

FINISH STRONG

A Strong Finish Requires a Focused Race

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

1. Paul inquires about their **TESTS** of faith vs. 1-5
 - Timothy is sent to **INVESTIGATE**
 - ▶ To strengthen and encourage their **FAITH**
 - Test #1 – Responding to **AFFLICTION**?
 - ▶ **'DISTURBED'** = to move away, be shaken in faith
 - ▶ **'DESTINED'** = divinely appointed and purposed
Acts 9:16, 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 1:6-7
 - Test #2 – Responding to the **TEMPTER'S** tempting?
 - ▶ **'Tempter'** = the **DEVIL** 1 Peter 5:8
 - ▶ **'Tempting'** = **FLAMING** arrows Ephesians 6:10-16
2. Paul **CELEBRATES**, they passed the tests! vs. 6-10
 - *'we were comforted'; 'we really live'; all the joy'; we rejoice'*
3. Paul prays that they **EXCEL** even more. vs. 11-13
 - *'cause you to increase'; 'abound in love for one another'; 'established your hearts'*

Conclusion: The single-mindedness of our faith family is seen in how we all individually respond to **AFFLICTIONS** and **TEMPTATIONS** to give up our faith!

The Return of Jesus

Hint #1 – *'wait for His Son from heaven... who **rescues** us from the **wrath** to come'*

Hint #2 – *'**crown** of exultation... in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming'*

Hint #3 – *'at the coming of our Lord Jesus with **ALL HIS SAINTS**'*

Auburn Grace Community Church – September 6th, 2020

Life Group Discussion Questions – September 6, 2020

1 Thessalonians 3:7 "...for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord."

DISCOVER (Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13)

1. If Paul was so eager to find out how the church in Thessalonica was doing, why did he not go himself to find out? Why would he specifically choose Timothy to go in his stead?

2. What afflictions was Paul referring to in v.3?

3. In v. 8, what does Paul mean by "...now we really live."? Why was this so important to Paul and his team?

4. What three things did Paul want the Lord to do for the Thessalonians? (see vv. 11-13)

EXPLORE

1. Was there ever a time that your faith was shaken? How does your response to affliction and temptation reveal your faith?

2. Why did Paul tell the Thessalonians ahead of time about the afflictions he and his companions were going to face? Couldn't this have discouraged the new believers? (see Luke 14:25-35) How can we learn to identify and anticipate divinely appointed and purposed trials in our lives?

EXPERIENCE

1. Think of a time when God sent someone into your life "to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith." What things did they say or do to shore-up your faith? Why were you needing to be supported? Is there someone in your life that needs the same kind of encouragement? How and when will you reach out to them?

2. What can we learn from the content of Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians in v. 10?

PRAY

1. New believers and mature followers alike need timely and consistent follow-up and encouragement. Pray that God would give you the eyes to see someone in our church family who needs to be strengthened. Ask God to give you the heart to empathetically understand their circumstance and to have the wisdom to gently and respectfully enter into their situation in love and prayer.