

A Minister's Heart

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

1 Thessalonians is a book that I really appreciate – A) The Reason is it is probably one of Paul's most personal Letters

B) In it we gain insight into what makes this guy tick

1) Maybe more so than any of his other letters **Paul reveals his heart** – **A ministers heart**

C) In this passage today – we get another glimpse of Paul's heart – **Example for us who are in ministry.**

1) Ministry in Church / home group / discipleship /

B) Also Ministry in the Home: **Children or spouse** – Consider it in that way.

5 Things we want to consider about Paul's heart for Ministry: RD V. 1-13

#1 He wants to be with God's People.

A) This passage opens with therefore, which specifically links it to the closing section of the previous chapter

B) Where Paul Expressed his desire to get back to them to encourage them

1) He wanted to be there – but was being hindered by Satan

C) Paul's strong affection for them resulted in intense emotional pain during this separation.

1) **He couldn't endure it** was aching at him that he couldn't get back there. { Debrecen / Costa Rica

D) Amazing that Even though he faced his own trials.

1) Paul was more concerned about their spiritual well-being and the trials they were facing !

A man with a true and faithful pastoral heart is not preoccupied with his own trials.

A) Rather, he is deeply concerned with the spiritual condition of his people.

B) Any time we get preoccupied with ourselves & our problems – good sign – getting off tract !

So #1 a true Minister is going to have a Heart that wants to be with the Sheep

A) Leaders – They like to be around the sheep – they want to be with God's people

B) Young man – { **Working with Youth** – Feel called to – Study

1) The Church doesn't need more theologians –

It needs ministers

2) Theologians are like Porcupines *Many fine points but hard to get close to*

Bring it into the home: A wife needs to know that her husband is concerned about her: She is on his mind

A) He likes to be with her – enjoys her company her friendship – Middle of the day – call hear her voice

B) Vice versa – A husband – needs a wife that he knows - She is into Him – Praying for Him

C) Denise will sometimes ask me – what is your day like today – { Why So I can Pray

1) So blessed by that - { Wife who Nags

D) I am blessed Denise will call: She knows I am counseling – calls to leave me a message !

1) Stops by to leave a note on my desk !

E) She works her **schedule & ministry** around me and the kids.

1) House a Sanctuary

F) She makes plans runs them by me – I am rarely ever surprised by – by the way going to ... tonight

Ministry opportunities – 5 out of the country invites for this year –

A) Women's retreats – speak – rare

B) Her heart is for us ! – Everything is prayed thru microscope of the affect on me and the kids

1) Vice versa – My Schedule – Called to go a little more – Not much – { Amy's games Dec – March
So the first thing we see about Paul's heart is that He wanted to be with these people

#2 He wants the sheep to be well cared for!

A) Jesus gave this commission to Peter: Feed my sheep – and tend them - Take care of them –

B) It was that type of heart that led Paul to say – We were like a nursing mother to you

C) **We thought it good to be left in Athens alone:**

1) Strong affection always leads to sacrifice . **Rd V4-5**

Paul was concerned that the faith of the Thessalonian's might crumble under this season of affliction,

A) So Paul sent Timothy to them to help them thru this time – But this was a great Sacrifice to Paul.

B) The verb translated left alone means "*abandoned*" or "*forsaken*"

1) and was used in secular contexts of leaving a loved one behind at death.

C) This expresses how difficult Paul's separation from his friend was.

D) Even though he could have benefited greatly by his assistance and fellowship in Athens,

1) Paul thought it best to send him to Thessalonica.

Why Timothy? 3 Reasons:

1) Timothy was a Brother – Like minded { Stress importance to Paul – other passages

2) He was a minister of God

A) This is simply the Greek word for a servant.

B) Our English word “**deacon**” comes from this word, *diakonos*.

1) Timothy was not afraid to work. He had faithfully served with Paul in other settings.

C) Note: Minister of God – Timothy knew who he was serving ! Serving the Lord – Not Paul

3) Fellow Laborer = Team player – Paul knew that He could be trusted –

A) He didn't have his own agenda – wasn't out to promote himself

B) In all Paul was saying *I am going to send someone to you who is going to take care of you the way that I would.*

C) Think about your flock – those you are over –

1) Are they going to care for them the same way that you would – Day Care – Baby sitters

D) Youth group – Partner with you as parents – Do they share my values –

1) What is their heart

E) What is their goal – Some youth ministries – Goal is entertain social – keep your kids out of trouble –

1) Major goals – $\frac{3}{4}$ of their time is spent on that

F) You would be shocked at how little a time is spent in the word – things of the Lord

Maybe that is why Stats reveal that 55% of Christian kids are sexually active before – 18 yrs old

A) Listen if you aim low – that is what you are going to hit – Aim high better chance of hitting that

B) Here at CCV – Entertain Social – small part to Bible study and Discipleship

C) Modesty – We are committed to that – Hopefully you are too Love God w/ mind...

1) Uniforms

D) Paul wanted them to be well taken care of!

That is the Biblical model –

1) Notice point #3 Paul's heart

#3 He wants to see them Established and Encouraged V.2-3

A) Establish = to support something to the point of making it unshakable.

