

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:14-3:13

For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God’s wrath has come upon them at last! But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.

Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

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.

Theme

The Gospel fuels fellowship and love in the church.

Outline

1. The Gospel Fuel of Conversion, 2:13
Their common life in Christ and the Spirit was the basis of their relationship
2. The Gospel Fuel of Love, 2:19-20; 3:4-7
They looked for grace and rejoiced in each other.
3. The Gospel Fuel of Priorities, 3:3-5; 11-13
They sought after sanctification not peaceful lives.
4. The Gospel Fuel of Intercession, 3:11-13
They knew each other and prayed for each other before God

Quotes

- *Not every small group is intent on this purpose, however. Some put a higher priority on socializing than on sanctification. Others excel in open sharing and sympathetic listening, yet they never confront sin or challenge members to change. . . This is unacceptable. A group with an unbiblical purpose can do more harm than good. Groups which meet without the biblical purpose of pursuing character development have the tendency to reinforce, rather than confront, the sin and selfishness already present in us. - C J Mahaney -*
- *Not what a man is in himself as a Christian, his spirituality and piety, constitutes the basis for our community. What determines our brotherhood is what that man is by reason of Christ. Our community with one another consists solely in what Christ has done to both of us. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer -*

Application

1. Let us tell our conversion stories to each other in small groups.
 2. Let us welcome new people into our lives and groups by asking for their conversion story.
 3. Let us look for grace in each other.
 4. Let us seek to build each other up in the faith.
 5. Let us pray for each other and give thanks to God for each other.
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