



Morningside Church

Sermon Discussion Guide

Title: Strength for the Struggle

Date: September 22, 2024

Scripture Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

Notes:

In the midst of their Christian walk, the Thessalonian church had to deal with persecution. Paul had to leave prematurely because of the persecution. He wanted to spend more time with them. Since he was not able to stay there, he wrote this letter instead. He had more to teach and share with them. He wanted to express his gratitude for their faithfulness and let them know of the blessing they were to others. So, how can someone live for Christ, and encourage others to do so, even in the midst of challenges and persecution? In today's text we see how Paul encourages the Thessalonians to have *strength for the struggle*.

I. The Reception of God's Word (1 Thess. 2:13)

The Thessalonian Christians received Paul's teaching, but not as the teaching of men, but as the word of God. They realized the source of what Paul said and embraced it, allowing it to transform their mind and heart ([Rom. 12:2](#)).

- What does it look like for someone to receive and accept the word of God?
- How can the word of God transform someone?
- Why is spending regular time in the word of God so important?
- How often on a weekly basis are you reading God's word?
- Describe a time recently when God spoke to you through His word.
- How has God's word transformed you?

II. The Motivation from God's People (1 Thess. 2:14-16)

The Christian lifestyle doesn't stop with receiving God's word. Putting it into practice is needed. Paul encouraged the Thessalonian church, acknowledging their hardships, comparing them to the prophets of the Old Testament, and Jesus, as they also were recipients of persecution and death. He wanted them to know that just because they were experiencing persecution, they were not at fault, but it was the persecutors who were wrong ([vs. 15](#)), and that God, in His just timing, would deal with them ([vs. 16](#)).

- Why is it important to be doers of the word and not just hearers ([James 1:22-25](#))?
- How can putting the word of God into action help build our faith?
- What are areas of God's word you find most challenging to put into action?
- How can knowing God's word more and more help you deal with your day-to-day encounters?



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III. The Anticipation of God's Presence ([1 Thess. 2:17-20](#))

Even though Paul had to leave the Thessalonian's before he wanted to, he knew that if he didn't have an opportunity to see them again in Thessalonica, that he would see them in the presence of Jesus at His coming. Paul was motivated by his passion for people. He knew that one day they would all be gathered together at Christ's return. This motive kept him focused on the spiritual condition of those he had a part in converting to Christianity. His investment in them included both evangelism and discipleship. He wanted them as equally prepared for Jesus' return as he was.

- How would you describe Paul's passion for people?
- What does it mean to invest in others?
- Who is someone who has invested in you?
- What limits our investment in others?
- How much are you anticipating Jesus' return?
- How can keeping Jesus' return at the front of our minds impact how we invest in others?

"The apostle here puts the Thessalonians in mind that though he could not come to them as yet, and though he should never be able to come to them, yet our Lord Jesus Christ will come, nothing shall hinder this. And further, when he shall come, all must appear in his presence, or before him. Ministers and people must all appear before him, and faithful people will be the glory and joy of faithful ministers in that great and glorious day."

Matthew Henry

"The end will come with the return of Jesus Christ...That is why a Christian can be an optimist. That is why a Christian can smile in the midst of all that is happening...We know what the end will be: the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Billy Graham