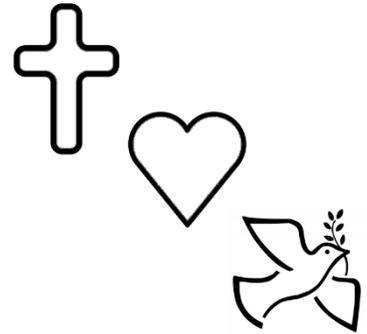


October 25, 2020
Willerup United Methodist Church
Sermon Notes
Pastor Marvin Singh
1 & 2 Thessalonians, Lesson 5
Concern for the Church



This series of meditations is based on the books of First and Second Thessalonians.

The Letters to the Thessalonians were written by Paul to confirm the truths he had taught while he was with them and to dispel any false teachings that had spread among them. He commended them for their faith, encouraged them to press on in faith and love, and showed why they could always have hope in Christ.

Concern for the Church

1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5

¹⁷But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. ¹⁸For we wanted to come to you--certainly I, Paul, did, again and again--but Satan stopped us. ¹⁹For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

^{3:1}So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. ²We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, ³so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. ⁴In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. ⁵For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.

Paul is expressing his longing to be with the church at Thessalonica.

He was not able to be present due to two reasons

- a. The hindrance of the Spirit of Christ (Acts 16:6)
- b. Satan blocking his coming (2:18)

He was worried that the believers could be tricked by Satan, the impact of the Gospel could be erased, and the other reason was that struggles and persecutions could put pressures on their faith to quit.

Finally, Paul sent Timothy, the trusted fellow soldier who has matured while following the Lord through his ministry.

Timothy was sent for three reasons:

a. **To spread the gospel**

How do you spread the gospel?

By sharing the life of Christ which is in you. Paul preached about the purpose of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ - to die for the sins of the world on the cross.

Acts 17:2-3, “As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. ‘This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,’ he said.”

Paul wanted Timothy to continue to remind the church of their responsibility to share what they have experienced and received from Paul.

We cannot keep it for ourselves. Jesus always encouraged the healed to go and tell the world “what the Lord has done for them.” (ex. Mark 5:18-20)

Jesus had commissioned the church to Preach the Gospel to every nation, every tribe, every individual, till he comes back.

b. **To strengthen the believers**

The believers’ strength lies in their time spent in the Word (Acts 2:42-45)

They devoted themselves to:

- (i). The apostles’ teaching - meditating on the Word of God
- (ii). Fellowship
- (iii). Breaking of bread
- (iv). Prayer

(v). Sharing with others

The result: every day The Lord added to their number.

Timothy was sent to Thessalonica to remind them and strengthen them in their journey of life and of faith.

c. **To encourage the church in their faith.**

Our faith is always tested through trials, struggles, problems.

The Christian way would be characterized by tribulation.

Paul and Barnabas, spoke to the South Galatian converts (Acts 14:22),

“strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.

‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.’”

Faith is a comprehensive term for the Christian life as a whole.

Satan targets the believers especially when the tragedies of life takes place - sickness, loss of a job, death of a loved one, betrayal, rejection.

Paul was worried about the church, praying that Satan may not sway them back to their old ways in the midst of suffering.

Timothy's work of confirming and encouraging the Thessalonians in their new faith had an important purpose, namely, helping them to face and endure the oppression that they experienced as a result of their conversion to the Christian faith. In his concern that not one of his converts be lost Paul had sent Timothy back to Thessalonica.

The Epistle to the Thessalonians, Charles A. Wanamaker, pg. 129

Jesus was tempted when he was starting his ministry, as Satan tried to create doubt in his mind, - **IF**, you are the Son of God, do this. (Matthew 4:3)

Satan creates doubt in the minds of Christians to abandon their faith.

We need to remember that we are the children of God,

1 John 4:4, ‘You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.’”

Revelation 20:1-2, “And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.”

James 4:7-8, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist** the devil, and he will **flee from you. Come near to God** and he will come near to you. ...”

The joy of the early Christians was based on their certainty of future salvation, regardless of what happened to them in the present.

1 Thess. 1:6; Galatians 5:22; Romans 14:17; 15:19

Paul had finally come to know that in spite of their suffering the church was strong in their faith and also growing in their Christian ministry and witness. He was doubly blessed and thankful to God that:

- a) His mission to the Gentiles which was commissioned by the Lord had come to fruition.
- b) At the coming of Christ, Paul can present to the Lord these precious souls who have become his joy and glory.

He has a sense of a “crown of pride” (for the Thessalonian church) like the wreaths placed on victorious military commanders or the winners of athletic contests to signify their achievement. They are the proof of Paul's faithfulness to his call and commission given by the Lord himself as a missionary to the Gentiles. 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 15:10

The Day of Christ, the return of Christ, the Greek word “*PAROUSIA*” is used six times in the letters to Thessalonians and one time in another epistle, 1 Corinthians 15:23.

The coming of the Sovereign Lord. Matthew 24:3, 27, 37, 39

Three references of the Son of Man. James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 1:16; 3:4; 1 John 2:28

Are we faithful to the call and commission which the Lord has given to each believer in Christ? Are we concerned about people of faith who are struggling in their situations? Do we pray for them? Write to them? Call them and send gifts with our resources to share their burden?

References used in preparing sermons in this series:

Barlow, George. *The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary: I & II Thessalonians*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1896.

Bruce, F. F., *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 & 2 Thessalonians*. USA: Zondervan, 1982.

Green, Gene L. *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letters to the Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002.

Dake, Finnis J., *Dake Annotated Reference Bible*.