

When We Could No Longer Forbear

1 Thessalonians 3:1 – 13

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~ When our Spiritual Safari previously examined the “Alice in Wonderland of the Bible” – the book of Ecclesiastes – we specifically examined a group of people labeled the “*do-gooder*.” A do-gooder was, and is, a religious man who never misses a church service, and is an exemplary, fine, outstanding citizen in the community. The only problem with the do-gooder is they never grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior. The reason they do not grow is because they have never prayed the Lord will lead them to a competent, educated, sincere, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led Bible study. There is a difference between being “holier than thou,” and merely doing good things — and between doing good things as a labor of our love for the Lord. The “*do-gooder*” always seems to deny – or at least be very uncertain of – the theme of the rapture in connection with the church. The rapture – harpazo – “*caught up*” – however you want to label it, is what Paul is speaking of in first Thessalonians.

When we continue in second Thessalonians, the theme will change to Christ’s second advent on earth in judgment as He treads the winepress and dashes the rebellion with a rod of iron like a potters vessel; as He establishes His earthly Millennial Kingdom – as we just learned all about in Isaiah. Paul taught those two great themes – among others – in Thessalonica. Well, the most impressive thing to me regarding prophecy is how practical it is in our everyday lives. If the right-teaching of prophecy doesn’t have an effect on the day-to-day, minute to minute manner in which we live your life, then the Lord Jesus doesn’t mean anything to you, friends. Let’s try it this way: prophecy will change your life, or you are not saved.

Modern eschatological seminaries have these teachings twisted into meaninglessness. They mishandle prophecy while treating the rapture and the second coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom as extraneous somethings. People love to argue about these things; but it’s of no value to even discuss them if prophecy isn’t being geared into our moment to

moment, private, and personal affairs. Our faith *MUST* walk in the reality of shoe leather – and produce something to further the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ – or it is so much nothing. Every angle of every view, of every shred of every perspective of our habitual existence and lifestyle, is inextricably intertwined into our thinking of Scriptural prophecy. Some people say, “*I don’t care,*” – and that’s indicative of them. If these things mean nothing to you, then all you have are theories and preconceived notions of religious philosophies. I cannot make it any stronger. The coming of Christ for His church is a purifying hope....

1 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

~ Love is not merely a fuzzy feeling of emotions we experience when we’re around some other person. No, love seeks the welfare of others above our own. Esteeming other people better than ourself is the truest form of expressing love to anyone. The only way a believer can demonstrate their love for God is through obedience. In fact, these three are the only forms of expressing love. It may include jeopardizing our own life for another. Well, Timothy was a brother, a minister, and a deacon servant alongside Paul the apostle. When we talk about taking the Gospel message of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus out to the world, we’re talking about an entire sphere of Christian service. Within that sphere, all other facets of

work for the Lord are contained. This Spiritual Safari does not emphasize the social aspect of the Lord's work – only Bible teaching – because there has never been any successful social movement that glorifies Christ that was not firmly anchored in the preaching and teaching of sound doctrine from Scriptures *FIRST*. Christ *must* come first. As Christians, when we do what we are supposed to do, then all of these other things are going to take care of themselves. For mankind, his problems grow worse and worse with no solution; because he is not anchored in Christ. And the “do-gooder” never seems to get around to doing any good.

Are you disturbed by the tensions and pressures in your church work? I wonder how Paul really felt about being “*appointed unto afflictions*” in verse three? It feels like an understatement. You and I are going to have problems in this world. No believer escapes problems and trouble in this life. We're tested on how well we stand for the Lord during our tribulations. Jesus saith, “*these things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace; in the world you shall have trouble....*” Well, that brings us back to rejoicing in suffering, as we have seen in previous reports. And these are the tenets of truth the church never gets around to teaching; indeed, they cannot teach this to a twenty-first century congregation. Impossible.

Christians are going to learn what trouble is once they accept Christ. Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth betimes. That's been my personal experience. Amazingly, Jesus knew about it, and told the disciples clearly, as He promised to lead us through the trouble. The storms of life *will* come along, but any boat Jesus is on is going to the other side, friends. Some will get out and walk on water with Jesus, and some will toil in frustration and fear. But all apostles reach the shore safely. All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. The previous sentence is an axiom of truth that shall never be changed or altered. Further, God is going to judge our *works* to determine our rewards in Heaven – but He is also going to judge our *character* to determine our position of authority as we rule and reign with Him. Only those who have suffered with Christ will rule and reign with Him when He returns in His second advent to establish His earthly kingdom by dashing the rebellion with a rod of iron like a potters vessel. You can just write that down, again....

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints ~

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