

“Interpreting Troubles”

1 Thessalonians 3:1-10

“It is a common thing for men to look upon pain as wholly evil. But deeper reflection shows that suffering is not thus purely evil – a thing to be feared and hated. It is often an instrument employed for good. Suffering will make the joys of heaven more rich and sweet. Remember that all discipline benefits or injures according to the spirit in which we receive it.” **T.W. Maya**

I. “Oh we got trouble!”

- A. What hardship or trial are you currently facing? Or recall a past trial.
- B. How did you respond to that trial in your thoughts and actions?
- C. How did your response to the trial please God?
- D. How did your response to the trial not please God?
- E. What Scripture did you turn to for strength and guidance in the trial?
- F. Which brothers and sisters in Christ encouraged you in your trial? How did they specifically encourage you in the trial?
- G. What does 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 say about trials and comfort?

II. “Oh I got trouble with my troubles!”

- A. Facing trials and troubles may tempt us to think:
(Check each statement that you have been tempted to think.)
 1. God is not at _____ in this; He cannot possibly be part of this.
 2. Things are not _____ out for me.
 3. God is _____ with me.
 4. This is not _____.
 5. If God _____ me, this wouldn't be happening.
- B. Consult the following Scripture regarding troubles and comfort and write down what they teach you: John 9:1-12; Job 1:6-12; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Proverbs 4:23; Isaiah 45:1-7; James 1:12; 1 Peter 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:12.
- C. What is a proper interpretation of 1 Corinthians 10:13, and how does it encourage you to face your trials with confidence in God?

D. Some Early Application:

1. Calamity, tragedy, trials, and hardships are not necessarily _____.
2. Trials are not necessarily an indication that God is _____.
3. The spiritual benefit in trials comes in my _____ acceptance of them, and in my confidence and trust in God's sovereignty, and my belief that He has my best interest in mind.
4. The test of trials becomes a solicitation to evil if I choose to _____ God and _____ His Word.
5. God will always provide a way for me to escape the temptation of unbelief and rebellion when I am enduring a trial.

III. "Oh I'm not troubled by my troubles anymore!"

- A. _____ tempts us to turn away from Christ, and tempts our faith to be weakened. (**1 Thessalonians 3:3-5**)
- B. "Faith" in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10 is not the collection of gospel truths, written doctrine, but "faith" is _____ belief in that doctrine.
- C. Timothy's mission in Thessaloniki was to:
 1. "Strengthen" = _____
 2. "Encourage" = _____
- D. "Disturbed" in 1 Thessalonians 3:3 means: _____
- E. When Paul said "we" in 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4, he meant: _____
- F. Why did the Apostle Paul warn the Thessalonians about affliction before the affliction appeared?

IV. Seven Elements of Caring for Others Spiritual Well-Being in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10. Measure yourself by the standard:

- 1) Christian affection and desire for fellowship in 3:1a; 2) Sacrifice in 3:1b-2a; 3) Compassion in 3:2b-4; 4) Protection in 3:5; 5) Delight and joy in spiritual progress of others in 3:6-8; 6) Gratitude to God in 3:9; and 7) Intercession in 3:10.

“Interpreting Troubles”

1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-10

Tempted in Trials

God is not at work in this.

Things are not working out for me.

This is not fair.

If God loved me, this wouldn't be happening.

1 Corinthians 10:13

God does not provide a way to escape the trial. God provides a way to escape the temptation to we face in trials to sin by disobeying God in our response to the trial.

“Flee from idolatry!” (10:14)

Application

Trials and hardships are not evil.

Not an indication that God is displeased

Spiritual benefit in humble acceptance

Solicitation to evil if I choose to doubt
God and disobey His Word.

Paul's Concern

Affliction may tempt us to turn away from Christ, and may tempt our faith to weaken.

1 Thessalonians 3:3-5

“Faith” in 3:1-10

“Faith” in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10 is not a reference to the collection of gospel truths, written doctrine, but “faith” is *living belief* in that doctrine.

Believing is one thing; living it is another!

Timothy's Mission

“Strengthen” = “to support or buttress with the intent of establishing

= a firm foundation in sound doctrine;
strong faith is the result of knowledge of
Scripture

Timothy's Mission

“Encourage” = “or comfort –
“parakalesai” = The Comforter – H.S.

= “to call near, to invite, to come along side to motivate to live in ways pleasing to God; application of doctrine to life”

“Disturbed” in 3:3

= “a dog wagging his tail to draw attention to himself, to get something; to allure, fascinate, flatter, beguile”

Don't allow affliction to lure you away from Christ.

“We” in 3:3-4

“We” meant Paul, Timothy, Silas, and all believers.

“Indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ will be persecuted.”

2 Timothy 3:12



Warning Beforehand

Paul warned the Thessalonians of affliction beforehand so that they would understand that their affliction, and his, was part of God's sovereign plan.

Affliction and the Christian

Don't think that our troubles mean God's plan is not working out.

Don't think that our troubles mean God is displeased with us.

In This Case Affliction Was:

An indication of Satan's opposition.

An indication of sinners' salvation.

An indication of saints' sanctification.

1 Thessalonians 3:6-10

Elements of Spiritual Well-Being

Christian affection and desire for fellowship, Sacrifice, Compassion, Protection, Delight and joy in spiritual progress of others, Gratitude to God for faith of others, and Intercessory prayer.

Measure yourself!