

1 Thessalonians 3

Notes for lesson 6

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Oct 13, 2013

1 Review of 1 Thess 1

How they received and sounded forth the gospel.

- Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy brought the gospel to Thessalonika
- gospel came in ...
 - word
 - power
 - Holy Spirit
 - full conviction
- they became imitators of Paul, S. and T., and of the Lord
- recvd the gospel in tribulation yet with joy of the Holy Spirit
- gospel sounded forth to Macedonia and Achaia.
- turned from idolatry, to the living God

2 1 Thess 2 outline

Key theme: we brought you the gospel, in truth and love, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of God. You became imitators.

- 2:1-2: We brought the gospel to you amidst opposition
- 2:3-5: We did not come in error
- 2:6: We did not come to seek glory
- 2:7-8 BUT: We came like a mother, sharing the gospel and our own lives
- 2:9-12: We came like a father: exhorting and encouraging So that you walk in a manner worthy of God
- 2:13: THUS: we thank God that you accepted the word of God
- 2:14-16: The work of the word: imitators of Judean churches, amidst opposition of their own countrymen.
- 2:17-18: But we were eager to see you
- 2:19-20 Because you are our glory and joy

2.1 1 Thess 2: in-depth look at the gospel

- Why? Why did Paul give the gospel? Why give it today?
 - Paul approved by God, entrusted with the gospel, pleasing God who examines our hearts (2:3-4)
 - they were dear to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy (2:8)
 - so that they walk in a manner worthy of God (2:12)
 - under obligation (Rom 1:14)
 - no choice 1 Cor 9:16
- What? What is the gospel?
 - by it we're saved; hold fast
 - Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures
 - buried
 - raised on the 3rd day, according to the Scriptures
 - appeared to many
- How? How do we share the gospel?
 - Mars Hill - relate to their own background, even their muddled religious views (contrast with idolatry)
 - Jerusalem - likewise, related to their Scriptural background, even contrast with their treatment of Jesus
 - impart information
 - compare / contrast / confront
- Who? Does this apply to us? With whom do we share?
- When? Now. Before it's too late.
- Where? Paul was led into Macedonia, away from Asia

3 1 Thessalonians 3 : Prayer and Follow-up

3:1-2: we sent Timothy to encourage you

3:3-5; don't be surprised by affliction

Paul feared Satan might have tempted them.

- “We have been destined for this”. Does this apply to just Paul and Thess.?
- yet there is hope. (3:11-13)

3:6-8: Timothy's good report

3:9-10: we pray constantly to see you, to complete what is lacking in your faith

- in what way were they standing firm? (See 1 Thess 1, for example, also 1 Thess 5:11, etc)

3:11-12: Paul's prayer

Wants come see you, the Lord cause you to excel still more, to be established blameless at His coming

4 The Follow Up

4.1 with the Corinthians

1 Cor 3:5-10: 5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are Gods fellow workers; you are Gods field, Gods building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

- 1 Cor 3 and 4: Paul planted, others build on it, but God causes the growth

1 Cor 4:14-21: 14 I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me. 17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just

as I teach everywhere in every church. 18 Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power. 21 What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

- compare 1 Cor 4:14-21 with Paul's letter to the Thessalonians.
- similarities: Paul calls them his children, be imitators, I want to come see you. The gospel comes in both word and power. Paul sent Timothy to them but in this case got back a mixed report.
- contrast: some are arrogant, need correction and reproof

4.2 with the Thessalonians

How does Paul follow-up? What are Paul's concerns? What does Paul want for them?

- does: sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage them, prayed for them
- concerns: disturbed by afflictions, temptation
- wants: to complete what is lacking in their faith

What is lacking in their faith?

- excel still more
- continue to love one another
- work hard
- do not fear death
- do not commit sexual immorality
- many instructions in latter part of 1 Thess 5

See also 2 Tim 3:16: compare with 1 Thess.

