

The Passionate Pastor (1 Thessalonians 2:17-20)

- The last 3 messages on 1 Thessalonians 2: the heart & character of the pastor
- In vs. 17-20 we will look at: 1) Paul's intense love for the Thessalonians
- 2) Satan sought to hinder the apostle from visiting with these new believers

I. Paul Is Anxious to visit with the Thessalonians (2:18-20)

- Paul loved the Thessalonians, they were his reward and crown (17,19b)
 - He is grieved & sorry that he cannot visit because this might discourage them
 - He reminds them that his departure was not a choice but by force (Acts 17:10)
 - Paul's love for them, (mother & father) testify to his desire to be with them
 - As God's means to save them a short time away from them was too long (17)
 - "In person not in heart" means for Paul that distance can't separate them (18)
 - Being out of sight did not mean out of mind, he truly desired to see them(17b)
- v.19 "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?"
- Paul means, God rewarded him in blessing his ministry by their conversion
 - He loved God all more because he saw fit to use a weak servant to save them
 - Paul's language shows they weren't the only ones he triumphed in
 - Every person won to Christ based on vs.20 is a spiritual crown of rejoicing

II. Why Paul Was Unable to visit them: Satan hindered them (2:18)

Vs. 18 because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.

- It was not for lack of desire on Paul's part, their plans were frustrated
 - This was not Paul's first time they were hindered in such a way (Acts 20:3)
 - The apostle is clear this was the work of Satan to frustrate the plans of God
 - Satan seeks to hinder & God may allow it, but He always works all things out
 - We have an enemy of our soul who prowls around seeking who to devour
 - While Paul was hindered God was faithful to preserve the Thessalonians
 - Timothy brought Paul a wonderful report of their perseverance in the faith
 - Satan may seem to gain the upper hand but God always accomplishes His will
- 2 Cor 12: 7- 10 Paul boasted in his weakness so he could know God's strength