

1Thessalonians 2:17–3:2

“Loving and Delighting in the Glorified Christ and His Glorified People”

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***Why was the apostle so urgent to send Timothy back to Thessalonica? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. 1Thessalonians 2:17–3:2 prepares us for the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that as believers increase in love for Christ and one another, the prospect of seeing one another glorified in Him at His return stirs us up to fervent affection and diligent action.***

**Thursday, March 31, 2022 ◊ Read 1Thessalonians 2:17–3:2**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What does Paul call the Thessalonians in v17? What has happened to apostolic ministry team? In what way had they not been taken away? What did this absence make them endeavor to do? How much? With what desire? What did they want to do (v18)? Who especially? But who hindered them? What three things does he call the Thessalonians in v19? In Whose presence, especially, are they these things? At what time? What two things does he say they are now (v20)? What couldn't they do (3:1)? Who stayed where? Who was the third that they sent (v2)? What three things do they call him? What two things did they send Timothy to do? In what, specifically, was he to encourage them?*

Proper Christian ministers have a strong, emotional attachment to those whom they serve. The apostolic team were as nursing mothers (v7) and devoted fathers (v10–11) to the Thessalonians. But they were providentially restrained from ministering to them for a time (v17).

The apostle has no problem personally identifying Satan as hindering them from coming back to Thessalonica. Still, the Lord sovereignly overrules—even over Satan. v19–20 cut two ways: explanation for why Satan would hinder, but also explanation for why the apostolic team would persist to overcome this hindrance. Satan was against their ministry because it was so good. And it was worth overcoming him to persist in the ministry, because it was so good.

Christian action and ministry is much strengthened by seeing and seizing the glory and joy of the last day. The apostle sees in his mind's eye the Lord Jesus Christ returned, and the Thessalonians perfected and glorified. He tastes the anticipation of seeing both and knowing that he was blessed and honored to have a part in that blessed reunion (v19b). This is his “hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing” (v19a).

Whatever the hindrance had been, it could stop three from coming, but not just one. And they gladly sent Timothy. He served God (v2). He labored in the gospel. It wasn't the same as the three of them being there, but the main thing was God's work, God's gospel. And whatever part they could have in it, they would take or facilitate.

From all of this, let us learn to rejoice over the prospect of the last day. And let us learn to rejoice especially over what opportunity we have to participate in the sanctification of others and the glory that Christ will have in them. We are finite and cannot participate in all ministry. But, we much increase our privilege by fostering others' ministry as well.

**To whom do you minister? To whom else would you like to? Whom else can you support in ministry?**

*Sample prayer: Lord, we bless You for Your work in applying Christ's salvation to those whom You are redeeming, and we thank You for involving us in parts of it. Forgive us for giving in easily to Satan's opposition of that work. And grant unto us zeal and diligence that takes whatever opportunity you afford to see others grown in faith, in Jesus's Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP78B “O Come, My People” or TPH438 “I Love to Tell the Story”**

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

First Thessalonians 2 verse 17 through chapter 3 verse 2, but we brethren having been taken away from you for a short time in presence. Not in heart. Endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore, we wanted to come to you.

Even I Paul time and again, But Satan hindered us for what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing is that not even you in the presence of our Lord? Jesus Christ to His coming, for you, or our glory and joy. Therefore when we could no longer endure it We thought it good to be left in Athens alone.

We and sent Timothy our brother and minister of God and our fellow laborer in the Gospel of Christ to establish you, and encourage you concerning your faith so far. The reading of God's inspired and aren't worked. One of the things that God produces in us, through faith, in Jesus Christ is a love for one.

Another I'll delight in one. Another Psalm 16 in which, the spirit teaches us to have our pleasure and God himself, and our joy in him and in his presence is, fullness of joy, is right hand or pleasures. Forevermore is also the one that teaches us to have the godly ones, the saints, in the land, as our delight and in that way to have the mind of Christ, Psalm 16, especially about the, the mind of Christ.

So in God brings us to faith in Jesus and starts to give us the mind and heart of Jesus, Then we have that love for and delight in one. Another. That is part of our love for and delight in Jesus. And then whatever role he has given us in his church.

