**1 Thessalonians 1-3**

(#52 book of the Bible, written by Paul to the Church in Thessalonica (Greece) in approx. 51AD and is thought to actually be his first letter of all the New Testament books.)

Today’s Summary: Paul loved people well, not only in word but in deed. He served relentlessly and was quick to encourage AND rebuke, because that is what selfless, healthy love does. In today’s letter to the Church in Thessalonica and to the body of believers called Thessalonians, Paul once again starts out telling him how thankful he is for them. For their WORK that is produced by FAITH, their LABOR for the kingdom and God prompted by LOVE and their ENDURANCE inspired by HOPE in JESUS. Humbling to say the least. Memorize this formula and lets make sure this is true not only of our own lives and households, but that we are doing OUR PART to make it true of our Churches. Praise be to Jesus that He uses the faithful to change the world.

**1**Paul, Silas and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

**Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians’ Faith**

**2**We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. **3We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**4**For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, **5**because our gospel came to you, not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. **6**You became imitators of us and of the Lord, **for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.** **8**The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia - your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, **9**for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, **10**and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead - Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

**Paul’s Ministry in Thessalonica**

**2**You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. **2**We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. **3**For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. **4**On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. **5**You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed -God is our witness. **6**We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. **7**Instead, we were like young children among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, **8**so we cared for you. **Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.** **9**Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. **10**You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy and righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. **11**For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, **12**encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

**13**And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. **14**For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God’s churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews **15**who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone **16**in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

**Paul’s Longing to See the Thessalonians**

**17**But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. **18**For we wanted to come to you - certainly I, Paul, did, again and again - but Satan blocked our way. **19**For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? **20**Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

**3**So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. **2**We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God’s service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, **3**so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. **4**In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. **5**For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.

**Timothy’s Encouraging Report**

**6**But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. **7**Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. **8**For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. **9**How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? **10**Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

**11**Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. **12**May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. **13May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.**