

I Thessalonians

Chapter 3:1-13

¹ **Therefore**, when **we** could no longer **endure** it, **we thought it best** to be **left behind, alone at Athens**,² 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,

Therefore > See I Thessalonians 2:17-18 > ⁷ But we, brothers and sisters, having been orphaned from you by absence for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and Satan hindered us.

Endure > (Strong's) to cover closely (so as to keep water out), generally to bear up under

Thought it best > (Keathley) (The Greek word) means “to be well pleased, to willingly determine, to think it a good thing to do.” It stresses the willingness, the positive choice.

We ... alone at Athens > Let's take a look at some passages from Acts that gives us a good timeline.

- **Acts 17:14-17** (some of the Berean brothers escort Paul to Athens) > ¹⁴ Then immediately the brothers sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵ Now those who escorted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and **receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they left.** ¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he observed that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be present.
- **Acts 18:5** (Paul now in Corinth) > ⁵ But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

Left behind > (Strong's) to leave, leave behind. usage > I leave behind, desert, abandon, forsake; I leave remaining, reserve.

(Utley) **Eph 5:31** > ³¹ For this reason a man shall **leave** his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

Strengthen > (Swindoll) The Greek word for “strengthen” is used in other contexts with the idea of buttressing or supporting a structure.

³ so that no one would be **disturbed** by these **afflictions**. For you yourselves know that we have been **destined** for this. ⁴ 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.

Disturbed > (Strong's) (Interesting word!!! Look what it specifically means!) to wag the tail, to greet, flatter, disturb. Usage > I fawn upon, flatter, beguile; pass: I am perturbed.

Verse 5 will give the understanding as to why this word may have been used here

Afflictions > (Strong's) *thlipsis* > *tribulation*

The word *affliction* > *thlibo* in verse 4 is the source word for *afflictions* found in verse 3. (Precept Austin) (*thlibo* from *tribos* = wear away, rub, break in pieces ... from the root *thlao* = squash, crush) literally means to press, squeeze, crush, squash, hem in and then to be narrow. *Thlibo* used literally pictures putting pressure upon or pressing in upon or pressing hard upon a person as when Jesus was forced to get in the boat to keep from *crowding* Him (Mark 3:9).

(Barclay) "*thlipsis* which originally expressed sheer, physical pressure on a man ... originally *thlipsis* meant simply pressure and could, for instance, describe the pressure of a great stone on a man's body. At first it was used quite literally, but in the New Testament it has come to describe that pressure of events which is persecution.

Matthew 13:20-21 > ²⁰ *The one sown with seed on the rocky places, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction (*thlipsis*) or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he falls away.*

Remember this verse from last week (and the comment made about the Greek word translated as *behaved* > *ginomai* > *to come into being*)? **I Thessalonians 2:10** > ¹⁰ *You are witnesses, and so is God, of how devoutly and rightly and blamelessly we **behaved** toward you believers;* It seemed that Paul, Silas, and Timothy had determined to not bring the effects of their abuse in Philippi into their ministry to those in Thessaloniki.

(Wiersbe relays the following) > Times of suffering can be times of selfishness. Persecuted people often become very self-centered and demanding. What life does **to** us depends on what life finds **in** us; and nothing reveals the true inner man like the furnace of affliction. Some people build walls in times of trial and shut themselves off. Others build bridges and draw closer to the Lord and His people. This was Paul's prayer for these believers, and God answered it: "*The charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth*" (2 Thess. 1:3)."

Destined > (Strong's) to be laid, lie

We kept telling you > (Robertson) (Greek grammar) we used to tell you

(Utley) This is (Greek grammar) which means repeated action in past time

(Constable) Often new believers, and even older believers, interpret difficulty as a sign that they need to change something. Timothy reminded them that persecution is a normal experience for the Christian, just as Paul had previously instructed them

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.*

The tempter > (Precept Austin) > *The tempter* (*peirazo* from the noun *peira* = test from *peiro* = perforate, pierce through to test durability of things) is a morally neutral word simply meaning "to test". For example, it may mean to put to the test and so to search out or to discover what kind of person someone is. And so it may be used of God or Christ in a good sense as putting men to the test that they may stand approved, as when Abraham was tested by God's request to him to offer Isaac, his son of promise, his only begotten son. *Peirazo* on the other hand when used of the devil always has a bad connotation, meaning to test or tempt in order to disapprove. It is always the devil's aim to entice men to sin and bring them to a fall as in the temptation of Christ

⁶ ***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,*

But now > (Strong's) just now

Faith ... Love > (Hiebert) *Faith* speaks of their characteristic attitude Godward, while *love* is their characteristic attitude manward ... "Paul's formula '*faith working through love*' (Gal 5:6) expresses the intimate relationship between the two qualities."

Kindly > (Strong's) good. Usage > intrinsically good, good in nature, good whether it be seen to be so or not, the widest and most colorless of all words with this meaning.

(Precept Austin) (The word) is one whose goodness and works of goodness are transferred to others. Good and doing good is the idea. (The word) describes that which is beneficial in addition to being good.