B) Building is established – by Bolts and beams that are connected to the Foundation

1) The goal of the Church Eph 4:11-15

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of

Christ,13 **till** we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;14 **that** we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,15 but, speaking the truth in love, **may grow up** in all things into Him who is the head – Christ

Growing into the Head –

Established – Unmoved –

Notice Establishing comes before Encouraging –

A) If I am encouraging – without establishing – only empowering people to stay in their sin

B) I can't encourage or make light of rebellion- Call to repentance – Establish in the truth !

C) The world is after your family – Wife / Husband / Kids

1) **Established in our love & In the truth**

D) Timothy's task was to establish these believers and encourage (comfort) them in their faith.

#4 He rejoiced in seeing his spiritual Children doing well. RD V6-10

A) Paul does a good job of complimenting –

B) Sometimes it is easy to focus on the negative –

1) Wife w/ Husband – Denise w/ me - Pastors on a Pedestal – Flawed -

2) Husband w/ wife

3) Parents to kids

C) Pastor to Church – Flaws yes – but what are we doing well.

D) What about you – Talk about your husband – Negative –

1) What about when you talk to him - Nag { My wife talked to me like that ... { **Never at home ?**

E) Guys talk about your wife – shame on you

1) Your kids –

The Church – No wonder they grow up not wanting to be around –

A)if all they here that comes out of your mouth is negative

B) So am I saying we should ignore problems -

1) **Paul presents a perfect Balance –**

C) He is going to praise their strength's and Pray v.10 for what is lacking

#5 He commits them into the Care of the Lord

RD V.10-13

A) Notice that Paul's prayers for his friends were not careless or occasional.

B) V.10 He prayed "night and day" he prayed "exceedingly"

1) Always in his prayers – Exceedingly – idea of Laboring in Prayer

C) Paul prayed for three specific requests. First, he prayed *that their faith might mature* (v.10)

D) The word translated “perfect” has the meaning of “adjust, equip, furnish.”

1) It is even used for the mending of nets (Mark 1:19).

In Chapter 1 Paul was rejoicing because of their faith – but here he says it was lacking – Why?

A) Our faith never reaches perfection; there is always need for adjustment and growth.

B) We go “**from faith to faith**” (Rom. 1:17).

C) Abraham is a good illustration of this principle.

1) God called him to the land of Canaan, and when he arrived, he discovered a famine.

D) God permitted that famine so that Abraham’s faith might be tested.

1) Unfortunately Abe failed that test – ran to Egypt

But Abe recovered – Started over – walk of faith

A) Each step of the way, God brought circumstances to bear on Abraham that forced him to trust God and grow in his faith.

B) Faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted !

1) Faith is like a muscle: it gets stronger with use.

C) God tries our faith, not to destroy it, but to develop it.

SO Paul prayed that the suffering Christians in Thessalonica might grow in their faith,

A) And God answered his prayer. Paul wrote in his second letter, 2 Thess 1:3

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly,

2) Their love would Prosper!

A) Times of suffering can be times of selfishness. Persecuted people often become very self-centered and demanding.

B) What life does to us depends on what life finds in us; and nothing reveals the true inner man like the furnace of affliction.

C) Some people build walls in times of trial, and shut themselves off.

D) Others build bridges and draw closer to the Lord and His people.

E) There come points in my walk when I say, “You know, I’m doing pretty good.”

1) I get comfortable as apathy begins to creep into my heart.

F) Through Paul, the Spirit says to me, “I want you to increase.

I rejoice in what’s happening in your life, but may your love for Me grow to an ever-deepening measure.”

The Lord declared in Jeremiah 48:11

“Moab has been at ease and settled in his lees. Therefore I will pour him out from vessel to vessel

A) The reference is to the way wine was made in Jeremiah’s day.

B) The winemaker would pick grapes, put them in a vat, and stomp on them to get the juice flowing.

1) Then he would pour the juice into a vessel where the wine sat until the lees, or dregs, settled to the bottom.

C) The winemaker would then pour the wine into another vessel, leaving the dregs behind, where it would sit while more dregs settled.

D) This process was repeated up to six times, until the end result was wine without any dregs—

1) The wine that was pure and sparkling.

It is a good picture of what the Lord allows to take place in our lives – Make us Pure

A) Trials and affliction come in – Boss says fired / girlfriends says – Goodbye

B) The Lord says – “I want to refine and use you as the wine of my Spirit flows through you.

1) For that to happen, there will be regular seasons where you are poured.

C) Otherwise you’ll become cloudy and dull as you settle in your lees. I love you too much for that.”

1) Instead of, “*Poor* me,” we must be those who say,

“*Pour* me, Father—that I may increase and abound in love.”

D) This was Paul’s prayer for these believers, and God answered it:

2 Thess 1:3-4

We thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

3) Paul’s third request was for *holiness of life*

A) In every Chapter of 1& 2 Thess. Paul makes reference to the Coming of Christ

B) Reason Paul Knew that the believer who believes that Jesus could come at any moment is going to live a life marked by Holiness