

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Thessalonians 3:11-13**.
- B. A key word in chapter 3 is that of being established. Paul uses elsewhere in his letters too. To be established means: to fix or set, make firm or solid, to cause to stand.
- C. The thought for us is that in our being ready for the coming of Christ we must be firmly established in our faithfulness.
- D. Let us see how Paul did that for the Thessalonians.

I. HE SENT THEM A HELPER.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 3:1-5.
Therefore when we could endure *it* no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone; **2** and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, **3** so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. **4** For indeed when we were with you, we *kept* telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know. **5** For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.
- B. The great commission says to go teach, baptize, and teach. Paul had helped to establish the church in Thessalonica, and now through Timothy he was working to establish (mature) the brethren there.
- C. It is not a sin to be a babe (immature) in X, but it is to stay that way (Heb. 5:11-14).
Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. **12** For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. **13** For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. **14** But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.
- D. Timothy was able to help the brethren become established because he was a Xian, a servant, and a fellow worker (team player), and a good example (1Tim. 4:12-16).
Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. **13** Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching. **14** Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. **15** Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. **16** Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

II. HE WROTE THEM A LETTER.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 3:6-8.
But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, **7** for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; **8** for now we *really* live, if you stand firm in the Lord.
- B. Timothy had visited Paul in Corinth (Ac. 18:5) and the young man told the apostle of the faithfulness of the Thessalonians. This proved to be of great comfort to Paul.
- C. Due to this visit Paul writes 2 letters to the Thessalonians which are now part of the NT. These letters are designed to encourage and establish Xians in the faith.
- D. The word of God is powerful to do this very thing (2Tim. 3:16-17):
All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **17** that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
 - 1. Doctrine--tells us **what is** right.
 - 2. Reproof--tells us **what is not** right.
 - 3. Correction--tells us **how to get** right.

4. Instruction--tells us **how to stay** right.
- E. We must have, as Xians, a good working knowledge of the word to be established in faith:
 1. God's word is food to nourish (Mt. 4:4).
But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"
 2. God's word is light to guide us (Psa. 119:105).
Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path.
 3. God's word is a weapon to defend us (Eph. 6:17).
And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

III. HE PRAYED FOR THEM.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 3:9-13.
For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account, **10** as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith? **11** Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; **12** and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also *do* for you; **13** so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.
- B. Paul's prayer for the them was that they be established with unblamable hearts, holy before God. Several times in his letters the apostle mentions the great value of being established:
 1. Romans 16:25
Now to Him **who is able to establish you according to my gospel** and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,
 2. 1Peter 5:10.
And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, **will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.**
 3. Romans 1:11-12.
For I long to see you in order **that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;** **12** that is, that I may be encouraged together with you *while* among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.
 4. Colossians 2:6-7.
As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk in Him, **7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith,** just as you were instructed, *and* overflowing with gratitude.
 5. 2Peter 1:12.
Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them*, **and have been established in the truth which is present with you.**

CONCLUSION & INVITATION.

- A. Being prepared for the second coming of Christ means being established in the faith.
- B. Notice that Paul's emphasis is not on what will happen at the second coming but making sure that the Thessalonians are ready for it, should it happen.
- C. To be established in your faith you must first be in the faith.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.