⁷ *for this reason, brothers and sisters, in all our **distress** and **affliction** we were **comforted** about you through your faith;* ⁸ *for now we really live, if you **stand firm** in the Lord.*

Distress > (Strong's) necessity

(HELPS Word Study) *necessity; a compelling need requiring immediate action, i.e. in a pressing situation.*

Afflictions > (Strong's) *thlipsis* > *tribulation*

(Hiebert) The two nouns, "distress" and "persecution," are linked together under one article, thus forming two aspects of the whole difficult situation in which they find themselves. (This is following a Greek grammar rule)

Distress and Afflictions > **I Cor 4:9-12** > ⁹ *For I think, God has exhibited us, the apostles, last of all as men condemned to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to mankind.* ¹⁰ *We are fools on account of Christ, but you are prudent in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are without honor!* ¹¹ *Up to this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed and roughly treated and homeless;* ¹² *and we labor, working with our own hands; when we are verbally abused, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;* ³ *when we are slandered, we reply as friends; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.*

Comforted > (Precept Austin) The Greek word literally means to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon

(Barnes) > In the inevitable trials of the ministerial office there is no source of comfort more rich and pure than this.

(Spurgeon) Never is the servant of God so full of delight as when he sees that the Holy Spirit is visiting his hearers, making them to know the Lord, and confirming them in that heavenly knowledge.

Stand firm > (Precept Austin) can mean to stand literally ("whenever you stand praying... " Mk 11:25) but is used figuratively in this passage meaning to stand firm in faith and duty, to be constant, to persevere, to remain steadfast, to continue in a state.

⁹ *For what thanks can we give to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice because of you before our God,* 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?*

For what thanks ... (Barnes) That is, what expression of thanksgiving can we render to God that shall be an equivalent for the joy which your holy walk has furnished, or which will suitably express our gratitude for it.

Give ... in return > (Precept Austin) (*antapodidomi* from *antí* = in turn // *apodídomi* = render <> from *apo* = from // *didomi* = give) means to give back in return for something received. The idea is to practice reciprocity with respect to an obligation.

As we keep praying ... Do you see the typical pattern of Paul's prayers? "We pray this ___ that this ___ may occur"

Most earnestly > (Utley) The adverb "most earnestly" is a very strong, triple compound (*huper* > over // *ek* > from out of // *perissou* > abundant), emotional term

Ephesians 3:20 > ²⁰ *Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,*

Complete what is lacking > (Precept Austin on *complete*) Secular Greek used *katartizo* (*complete*) for manning a fleet or outfitting an army with provisions so they would be thoroughly prepared to go to war.

¹¹ ***Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you;*** ¹² ***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;*** 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.***

(Utley) ***I Thessalonians 3:11-13*** > is one sentence in Greek. (And it is written in Paul's format)

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus (Hiebert) Thus to address the Lord Jesus as the object of their prayer, equally with the Father, is to ascribe full deity to Him. To make Christ one with the Father in the prerogative of hearing and answering prayer is to bracket Him with the Father as equal in power and glory. For a strong monotheist like Paul this would have been unthinkable if he had regarded Christ Jesus as a mere man, however exalted.

Direct > (HELPS Word Studies) *kateuthýnō* (from *katá*, "down, exactly according to," intensifying /*euthýnō*, "make straight") – properly, go straight *down* by the most direct, efficient route; to go in a direct (*straight*) *course* – avoiding all *unnecessary delays*, without any undue loss of time or achievement.

Love > (Swindoll) We can apply this in four ways: L-O-V-E.

- When I think of **L**, I remember that to be a **part of someone's life**, I have to listen. I must respect them, accept them, and be gracious enough to hear what they have to say.
- **O** stands for **overlook**. When I listen to people, I should overlook their flaws so that I can affirm them in other ways. Most of us are already well aware of our flaws.
- **V** stands for **value**. When two people value each other, it affects the way they think about and communicate criticisms or problems. There's a mutual respect.
- Finally, **E** reminds us to **express our love**. Love is demonstrative. It's a verb. Love is something we do."

Coming > (Walvoord) The word here in 1 Thessalonians 3:13 is the Greek word, *parousia*, which means "presence," but is usually translated "coming." It is derived from two words: a preposition (*para*) meaning "along," and *ousia*, which is a form of the verb *to be*; hence the word means, "to be alongside of," or "to be present." While commonly translated in the Bible by the word "coming," *parousia* itself does not strictly mean coming and is used with other meanings. It means "presence" and is translated that way in 2 Corinthians 10:10 and Philippians 2:12. What does this word *parousia* mean here in Thessalonians? When someone is coming, we also speak of his presence. For instance, a visiting preacher might be welcomed with the words, "We are happy for the coming of Pastor John Doe." What would be meant by that? How he came would not be important; the point is that he is here, and we are glad for his presence. His coming was just the means to the end. Even in English we use the term coming in the sense of presence. That is precisely the thought here.