

1 Thessalonians 3:1-10

A Strong Faith - 2

1

Introduction

This passage has to do with the faith of the Thessalonians. Their faith was strong, and Paul wanted to make sure that it remained strong. He stressed their faith five times in these ten verses (2, 5, 6, 7, 10).

The one thing needed by Christian believers is a strong faith: a faith that honestly knows Christ and knows what it is to walk in Him day by day, trusting Him, His care and comfort and strength. What we need is a faith that stands fast, endures, and perseveres, and that grows stronger and stronger in Christ. The stronger we believe and the more faith we have, the more we can conquer in life and do the things that we should do. A strong faith in Christ enables us to triumph over the trials and temptations of life and to fulfill our purpose in life.

2

Introduction

Many of the believers in Thessalonica had a strong faith; therefore, their faith stands as a model for us. What is a strong faith?

1. Paul's extreme anxiety for the church: they were suffering fierce persecution (vv. 1–2).
2. A strong faith is not moved by trials (vv. 3–5).
3. A strong faith bears an excellent testimony (v. 6).
4. A strong faith stirs the hearts of others (vv. 7–10).

3

1 Thessalonians 3:1-10

Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, ²and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, ³that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. ⁴For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. ⁵For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain. ⁶But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to see you*—⁷therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. ⁸For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. ⁹For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, ¹⁰night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

4

Review

Last week we looked at Paul's anxiety about how the church of Thessalonica was doing. Was their faith strong enough to handle the persecution they were facing.

While in Athens, Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to see if the church was standing fast.

5

Stand Fast – An Excellent Testimony

1 Thessalonians 3:6

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you.

A strong faith bears an excellent testimony. When Timothy returned from his mission to the Thessalonian church, he had good news.

1. **The believers were standing fast in their faith in Christ.** They were not buckling under to persecution nor to the temptation to be silent about Christ. They were not forsaking their worship of Christ. In practical terms, they were continuing to study the Scriptures, pray, and worship together. And when possible, they were sharing Christ and the promise of eternal life with all who would listen.

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Stand Fast – An Excellent Testimony

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2. **The believers were standing fast in love.** They had a love for Christ, each other, and their fellow men. They were ministering and meeting the needs of all those who would receive their help. They were doing all they could to demonstrate love and care toward all.

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Stand Fast – An Excellent Testimony

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3. **The believers also remembered those who had ministered to them.** Despite the rumors, they had deep affection for Paul. They longed to see him just as he longed to see them.

There should be a longing to be with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. This is part of the glue that binds us together.

8

Stand Fast – Stirring the Hearts of Others

1 Thessalonians 3:7-10

therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. ⁸For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. ⁹For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, ¹⁰night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

A strong faith is a faith that stirs the heart of its ministers and fellow believers. Note four significant points.

1. The strong faith of the Thessalonian believers comforted Paul. Paul and his team were in **affliction and distress.** **Affliction** literally means “**choking, intense pressure and stress**”. **Distress** means “**crushing trouble**”. We do not know the specific cause of Paul’s distress. It may have been his concern over the welfare of the Thessalonian believers. We also know that Paul was on the front lines of the Spiritual Battle between Jesus and the forces of evil in this world. Wherever Paul went to share God’s plan of salvation, opposition rose up to try to stop the spread of the gospel. During Paul’s affliction and distress came the news that the Thessalonian believers were standing firm in their faith. This news brought great **comfort** to Paul. The word **comforted** means encouraged and strengthened.

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Stand Fast – Stirring the Hearts of Others

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2. **The strong faith of the Thessalonians stirred renewed life and purpose in Paul.** Paul had been discouraged, not defeated, because of the difficulties confronting him in ministry. But when the news of the Thessalonian believers reached him, it ignited a renewed burst of life and purpose in him.

Serving Christ is a great experience with eternal rewards; however, the battle can be discouraging. To see other believers standing firm, growing in their faith, and serving Christ encourages others to do the same. **The greatest encouragement you can give to those in ministry is having your life being transformed into Christ’s image!**

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3. The strong faith of the Thessalonians stirred joy in Paul. Very simply, the news of the Thessalonian believers standing fast in their faith was bound to stir joy in their Paul's heart. It let him know that the work was not in vain but reassured him of God's faithfulness.

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Stand Fast – Stirring the Hearts of Others

1 Thessalonians 3:7-10

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4. The strong faith of the Thessalonian believers stirred Paul to pray for their fellowship and growth in Christ. Paul longed to be with them so that he could continue to share and grow them in Christ. He wanted to build them up and perfect whatever weaknesses they might have. What a pastoral heart! The heart to always proclaim and teach Christ until we are all perfected into the image of Christ.

12

So What ...

None of us long to face persecution. We need to stand fast in the faith. It is a declaration of our love for Jesus and our trust in His provision.

We also need to stand strong because others are watching. For those who do not know Christ's salvation, they are watching to see if it is real.

It also brings joy and encouragement to other believers when they see your faith being lived out.

Remember, we are in this together!