We're not all apostles. Like Paul or ministers of the gospel like Sylvanas and Timothy or Silas Timothy, but God has given us all a part in his church, apart in the work that must occur before Jesus returns in glory, part in that work that must occur before. All believers are not only perfected in soul

but also resurrected and glorified in body and so he gives us, He gives us a part in what goes on, in our household, It gives us a part and what goes on in the congregation.

He gives us a part in what goes on in his work generally as the Gospel is spread throughout the earth and he saves for himself. All those whom he has chosen and love from before the world began, even as Paul has been writing to the Thessalonians. And one of the things he was excited about in chapter 1, was that the fact that they were, the elect of God is, what had been proven true by the Holy Spirit, not just sending preachers, so that the gospel may be preached, but giving the Thessalonian believers hearing so that the gospel may be with faith.

And so, there's been this combination of a love for Jesus. And his glory, a love for those, for whom. Jesus has died and excitement to participate in that, which God's electing love has determined to do. So that God electing or predestinating doesn't actually hinder ministry for those who love Christ's glory and are excited to participate in something that they know God himself is doing and that they know will, for sure.

Be accomplished. But even when we have this love and this pleasure and this desire, things do not always go. According to our wisdom, would want it to. So, Paul and Sylvanus. And Timothy were in Athens, where Paul had originally gone by himself and waited for them to catch up.

And now they're stuck in Athens even though they want to be able to get back to Thessalonica, to have a renewed role in the Thessalonians, being built up in Christ and a renewed role in their sanctification, their growth and grace and he expresses his love for them that Jesus has produced in their hearts.

We brethren having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not an art. Endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. So this love of a nursing mother. This love of a faithful father from the preceding versus in in verse 7 and verse. This is the Father mentioned in eight or no further down 11.

So in verses 7 and 11, this love was a love. Also, in which they wanted to see their faces. And I don't remember if I included first Thessalians, 2:17, when I preached on the biblical theology of faces but it's all through the Bible. We should have a love for a longing for a desire to see the faces of those who belong to Christ and whom Christ is being glorified.

And so if we don't then we can ask the Holy Spirit to give us more of the mind of Christ. More of the heart of Christ to be more selfless, not thinking about how hard things are on us are what people might do to us. But to be more Christ-centered that we would be, remembering what Christ is doing through us, and what Christ is doing in us and in, then that's what he was.

So excited about when he said, what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord? Jesus Christ is coming. So there's this future joy that he's going to have. Jesus is going to return, they are gonna have been perfectly sanctified and glorified in the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul and Silas and Timothy on the last day, see the returned Christ. See the glorified Thessalonian believers. They will have the honor of knowing that God gave them apart. God gave Paul Silas and Timothy apart in a role in bringing that day and doing that work of applying Christ to the Thessalonians.

And so, if we are going to on that day, it's one of my great joys concerning you all and it should be your joy concerning me too. I feel much like Enoch who after he became the father of Methuselah, his life could be described as a walking with God.

You have been great blessings to me in my own sanctification and I know by God's design that my ministry has been a tremendous blessing to you and you're coming to faith and you're sanctification and as much as we love one another, now It is part of how the Lord motivates us to ministry part of how the Lord motivates us to even greater love for one another.

That we would think about that. Last great day and the returned Lord Jesus. And how each of us will have been perfected in him, and the satisfaction that we'll have in having been given the honor the privilege of being one of the ones that God used in each other's lives, there's someone who doesn't like for us to have joy.

He wants to hinder that work. He can't do anything about it and yet he tries to do everything he can about it. And Paul has no problem saying at the end of verse 18, Satan hindered us. So we are in our quest to see one another grow in Christ and they're delight in that day.

Which by the way, isn't just anticipation of future delight like verse 19. But verse 20 is present delight and on our you are our glory and joy. Now we have that glory and joy already even as we anticipate it having fully then Satan, opposes all these things. And so, we are to be strong in our affections over against Satan but also creative and decisive in our actions for whatever reason.

All three couldn't come just one at most could come apparently the other two may have been needed in Athens or prevented from leaving Athens but he says in verse 1 of chapter 3, therefore when we could no longer endure it We thought it good to be left in Athens alone and sent Timothy our brother and minister of God and fellow laborer.

