



Series: Be Encouraged
1 Thessalonians 3:6-13
Week of November 4-10

1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

"But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints."

1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 ESV

Begin your time with prayer asking God to speak through His Word and in your discussion time.

Read v. 6-10

Strength in Pain was Michael's main point from this passage.

Many afflictions and sufferings were a part of the Thessalonians church. Persecution was strong and Paul was concerned about their well-being, their faith and their personal relationship afraid they would feel abandoned.

Ask, What are some of the struggles that you are currently going through and how is God using them in your life to help point you towards Him.

In v. 6- Paul is encouraged by the report of Timothy. He church is growing and responding well.

He mentions both Faith and Love. Faith - holding strong to the Gospel and in Love - they are loving one another well.

In v. 7- Paul and others were suffering and afflicted and they were encouraged to hear the Thessalonians were faithful and loving.

Ask, In the midst of the struggle how are you encouraged by others and their faithfulness? Sometimes in the midst of struggle we turn inward and forget to look to the faith and love of other as encouragement.

In v. 9-10 - Paul asks a rhetorical question – Paul, Silas and Timothy are thanking God for their faithfulness and Paul prays for their continuing need of even more faithfulness. We never arrive at being fully faithful and it is important that we allow others to pray for our continued faithfulness.

Ask, Who do you turn to when you are lacking and need information? Who is discipling you? Allow time for individuals to respond

Paul longed to be with them face-to-face and to be able to encourage them in person but sometimes we are encouraged "long distance" and can encourage others "long distance". The key is to be intentional in encouraging and in receiving encouragement.

In v. 11 - Paul asks that God Himself would direct their path to the Thessalonians. Paul continues to not only point to God the Father but Christ as well. He reminds them that Jesus is Who He says He is. This is still a challenge for many today. Equating Jesus with God. Most of the conversations we have with non-believers can be difficult when we start talking about Christ. But if we do not talk about Him then we are only being nice and not sharing the truth of the Gospel.

In v. 12-13 – there is an increase and abounding in love for one another and for all people.

Ask, Do you love fellow Christ followers? Practically, what does loving fellow believers look like in your life?

Ask, Do you love others? What actions does your love for God and others lead to for you? Are there certain things you do to live out your love for others? Allow time for people to respond.

Who are your neighbors? What might it look like for you to love them?

As a church family, we are really that, family? Are you willing to set aside your preferences for the sake of the family? For our neighbors? If so, what might that look like for you? (Allow people to wrestle with these questions. Don't press them to answer but allow them time to consider.)

The goal is to Unified in diversity because you love God with your all. The Thessalonians were showing this kind of love and commitment to God and one another. It is an ever-growing love and growing in love comes about as we grow in faith in Christ.

Paul prays that believers will be encouraged and strengthened through our faith and love in Christ. Take some time now to pray that same kind of love for your group, our church and families.

Remind those in your group that we can love and are only loving because we are greatly loved by God.

Close your time in prayer.