

***“A Firm & Fruitful Faith!”***  
***1 Thessalonians 3:1-8***

**Introduction:**

1. We Saw Last Week The Kind Of Heart That Paul Had Towards The Thessalonian Christians!
  - A Heart That Reflected Christ’s Heart!
  - A Heart That Ought To Be Reflected Here, In Our Church, As Well!
2. Paul Continues To Share His Heart With Them In Chapter 3!
  - And It Shows What His Real Concern For Them Was:
    - It Wasn’t For Them To Just Be Together, Like At A Social Event Or Family Event!
    - Even Though He Wanted To See Their Face (2:17) & They Wanted To See His Face (3:6)!
  - His Concern Was For Their Faith!
    - Read 3:1-8!
3. As We Look At The Life & Ministry Of Paul:
  - We See That He Was A Man Of Strong Faith!
    - 2 Timothy 1:12 - “For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day!”
    - His Faith Was Firm!
      - Not Easily Swayed! Because It Was Focused On His Savior, The Lord Jesus Christ!
    - His Faith Was Fruitful!
      - Because It Was Firm, He Was Not Ashamed Or Afraid To Serve The Lord!
  - This Was The Real Concern Paul Had For The Thessalonian Church!
    - He Wanted Them To Have A Firm, Fruitful Faith As Well!
    - And So, After Being Taken From Them So Suddenly, And Being Unable To Return Himself To Help Them Through The Persecution & Opposition They Were Facing, He Sends Timothy To Them!
4. Throughout This Chapter, We See Where A Firm & Fruitful Faith Leads!
  - And Why We Need / Strive To Have The Same Kind Of Firm & Fruitful Faith Both Paul & These Thessalonian Believers Had!

***\* A Firm & Fruitful Faith:***

1. ***Leads To Contentment In Your Circumstances!***
  - 3:1 - “Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone!”
  - In Our Flesh, Contentment Is Difficult!
    - After Paul Suddenly Left Thessalonica!
    - Remember In Acts 17, Because Of His Preaching Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ, He “Set All The City On An Uproar!” (17:5) / Then The New Church “Immediately Sent Away Paul And Silas By Night Unto Berea!” (17:10)
    - Paul Desired To Return! (2:17)
    - Paul Even Attempted To Return! (2:18)
    - But Paul Was Prevented From Returning – Even Being Hindered By Satan Himself! (2:18)
      - But He Could Never Hinder / Stop Paul’s Heart Toward Them!
    - In Paul’s Absence, There Came A Point When:
      - “We Could No Longer Forbear!”
      - Or To Endure / Held Back!
      - **IE:** Like Someone Physically Restraining Someone In Their Excitement!
    - And So, They Did The Only Thing They Could!
      - The Sent Timothy – Because They Were Unable To Go Themselves!
      - How Hard This Must Have Been!
  - Through Our Faith, Contentment Is Doable!
    - But, We Learn Something About Paul’s Faith Through This!
    - His Faith Was Firm!
    - And Even Though:

- He Wanted To Go Himself!
- He Had To Send Someone Else!
- He “Thought It Good” – Pleased – “To Be Left At Athens Alone!”
- He Was Content!
  - With Where God Had Placed Him! “Athens!”
  - With How God Had Placed Him! “Alone!”
  - Because Paul Had Learned Through Faith, “For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content!” (Philippians 4:11)
- A Firm & Fruitful Faith Will Lead To This Kind Of Contentment In Your Circumstances!
  - An Acceptance Of & Trust In God’s Purpose & Timing!

