

Recap of 5/10/20 (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18):

1. In 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they face an enemy of the gospel in Satan. It was Satan who was blocking the way for Paul to revisit them to see how they were doing in their newfound faith.

2. In vs. 17, Paul expresses his deep feeling for them. His absence was not voluntary. He feels torn away from them, like a parent separated from his children (cp, 2:7,11). He desired to return to check on their progress but was hindered by Satan. Satan had blocked the way, put up obstacles to Paul's return.

-“It is Satan's work to throw obstacles into the Christian's way—and it is our work to surmount them” (Barclay).

3. Satan is a personal being, a spirit being, apparently God's highest created angel (Ezekiel 28:12,14), who fell from his position by pride (Isaiah 14:12-14).

4. In the words of C.S. Lewis, in **The Screwtape Letters**, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors,....”

5. The tactics Satan uses against Christians are:

-He throws up roadblocks as in this passage.

-He counterfeits or distorts spiritual gifts.

-He uses deception (he comes as an angel of light, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; he deceives about the seriousness of sin, Genesis 3; and he uses “strategies and tricks”, “schemes,” trickery against believers, Ephesians 6:11)

-He distracts from what is important, from right priorities, by choosing the good instead of the best. “...he tempts us in order to make us lose what God has put into us by regeneration, viz., the possibility of being of value to God...shifting the point of view” (Oswald Chambers).

-He tempts us to deny the Word of God; to renounce Christ; to illicit desire (sex, greed, lust for power/ambition; to despair, anger, discouragement, and an unforgiving attitude. He tempts in three general areas the lust of the flesh (physical appetites); the lust of the eyes (desire to possess things, desire for acquisitions; and the pride of life (unbridled ambition). 1 John 2:15-17