

The Heart of God's Man (Part 2)

1 Thessalonians 3: 1-13 (6-13)

In our last study we began to consider the heart that Paul had for the church and the work that God had called him to. Just as a reminder, let's quickly review [Vv.1-5](#).

I. The Investment of the Pastor (1-2a)

A. His Forbearance (1a) – Paul was burdened by his separation and could no longer hold out without hearing of their condition.

B. His Fervency (1b) – [Paul thought it good to be left at Athens alone](#). This was not an act of cowardice, but a willingness to remain in Athens for the good of the church in Thessalonica.

C. His Fellow-laborer (2a) – He reminds them of the blessing that Timothy is to himself as well as the church.

1. Timothy's Closeness – [brother](#).

2. Timothy's Calling – [minister of God](#).

3. Timothy's Commitment – he was [a fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ](#).

II. The Interest of the Pastor (2b-3)

A. He Desired Stability – [establish you](#). "*make stable, place firmly.*"

B. He Desired Security – [comfort you](#). "*admonish, console, encourage.*"

C. He Desired Steadfastness (3) – endure in the midst of adversity.

III. The Integrity of the Pastor (4-5)

A. A Man of Honesty (4) – Paul had always been open and honest with them.

B. A Man of Loyalty (5a) – He was committed to finishing the work at Thessalonica.

C. A Man of Accountability (5b) – He knew the responsibility he had for the church.

So, let's continue to consider the [qualities](#) our Lord develops in the pastor as we think on: [The Heart of God's Man](#).

IV. The Inventory of the Pastor (6-10) – As a true man of God, Paul was always taking inventory of current situations. He was continually evaluating the church and her growth. This was not done in arrogance or skepticism, but with a heart of love, for the benefit of the church. What did Paul discover as he evaluated the church in Thessalonica?

A. He was Comforted (6) – Timothy returned to Paul with news from Thessalonica and it brought comfort and assurance to him. Paul was comforted because of:

1. Their Faith – [But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith](#). One of the first things Timothy reports to Paul is the continuance of their faith. Paul had

revealed that he did not desire his work there to be in vain. He had exhorted them to stand fast in the face of adversity. They had not abandoned the Lord. They continued in Bible study, prayer, and worship of the Lord. The church was continuing to grow!

- As the world considers our congregation, what do they see? Could it be said that we are continuing in the faith? There is a rich history and an enduring legacy here. We must ensure that our faith endures for future generations.

2. Their Fondness – Timothy also brought [good tidings of their charity](#), the love they possessed and expressed. I believe this love was shed abroad liberally. They loved the Lord; they loved His church; they loved their pastor, and they loved the world around them. (That is not to say they engaged in worldly activities, but they loved all men.)

- In my humble estimation, there is no greater attribute of a body of believers than to be known for charity. A church that is filled with love is a church that overcomes and endures! [John 15:12 – This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.](#) Prov.10:12 –[Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.](#) 1 John 3:14 – [We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.](#)

3. Their Fellowship – [and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you.](#) The church genuinely desired to see Paul. Even though he was separated from them, they still longed to fellowship with him. They desired to hear him teach the Word and they appreciated the leadership he provided.

- An individual or congregation that does not desire fellowship with other believers cannot be right with the Lord. I love to come together with God's people. I love to associate with my church, whether here for services or extra-curricular activities. There is nothing that will replace genuine fellowship with those of like faith!

B. He was Confident (7-8) – It would be safe to say that Paul was deeply concerned for the church in Thessalonica. He had faced great opposition, being forced to leave town. He knew they too would face intense opposition. Hearing of their resilience comforted Paul even though he desired to be among them. Paul rejoiced in their growth even in his absence. No doubt he was confident of his Lord and their commitment to Him.

- We all face trials and difficulties in this life. We have all had times when we were tempted to give up and abandon the work we were called to do. There is nothing like the love and support of

the church to renew our confidence and encourage us in the faith! When I see others at work for the Lord it renews my passion to serve Him.

C. He was Challenged (9-10) – The church in Thessalonica had endured and even overcame a tremendous obstacle. Many would have given up long ago. Paul had much to rejoice in when he evaluated the church, but he was also challenged to lead them into greater depths with the Lord. They had grown tremendously, but yet there was room for improvement. Paul was pleased with their efforts, but he was in no way complacent or unconcerned.

- I rejoice in the growth we have experienced, but we must not get complacent. There is yet much to be done, greater heights to achieve, and we must continue to seek growth, possessing a desire to excel in the Lord.

V. The Intercession of the Pastor (11-13) – Here we see the intercession of Paul for the church.

A. His Pattern of Prayer (11a) – [Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.](#) Paul offers an example as well as instruction concerning prayer for the church. He not only prayed for them, but instructed them in prayer.

- It is interesting to note that Paul doesn't refer to his prayer as being offered to God alone. That in and of itself is powerful. In fact, we ought to pray to God, but Paul offers valuable insight to prayer here. He addresses his prayers to [God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ](#). This confirms that God is not some distant deity with whom we have no access. We are not offering prayers that we hope will be heard and answered. We have the glorious privilege to pray unto our Father and our Lord.

- That simply reminds us of our relationship with God and His sovereignty over our lives and affairs. We have the privilege to approach the throne of grace in heaven, where our Father and Lord reside!

B. His Purpose in Prayer (11b-13) – These closing verses reveal the purpose behind Paul's prayers. They reveal his desires and petitions unto the Lord. Paul seeks:

1. His Nearness (11b) – [Now God...direct our way unto you.](#) He had not given up on returning to Thessalonica to minister to them and he sought the Lord for that.

- We ought to pray that the Lord would draw us nearer to Himself as well as the church that we attend. We need to be closer to Christ and the church!

2. Their Fullness (12-13) – Along with his desire to return to them, Paul prayed for their fullness in the faith. We have talked much recently about praying specifically and Paul models that for us in these verses. He prayed that they might be full:

a. In Love (12) – He wanted them to **increase and abound in love** toward each other and all men as he had loved them. **Increase** means “*to super-abound, to exist in abundance.*” **Abound** has the idea of “*exceeding a fixed number, to overflow.*” Could we not all increase and abound more in love for each other and all men?

b. In Loyalty (13a) – Paul desired that they remain loyal to the Lord and the ministry so that at Jesus’ coming they would be found without spot and blameless. He knew if they remained committed to Christ, their lives would be lived in light of His holiness. What a challenge for us to remain loyal to the Lord and seek His righteousness.

c. In Life (13) – Lastly Paul wanted them to experience fullness in life itself. They were not a people without hope. They were not following one who was unable to provide for them or secure their future. They could live life abundantly in light of the Lord’s coming and the resurrection of the saints. There is absolutely no reason for a Christian to live a defeated life. We can enjoy the fullness of our Lord, living in expectation and anticipation of His coming!

Conclusion: This has been a wonderful and encouraging chapter. Paul has revealed his heart’s desire for the church. In that we find great encouragement as well as a profound challenge regarding our Christian lives.

I know that all are not called to pastor, but we all need a heart that is filled with love, compassion, and concern. We need the heart of our Lord.