

6/21/20

Recap of 6/14/20 (1 Thessalonians 3:5-9):

1. In a number of ways the experience of the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 3 parallels Paul's experience in 2:17-20. In 2:17 persecution prevented Paul from continuing his ministry among them. In 3:3,4 Paul feared that persecution the Thessalonians were experiencing was preventing their growth in faith. In 2:18, Paul Satan had blocked Paul's way to them. In 3:5 Paul was concerned about Satan's attempts to block them from growing in their faith. The bottom line was that Paul wasn't content with just leading them to Christ-He wanted to see them grow in Christ and walk in faith and love.
2. In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul identifies the goals of the teaching ministry of the church: to build up the church, to lead it to maturity in faith, and to lead it to unity. (Allison & Kostenberger).
3. Concerning Satan's attempts to derail our faith, Vance Havner writes: "We need not be surprised if, right on the heels of a new spiritual beginning, we are beset with double force by the devil. It is a good sign. It is evidence that we are making progress and have aroused him. He will attack body, mind, and spirit to disable, deceive, or discourage...Be not discouraged. It is a sure sign of progress. The farther you go, the more you may meet with." When we feel: discouraged, far away from God, forsaken by God, or like Heaven is far away and its' door is shut to our needs, this may well be the work of Satan to discourage and disable us from usefulness for God.
4. In 3:6-8, Paul is encouraged when the report comes from Timothy that the Thessalonians faith was intact. To see other believers standing in faith, especially in the face of very difficult circumstances, is an encouragement to us. Conversely we encourage others when we respond in faith to life's difficult moments.
5. In 3:9, Paul mentions the need to pray for others, especially those going through deep waters. -"We often wonder why the Christian life is so difficult, especially in the ordinary everyday relationships. The answer may very well be that we are trying to live it by ourselves. The man who goes out in the morning without prayer is, in effect, saying, 'I can quite well tackle today on my own.' The many who lays himself to rest without speaking to God, is, in effect, saying, 'I can bear on my own whatever consequences today has brought.'...It may well be that our failure to live the Christian life well is due to our trying to live it without the help of god—which is an impossible assignment." (Barclay)