

## Bible Study 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13

Acts 17:1-10a records how Paul & Silas' visited Thessalonica, where they preached the gospel and people were saved – a church formed, but after only about three weeks they were forced to leave by the local Jews.

1. **Read 1 Thess 2:17-3:13.** Make a list of all the things that reveal the kind of relationship Paul had with the new Christians in Thessalonica. How would you describe their relationship?

*v.17 "torn away" (very sad to go); vv17-18 intense longing & effort to see them; vv19-20 'you are our glory & joy' also v9; 1-5 anxious for their spiritual welfare so sent Timothy; v6 they have happy memories & long to see Paul and Silas again; v12 their love for them overflows. There is great love and affection shared between Paul and the Thessalonians, where they think of each other and desire what is best for the other.*

2. Why does Paul spend so much time highlighting the love he (and Silas) has for them and they for him?

*Because it was a significant thing between them, but also to highlight the importance of love among God's new people, and that they grow in this love expressed to one another see vv12-13.*

3. Can we use v18 as a model for how we interpret events in our lives?

*No. Paul had specific insight from God that Satan was involved in hindering his efforts to go back to Thessalonica. Unless we have such insight too, we cannot say with certainty that some event (a frustration at work, some trouble for a family member etc) is specifically the work of Satan. Satan is real, he might make gospel work difficult at times and we are to be wary of him (eg 1 Peter 5:8) but there are many reasons things might happen a certain way so we cannot say definitively that something was Satan's work.*

4. "glory" in v.19 is literally "boast". What does Paul mean in vv19-20 - isn't Christ to be the only one we boast in?

*Paul is looking to the future, in glory, when these new Christians will be standing before Christ holy and blameless. This is his goal as apostle to the Gentiles. Their salvation and glory will bring glory to him who died and rose again for their salvation.*

5. What do vv1-5 teach about the Christian life? Paul made sure he taught this to the Thessalonians. Is it something you keep in mind and take to heart for yourself?

*Persecution and trouble are the norm. The devil will keep working to tempt us away from reliance on Jesus, often using troubles. If we don't think we could be tempted away, then we leave ourselves even more vulnerable to the devil's temptation, as well as our own sinful thoughts and reactions to hard times. Remember Mark 4:17-19.*

v.10 "supply what is lacking in your faith", likely refers not to anything that was deficient in their knowledge of the gospel but rather their application of it. Ch. 4 will give one example of this, applying the gospel to the area of sexual relationships.

6. What do you think is your deep-felt attitude towards your own faith? Do you assume that there are things 'lacking' or not? What difference would it make one way or the other?

*Put simply, the question is 'Are you teachable?'. Do you operate under the assumption that you are 'pretty well sorted' as a Christian? Or do you assume that there will always be areas of your life that need to be shaped and reshaped by the gospel? The difference will show itself in how you listen to the teaching of God's word whether in formal settings or even conversations, how motivated you are to read the Bible, how well you take correction from others. Pray for a soft heart that is always open to God's word.*

7. Read 1:10, 2:19 & 3:13 again. What difference does Paul's view of the future make to him? Do you share this view? What differences would such a view make to us? (cf Matt 6:19-21)

*That history will end with the return of Jesus. That will be time a wrath / judgment, but Jesus will rescue those who trust him from that wrath. Paul is driven by the goal of people standing before Jesus 'blameless and holy' – it brings him joy and satisfaction in life. Too often we set our goals too low, seeking joy in things that won't last, and not caring about the eternal welfare of those around us. Setting our heart on Jesus' return will free us from slavery to our careers or possessions or reputation and live more fully for Jesus.*

8. Consider the prayers Paul asks in vv12-13. What impact might it have on you life if you were to pray these for yourself and others? Write them in your own words and in twos or threes pray for each other.