. Diligent prayer for people
- for the spiritual journey - not their jobs, not their health, not their financial needs
2. What encourages you? - in the church
- what discourages you? - in the church
3. They are winning a spiritual victory here - discuss what it is

### **III. Focused - 1 Thess. 3:11-13**

1. May God allow us to come to you (verse 11)
- Rea -its actually up to God even though Satan had previously “blocked” the way - 2:18
- Rea 2. Why do you think that God may NOT have cleared the way? - so far
3. He never made a ministry move without the leadership of Jesus
- doors were closed in regard to Macedonia
- a vision was given in regard to God’s direction - Acts 16:6-10
- Rea 4. God the Father and Jesus are equated - Jesus is God
5. He prayed for love for them - for one another (**verse 12**)
- increase

- overflow
- Rea -like our love overflows for you
- Rea -just an opinion - I rarely see this type love in the local church for one another. That may be why we have so many fights, and splits and struggles for control. If we have this type of love... why is it such a “hassle” for pastors, staff and rank and file church members to visit someone in the hospital or the nursing home?
- this is superabundant love
- 6. They had seen Paul’s example of love
  - tender compassion (1 Thess. 2:7-8)
  - encouragement (2:11-12)
- Rea -leadership needs to set the example in everything!!! - but especially in the are of overflowing love
- 7. Our sincere love provides the world with an example of Christian character
  - Rea -God “IS” love
  - Rea -so... what does the lack of love tell the world?
- 8. Strengthen you in holiness and blameless living (**verse 13**)
  - Rea -so the context is love (verses 11-12) - in this context then, holy and blameless would mean holy and blameless - *in love*
  - Rea -actions testify to our faith and also testify to the lack of our faith
  - Rea -we never “love enough” - it ought to overflow - be a growing thing
  - Rea -people ought be able to look our life and find it “holy and blameless” - after all you know a tree by its fruit
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
  1. Discuss love... and how it is communicated or not
  2. Can you be “holy” and also “loving?”
    - can you live up to God’s “laws” in a loving way?

Bob Bunn - SS lesson for 3-27-22