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1 Thessalonians 3
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By Dan Maines

1 Thessalonians 3

1 Thessalonians 3:1-2

Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it best to be left behind, alone in Athens, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the benefit of your faith.

† Paul's concern for the Thessalonians was so deep that he sent Timothy to support them.

† Timothy is described as a true fellow worker, showing the

shared labor of ministry.

† Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History 3.4) notes the role of Timothy in building up the early churches.

1 Thessalonians 3:3-4

So that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions, for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. For even when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction, and so it happened, as you know.

† Affliction was not unexpected, it was part of God's plan.

† Paul had warned them, so their trials confirmed his words.

† Tacitus (Annals 15.44) records the intense persecution believers endured, showing that affliction was indeed part of their destiny.

1 Thessalonians 3:5

For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be for nothing.

† Paul's pastoral heart shows his concern that persecution might shake their faith.

† The reality of temptation and trial was present in their daily lives.

1 Thessalonians 3:6-7

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, for this reason, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith.

† Timothy's report brought Paul comfort and joy.

† Their faith and love stood firm despite opposition.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 59) also gave thanks for reports

of faithfulness among believers, paralleling Paul's joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:8-9

For now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord. For what thanks can we repay to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God because of you?

† Paul declares that their perseverance is his life and joy.

† Their faithfulness was proof that his ministry was fruitful.

1 Thessalonians 3:10

As we keep praying most earnestly night and day that we may see your faces, and may complete what is lacking in your faith.

† Paul's prayers were constant and intense.

† He longed to supply what was lacking in their spiritual growth.

† Justin Martyr (Dialogue with Trypho 39) wrote of the constant prayers of the faithful, echoing Paul's zeal.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-12

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you.

† Paul's prayer was for increased love, both within the church and outward toward all.

† This reflects Christ's command to love even enemies.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

† Paul points them to the coming of the Lord in judgment and vindication.

† Holiness and faithfulness would secure them at Christ's

appearing.

† Josephus (Wars 6.9.3) recorded the devastation of Jerusalem, showing the wrath that fell on those outside of Christ.

How it applies to us today

† 1 Thessalonians 3 teaches that affliction is part of Christian life, but God uses it to strengthen faith.

† The perseverance of the early church assures us that God's promises never fail.

† In the fulfilled kingdom, we too are established blameless in Christ, living in love and holiness as His saints.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.4 - Timothy strengthening churches

† Tacitus, Annals 15.44 - persecution of Christians

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 59 - thanksgiving for faithfulness of believers

† Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 39 - constant prayers of the faithful

† Josephus, Wars 6.9.3 - wrath on Jerusalem

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