

THE FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS (1 Thessalonians 3:6-10)

I. Timothy's return.

- A. The news that Timothy brought back was good news.
 - 1. The phrase good tidings is the same word translated gospel in other passages.
 - 2. It means good news as you know.
- B. Why was the news good?
- C. There are three reasons why the news was good.
 - 1. The news of their faith was good.
 - a. The difficult times had not caused them to fall away.
 - b. The afflictions through which they had went caused them to grow as afflictions will if dealt with properly.
 - 2. The news of their love was good.
 - a. The word is agape.
 - b. They were willing to sacrifice in order to be pleasing to God.
 - c. This is what Paul had taught them, and us, and they were faithful to what they had been taught.
 - d. This includes love for man and God.
 - 3. The news of their thoughts of Paul was good.
 - a. They had good remembrance or good thoughts about Paul.
 - b. Paul was special to them because they knew that through which he had gone to preach the gospel.
 - c. Their remembrance caused them to have a desire to see him just as he wanted to see them.
- D. As we can see, the return of Timothy to Paul was a favorable one in regards to the news he brought back from Thessalonika.
- E. The question should be asked of ourselves: "How would we have been in the position of the Thessalonians?"
 - 1. Would we have stayed faithful?
 - 2. Or, would the news that Timothy would have brought back to Paul about us been negative?
- F. Thankfully, for these brethren the news was good.

II. The rejoicing of Paul.

- A. In the face of affliction and distress Paul could have joy.
- B. This is one of the wonderful things about being a Christian.
 - 1. In the face of troublesome times there can be joy.
 - 2. No matter what is going on the Christian can have joy, while the world cannot.
- C. Paul says that he was comforted by this news.
- D. The unease over their situation was removed by this news.
- E. Paul says this was in the face of affliction and distress.
 - 1. Affliction carries the idea of a great pressing upon, force exerted against.
 - 2. Distress is trouble and trial.

3. Though there was great pressure on Paul, to the point of his life being in danger, he could still find comfort because of the gospel.
- F. Paul then makes a very interesting statement in verse eight.
 1. Paul says he can live if they only stand fast in Christ.
 2. If they remain faithful Paul would feel that he could go on living.
- G. This shows the depth of love that Paul had for his brethren.
- H. What is most amazing about this is that Paul grew up with a loathing of Gentiles because of his Jewish heritage.
 1. This was an idolatrous bunch of people that were hated by Jews.
 2. Yet, because of his obedience to the gospel, Paul could overcome the prejudice instilled in him and love those he once hated.
- I. Truly, this shows the power of the gospel to change the lives of people in a positive way.

III. **The request of Paul.**

- A. Paul makes a request of God that he be able to see them again and continue them on to spiritual maturity.
- B. He loved them so much he wanted to spend more time with them.
- C. He also wanted to strengthen, through the gospel, those areas in which there was weakness.
 1. This would have been done through teaching the gospel more thoroughly to these brethren.
 2. Paul knew the value of bible study and what it would do for them.
- D. What is interesting about this request is the way he worded it.
 1. Notice he said, "For what thanks can we render to God again for you..."
 2. Paul is saying that he really does not know how to properly thank God for them and make this request.
- E. His joy is so great over these brethren that he was at a loss for words.
- F. This should move us to be concerned about our brethren.
 1. Paul was concerned over people he had known only a short time.
 2. We have known each other for years and many of you have known each other much longer than I have known you.
 3. When one of us is missing from services or sick or having problems, there should be great concern on our part for that one.
- G. When God's people care about one another to this degree the world will take notice and want to be a part of something so wonderful and loving.