Then the gospel of Christ to establish you and encourage you concerning your face. So they had to make a decision about the best way to delegate and design the personal resources that they had and my personal resources. I mean, you have the total ministry that Paul and Silas and Timothy can do and although they could have done more ministry in Athens if they had Timothy with them because he is their fellow laborer.

He is their brother and minister of God. They could have done more in Athens yet the total amount that could be done. And this is sanctified

judgment by the Holy Spirit, and even using their emotions, the angst at maybe anxiety isn't the right word, the, the agony that they had from, not being able to go to Thessalonica like they had wanted, but in in the whole complex of making that decision, they decided, well, if Timothy goes there then we'll lose a little bit here, but what we lose here will actually be to some extent a participation in.

What Timothy does there because he is our brother Minister of God and fellow laborer in the Gospel of Christ. And this shows us that there reminds us that we can't do all ministry everywhere. One of you, when you were younger, you know, wanted me to go to the house of every father in the city and teach their the fathers.

And husbands, how to have family worship, how to give discipline, how to instruct children. So that everyone in the city could receive that discipleship. Now, that's not something that I'm able to do, because I'm finite not that I couldn't have been more diligent or whatever. But I'm finite, I can't be everywhere and do everything.

That's what Paul Silas. And Timothy were running up on here. They were finite, they couldn't be everywhere and do everything, But God himself, as the one who is doing the work. When we serve, we serve, as ministers of God. And one of the ways that we can serve is by sending others whom we could have used, who would have been a benefit to us, but we send them and they minister on our behalf churches.

Do this with missionaries, for instance, and church planters, who are, you know, missionaries to your own land. We send them out. We pray for ministers of the gospel and we pray for parents who whom we know have their hand set to to the work. We encourage one another. You can't be in every house to encourage every parent like you encourage and are help.

And unto me, you can't be in every house to to be alongside every brother and sister like you are encouraging and helping one, another and your walks of the Lord. But you can on the Lord's day, stir up. Other children in the congregation unto these important roles that they have in their homes.

And you can spend the time instead of talking about, you know, the whatever gun stuff, or whatever, tech stuff or whatever other garbage. And on the Lord today, it's garbage that other people want to talk about. You can talk about what was in family worship in your house this week, or even better, ask them what was in family worship in their house, ask them how things are going with treating their siblings, well and encouraging one another in the Lord.

And then you could pray for one another and send your, send your friends as missionaries, quote, unquote to one another's, homes, the way. Paul and Silas sent Timothy as a minister on their behalf back to Thessalonica. The point is that our great joy is Christ and a subsidiary participating joy in the joy of Christ.

And His gloria, his return are the people whom he will have glorified and our love for them, ought to drive. Not just doing everything that we can. But what we can do is very small by comparison, not just to what he himself is doing of course. But also to what he is doing by using all who is and so a very important part of what we do is equipping and enabling others to be able to minister to wherever God takes them and wherever God calls.

Then and love for him. The light in him, love for the brethren delight in the honor that we have. Either of having a part in the work that he does or enabling someone else to have a part in that work, these things should be great motivators and pleasures in our life.

Like the Apostle shows that they were in his and Silas's and Timothy's in the passage before us, the Lord have help us to have those desires and those delights and spray Father. Thank you. That Satan has helpless and all that he does to try to hinder your work. As you overcome his opposition, we pray that you would give us the kind of affections for one another and for all of your people and the kind of actions and one another's behalf and behalf of all your people through which you overcome, the attempted hindering work of the devil.

Thank you. That Christ will return in glory. Thank you that everyone for whom. He has died, everyone. Whom you have elected in him. Will be glorious like him in that last great day, we pray Lord that you would make us to have our joy in Him and have great joy from the participation that you give us in your work.

And in one another, We pray Lord that that you would wean us off of the joys and entertainments and amusements of this life. And this world which are so pathetically small by comparison to the joy and glory and crown that the Apostle has described. In this portion of your word, we realize, as we think about it, as we speak it, how far our hearts are affections and our actions have been falling short of this.

So we bless your name for the Word that you bring to correct us and we pray that you'd help us and that you'd be glorified by finishing by completing the work that you have begun in Christ on His day and then whose name we ask it. Amen.