

The Bible for Everyman: 1 Thessalonians

As One: The Unity of God's People

Week 3: 1 Thessalonians Chapter 3

Welcome to Session 3: As followers of Jesus, we were created *for*, and then encouraged *to*, follow after Jesus *with others* doing the same - His desire for us is that we would pursue Him **AS ONE**....as one community, as one family....

“But you know that we are destined for such troubles.” - 1 Thessalonians 3:3

Culture has sold us a brand of Christianity that avoids pain, and promises health - wealth - prosperity and a life of ease. And yet....this Jesus, the one we pursue was:

- **SOLD OUT** by his own friends
- **REJECTED** by his culture
- **HATED** by those he came to save
- **PERSECUTED** by the church
- **PROSECUTED** by the government
- And was....**TORTURED, ABANDONED...and KILLED**

When Isaiah described the Messiah in chapter 53, the Messiah *WE* are following afterIsaiah said that he was a man “*despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.*”

And yet I've often built my life, and my faith on false expectations. This is of the case:

Expectations are often _____.

We often hold these types of expectations in every arena of our lives: with our relationships, our finances, health, our profession...even what God is expected to do *for* us. And yet, we are promised trouble....and yet far to often:

_____ is so _____ to my faith

We're so surprised, even though God set the proper expectations for trouble in His word:

- **John 16:33** - In this world you *will have trouble*
 - **1 Corinthians 10:13** - reminds us that all men have faced the same temptations and afflictions....that struggle is UNIVERSAL

- **James 1:2** - tells us to consider these trials a joy, as we think of what they are producing in us
- **1 Peter 4:12** - says do not be surprised by the fiery trial when it comes upon us to test us....as if something strange were happening to us....

But suffering raises real questions in our hearts: God...do you not see me? Are you not even there? Are you powerful enough to save me? Do you care? Why won't you just stop this....or fix this....or heal them...?

“Even while we were with you, we warned you that troubles would soon come - and they did as you well know.” - 1 Thessalonians 3:4

What I do with _____, reveals what I've done with _____.

“We sent him (Timothy) to STRENGTHEN you, and to ENCOURAGE you in your faith and to keep you from being shaken by the troubles you were going through.” - 1 Thessalonians 3:2-3

Their response, their plan of attack was simple... they faced trouble _____.

God's plan since the beginning is that we would live in intentional and powerful community. In short:

_____ has ALWAYS been God's plan for us.

God's men rallied together, and with a purpose - to STRENGTHEN and ENCOURAGE. We can often (wrongly) think that these things are separate endeavors, and we can move out rashly and try and solve the problems ourselves. But instead of asking ourselves what WE think the people in our lives need....what if we asked the Lord what the people in our lives need?...

Perhaps we don't always need to KNOW some _____....maybe we just need to know that the _____.

Maybe...for the people in our lives, just like this early church.....**Strength....can come in the form of encouragement.** Encouragement that we give and receive to one another, but when did we swallow the lie that a life lived alone is a powerful life.

When did we settle for _____?

The goal of this church was fellowship, to gather in order to bless *one another*.

“I sent Timothy to find out whether your faith was still strong. I was afraid that the tempter had gotten the best of you and that our work had been useless.” - 1 Thessalonians 3:5

Paul wanted to find out if their faith was MATURING, if it was strong enough to go the distance....it's not enough to share the hope of Christ with the people in our lives....and then not return to see how they are moving along.

Our hope is not that people would simply _____ Jesus....

Our hope is that they would _____ Jesus

“And so we have been greatly encouraged in the midst of our own troubles and suffering” Isn't that the most beautiful picture of how this church is moving and growing and living? Look at the cycle of faith and encouragement!

They find _____ that encourages their _____....and you see how God designed the church to continue and thrive. And look at their activity, verse 10 ***“Night and day we pray EARNESTLY for you....”***

If God answered every prayer you prayed for the last month....whose life would be different? Whose life would change?

- Would there be new faith? Would anyone be healed? Restored relationships? What about your church community? How would it be better? Or would it be only *YOU* that experienced a blessing?

“May the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows.” 1 Thessalonians 3:12

BUT GUESS WHAT?

We can't love people we don't _____

We can't love people we aren't _____

And we can't love people we don't _____