

A TROUBLESOME TIME (1 Thessalonians 3:1-5)

I. Paul's restlessness.

- A. Twice in these five verses, Paul said he could no longer forbear.
 - 1. This Greek word comes from a word that means to roof over.
 - 2. It figuratively means to cover with silence.
 - 3. It carries the idea enduring patiently, to bear or suffer.
- B. Paul says he could no longer remain in silence over them - he had to know what was going on in their lives spiritually.
- C. Paul was so intent on finding out about their state that he was willing to be left alone in Athens.
 - 1. It must have been notable for him to mention it here.
 - 2. Over the course of the previous few months several attempts to arrest or even kill Paul had taken place.
 - 3. No doubt there was a sense uneasiness at being left alone because of people wanting him dead.
 - 4. This shows the great desire he had to know of their faith.
 - 5. He wanted to know if their faith in God and His word was growing or if they were faltering because of the tempter.
- D. This is the only time Paul designates Satan as the tempter.
 - 1. The word tempter deals with entangling one in sin.
 - 2. This person is engaged in finding out the weak points of someone and exposing those weaknesses.
 - 3. The devil looks for our weaknesses and attacks them.
 - 4. This is the reason Paul was so concerned about the faith of the Thessalonians.
 - 5. Their faith was weak because it was new and needed strengthening.
- E. Paul was restless and had to know how these brethren fared spiritually speaking.

II. Timothy's role.

- A. Because of his restlessness, Paul sent Timothy to these brethren.
- B. This was a role that Timothy filled for Paul more than once.
 - 1. In 1 Timothy 1:3-4 we are told that Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus.
 - 2. He planned to send Timothy to the Philippian brethren for this purpose (Philippians 2:19-20).
- C. Notice the designations given Timothy by Paul.
 - 1. He was a brother - meaning brother in Christ.
 - 2. He was a minister - one who waited on others while serving Jesus.
 - 3. He was a fellow laborer - he labored with Paul in preaching and teaching the gospel to the lost.
- D. Timothy's role was two-fold.
 - 1. Timothy was to establish them.
 - a. This word literally means to turn resolutely in a certain direction.

- b. This is the same Greek word found in Luke 9:51 where we are told Jesus “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.”
 - c. These brethren needed strengthening of their resolve in the gospel.
 - d. Timothy’s role was a laborer in the gospel of Christ and this is the only thing that could strengthen them in troublesome times.
2. Timothy was to comfort them.
- a. This word is the same Greek word applied to the Holy Spirit as Comforter in John 14:16.
 - b. It literally means to call to one’s side.
 - c. Timothy was to give them comfort through the word of God (Romans 15:4).
 - d. He was to give them the comfort he had received from God (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

III. The reason for Timothy’s role.

- A. There was a reason for everything that Paul did it seems.
 - 1. Paul was not one who flew by the seat of his pants.
 - 2. He thought things through and reasoned things out before he made a decision.
- B. There were two reasons for the role given to Timothy.
 - 1. The first mentioned is that no man should be moved by the afflictions befalling the congregation.
 - a. The troublesome times in Thessalonika did not end with Paul’s departure.
 - b. The Christians were still being persecuted and Paul did not want to lose any of them.
 - c. The word move means shaken.
 - d. He wanted none of them to have their faith shaken by these afflictions and fall away.
 - 2. The second reason is that Paul did not want his labor to be in vain.
 - a. He didn’t want all the effort that left him so weary to go up in smoke.
 - b. Illus of child making sand castle and another knocking it down.
 - c. Illus of Jincy’s cake for Ashley and how mad she got.
 - d. Paul had bestowed great labor on them and did not want to see his efforts wasted.
- C. Timothy went to these brethren to strengthen and comfort them in troublesome times.
- D. By doing this, the brethren would not be shaken and the efforts of Paul would not have been in vain.

IV. The reality of life.

- A. There is a reality that all Christians face that is shown by Paul to these brethren and to us - we will suffer affliction.
- B. Affliction is from a word that means pressure on the spirit.

1. It comes from a word that means to crush or break.
 2. Satan sends afflictions on us to crush us.
 3. They put great pressure on our spirits so as to get them to break and to turn to sin.
- C. Paul told these brethren that we are “appointed thereunto.”
1. It carries the idea of having an appointment with afflictions.
 2. We are set to have afflictions is what it literally means.
 3. All those who live godly in Christ Jesus are going to have afflictions.
- D. This is a reality of the Christian life.
- E. How we deal with them will determine where we end up in eternity.
- F. These brethren needed Paul and Timothy to help strengthen them and that is why Paul did his best to get back to them and sent Timothy when he could not go.
- G. The reality they faced is the same reality we face - there are going to be afflictions.
- H. Paul knew that the only way they could endure them is if they were strengthened and comforted by God’s word, the gospel.
- I. That is also the only way we will endure these afflictions.