## 2. ***Leads To Commitment To Your Church!***

- 3:2-4 - “And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: 3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. 4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know!”
- A Commitment Through Sacrifice!
  - Timothy Was The One Paul Was Able To Send To Them In His Absence!
    - Timothy Was Very Special To Paul!
  - He Sent Him, Because Of His:
    - Relationship! “Brother!”
    - Qualification! “Minister!”
    - Labor! “Fellowlaborer In The Gospel Of Christ!”
  - He Sent Timothy Because:
    - He Was One Of His Own!
    - He Was One Of The Best!
    - How Hard It Must Have Been To Send Timothy & Remain “Alone” In Athens!
- A Commitment Through Service!
  - The Reason Timothy Was Sent Is Stated In 3:2 - “To establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith!”
    - He Wanted Them To Have A:
      - Firm Faith!
        - “Establish You!”
          - To Set Firmly - Like Barricading A Door / Like Setting A Fencepost In Concrete!
        - Why Was This Needed?
          - So “That No Man Should Be Moved By These Afflictions!” (3:3)
          - “Moved” - Like The Wagging Of A Dog’s Tail!
        - How Was This Given?
          - “Concerning Your Faith” – “In The Gospel Of Christ!”
          - Through The Preaching About Christ & His Word / Through Teaching About God’s Own Involvement & Control! (“Appointed Threunto!”)
          - Timothy Was Not Sent To Alleviate Their Physical Suffering, But To Shore Up Their Faith – Then, They Could Withstand Any Storm!
        - Psalm 62:5-6 - “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved!”
    - Fruitful Faith!
      - “Comfort You”
        - To Encourage & Exhort, To Keep In The Race, Even Though The Path Is Difficult!
      - Why Was This Needed?
        - Because They Were Told That They Would “Suffer Tribulation!” (3:4)
        - It Was Predicted / Expected / Experienced!
      - How Was This Given?
        - Again, “Concerning Your Faith!”

- Timothy's Ministry Was Not Primarily About Helping Them With Their Finances, Their Career Path, Their Marriage Or Their Parenting Skills!
- When Your Knowledge & Faith Is Firm In The Gospel, Then & Only Then Can You Have Comfort To Go Through These Issues & Help Others Through Them As Well!

- A Firm & Fruitful Faith Will Lead To This Kind Of Commitment To Your Church!
- With Sacrifice & Service, In Order To Build / Establish One Another's Faith!

### 3. ***Leads To Concern For Others Condition!***

- 3:5 - "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain!"
  - Paul Had A Personal Interest & Concern For These Christians! Here He Gives His Own Personal Reason Why He Sent Timothy!
  - Again His Focus: "I Sent To Know Your Faith!"
- Have They Been Tricked?
  - This Is What The "Tempter" Does Best!
  - And, When He Succeeds, He Can Bring You To A Point Of Fear, Uselessness & Even Compromise!
  - When Our Primary Focus Is Not On "Your Faith", The Tempter Can Easily Draw People Away!
- Have They Been Trapped?
  - When Our Labor Is Vain, It Means It Has Been Ineffective & Fruitless!
  - Is This The Kind Of Concern We Have For Each Other?
- A Firm & Fruitful Faith Will Lead To This Kind Of Concern For Others Condition!

### 4. ***Leads To Comfort In Your Crisis!***

- 3:6-7 - "But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: 7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith!"
  - Paul Tells The Thessalonians That His Concerns For Them Were Relieved, When Timothy Brought His Report!
  - And This Report Brought Great Joy & Comfort To Paul!
- Comfort Through Faith!
  - Paul's Greatest Concern!
  - Look At 3:7!
- Comfort Through Love!
  - An Added Blessing! Shows A Fruitful Faith!
- Comfort Through Remembrance!
  - "Good . . . Always!"
- Comfort Through Desire!
  - Mutual! This Is The Way It Is Meant To Be!
- Paul Sent Timothy To Comfort Them, But Instead, They Comforted Paul!
  - From His Distress From The Inside – Concern!
  - From His Affliction From The Outside – Conflict!
  - They Melted Away
- A Firm & Fruitful Faith Will Lead To This Kind Of Comfort In Your Crisis!
  - What Brings You The Most Comfort?
  - Someone's Presence, Love Or Faith?
  - How Your Spiritual Growth Affects Others Must Not Be Underestimated!

### 5. ***Leads To Continuation In Your Calling!***

- 3:8 - "For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord!"
  - Before Paul Knew How They Were, He Grew Faint With Concern!
  - Now That Paul Knows, It Is As If New Life Was Breathed Back Into Him!
    - In His Heart! In His Service!
    - This Is What Happens When We See Fruit From Our Labors!

- What An Encouragement / Comfort You Can Be!
  - If You “Stand Fast In The Lord!”
  - To All The Other Believers Around Us!
    - No Matter How Deep Their Distress!
    - No Matter How Difficult Their Affliction!
- Your Perseverance In Faith Helps Others Persevere In Their Faith!
  - A Firm & Fruitful Faith Will Lead To This Kind Of Continuation In Your Calling!

**Conclusion:**

1. A Firm & Fruitful Faith Leads To:
  - Contentment
  - Commitment
  - Concern
  - Comfort
  - Continuation

***Grace Baptist Church  
Stephen Elmer, Pastor  
4245 North 200 West  
Greenfield, Indiana 46140  
317-326-2362  
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com  
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace  
www.growatgrace.org***