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- Paul taught them
- Paul did not have to reprove them (but he did so to Corinthians): point out what is wrong
- Paul pointed out the correct things to do (correction)
- Paul trained them (discipline): work of faith, labor of love. Work hard.

5 Paul's Prayer

9 For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account, 10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith? 11 Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; 12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; 13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. (1 Thess 3:11-13)

- v9: joy
- v10-11: to see them soon and complete what is lacking (near future)
- v12: to increase in love (near and far future)
- v13: be established blameless at His coming (very very far future)

5.1 references to prayer in 1 Thess

- 1:2-3: constantly thank God for how they continue in the faith

2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

- 2:13: they received the word, which performs its work

13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

- 3:9: thanks to God. Joy, desire to see them and to complete what is lacking

9 For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account, 10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

- 5:16-19: pray constantly. Note the connection with the Holy Spirit in v19.

16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is Gods will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophetic utterances

- 5:25, brethren, pray for us. (Be imitators). Compare the first 3 in this list (Paul's prayer) with the last two (Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonians)

6 Cross-references on prayer

- God does not listen to the prayers of the wicked (John 9:31, Prov 15:8, 28:9, Isaiah 59:1-2)
- God delights in the prayer of the upright (John 9:31)
- Do not pray in meaningless repetition (Mt 6:5-13)
- we pray in the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26, Eph 6:18-19). Compare with 1 Thess 5:16-19.
- we do not have because we do not ask (James 4:1-3)
- pray for one another (James 5:16)
- prayer is powerful (James 5:16)
- If we ask anything *in His will*, He hears us (1 John 5:14-15)
- persevere in prayer (Luke 18:1)
- do not be anxious (Phil 4:6), but pray
- Compare Paul's prayer with with 1 Samuel 12:23-25

23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way. 24 Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. 25 But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away.

When Jesus was asked how we should pray, He replied that we are not to use “meaningless repetition” or “many words.”

And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition (*battalogo*) as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. (Matthew 6:7-8)

The Greek word translated as the phrase “meaningless repetition” is *battalogo*. This word appears only once in the New Testament and means either repetition of sensible words, or repetition of nonsense words. In the context of Matthew 6:7-8, Jesus is clearly prohibiting the “meaningless repetition” of “many words.”

Scripture provides two examples of the repetitive prayers of ungodly Gentiles:

1. When the Ephesians “recognized that he (Paul) was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’ ” (Acts 19:34). The religious phrase they chanted has very specific meaning, and was said over and over again (for two hours in unison).
2. Likewise, the prophets of Baal danced to the repetitive nature of their religious chant “from morning until noon saying, ‘O Baal, answer us’ ” (1 Kings 18:26-29). The chant was “according to their custom.”

The chants of the ungodly Ephesians and the prophets of Baal were repetitions of a short and specific meaningful prayer. Both groups thought they would be heard by their gods for their “many words.” The critique of hesychastic repetitive prayer comes from Jesus himself, who commands us not to pray that way.

Jesus taught us to pray simply and directly that the Father’s will be done. What we ask will be done if we pray according to God’s will.

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
(Matthew 6:10a)

Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (John 14:13-15)

All our prayers should be according to God’s will and under His authority. When Jesus prayed his prayer for His disciples, He clearly stated that everything He did and said was under the Father’s authority.

Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. ... I have given them Your word; (John 17:7,8,14a)

Only false prophets prophesy on their own inspiration and authority. They are not heard by God.

An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it? (Jeremiah 5:30-31)

The goal of prayer is to give God praise, glory, and honor, to confess to Him, and to make requests. Jesus gives us a model of prayer in Matthew 6:9-13, outlined below:

Praise:	Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.
For His glory:	Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Petition:	Give us this day our daily bread.
Confession:	And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
Petition:	And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
Praise:	[For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]

7 Summary of 1 Thess 3 (and prior)

- share the word of the gospel (1 Thess 1-2)
- follow-up: encourage, stand by their side
- pray