



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

1, 2 Thessalonians Sermon Series
Supports Session 4: Encouraged
Sermon Title: A Pastor's Prayer
Passage: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Connection to 1 Thessalonians 3:4-13

The prayers of Paul, Silas, and Timothy were from a heart of thankfulness as they prayed while being encouraged by the faith and work of the church at Thessalonica.

Introduction/Opening

Memories sometimes cause us to smile. It might not be an external smile but a tender reaction of the heart. It may be about a grandparent, a dear friend, or an admired person, but just thinking of that person makes one smile.

In a sense, this is what Paul is conveying to the church in 1 Thessalonians 3. He wrote that he was encouraged about their faith (v. 7), that their work produced fruit (v. 6a), and that God still knit their hearts together in Christ (v. 6b).

The prayer in verses 11-13 is so special since it was a prayer from the heart—a prayer from the Apostle to the church that affirms a deep affection for them in a special way. It's the sort of prayer that every pastor today can and should have for his church.

Outline

1. May we bond securely (vv. 9-11)
 - a. United in a common bond
 - i. Their common love for God resulted in a unique love for one another. This love for the church brought out a desire to spend time with them—quality time, as we often say today. This quality time was something done face to face.
 - b. United without barriers
 - i. Paul used a specific Greek word to express his immediate desire for the Lord to direct his way to the church (kateuthuno). This carried the idea that God was going to make a straight, level path for them to the church.
 1. His request was for God to make a path free of obstacles and hindrances so that they could directly come to the church at Thessalonica.
 2. Whether the hindrances were spiritual or physical (see 2:18), the point is that Paul, Silas, and Timothy prayed for those barriers to be removed.
 3. See also Luke 1:79 and 2 Thessalonians 3:5.
 - ii. We must unite in a common bond around Jesus, seeking to remove barriers we place and reinforce, including our busyness.

2. May we love maturely (v. 12)

The second part of Paul’s prayer was for God to increase the love of the church to the point of overflowing—affecting both the church within and the world beyond.

 - a. Love one another.
 - i. A mature love is a love that is unselfish, unassuming, and without ego.
 - ii. See John 13:33-35; Romans 15:2-3; 1 Corinthians 10:24; 13:4-7; 2 Corinthians 13:11-12; Galatians 5:13-14; Philippians 4:5.
 - b. Love the world.
 - i. A love for all people can be expressed in many ways, but ultimately it is a love that displaces personal comfort to extend the gospel to others. To do so is a sign of maturity in Christ.
 - ii. We are to set aside comfort and convenience for the call to salvation. See 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

3. May we walk purely (v. 13)
 - a. For the sake of the gospel
 - i. The church’s witness was to remain strong as they walked in purity before God.
 - ii. This is a similar concept to what Paul wrote earlier in 1 Thessalonians 2:12.
 - iii. The idea is that the church walks in unity as well as purity for the sake of the gospel of Christ.
 1. Peter also discusses this concept in 1 Peter 4:1-6.
 - b. Until Jesus returns
 - i. Paul appealed to the future return of Christ as a major reason for his instruction.
 - ii. Christians are to be holy as God is holy, being seen as one of Christ’s when He returns. However, no one is perfect, and all sin.
 - iii. We must do two things to be holy: walk in the way of Christ and rely on the grace of Christ.

Conclusion

This is a pastor’s prayer. And this should be my prayer. Our prayer. To be holy until Christ returns.

May we bond securely. May we love maturely. May we walk purely, as we live a life for Christ to glorify Him and share Him with others.

Fran Trascritti is a husband, father, grandfather, but most of all, a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has served in ministry for over twenty-seven years, and currently serves as the Administrative Director of the Growth Team at the Illinois Baptist State Association. He graduated from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv, PhD). He and his wife, Teresa, live in Springfield, Illinois.

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