



## Threats To Our Faith

### 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20, 3:1-5

**1 Thessalonians 2:17-18** 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, 18 because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.

- Paul had been forced to leave Thessalonica.
- Acts 17--Paul preaches, some persuaded, some angered.
- “Those who have turned the world upside down.” Jesus does that!
- The world, and evil, is not in fear of gentle Jesus, who is only love, and is NEVER against feelings and desires. That guy is not a threat.
- Satan hindered us--impede one’s course by cutting off his way.
  - Satan is the adversary. Personal and against the church.
  - **Satan is Intent on tearing down your faith, and tearing down the church.**
- We’re talking about faith. Satan hates, above all, your faith in God.
- Our sin...reveals the temperature of our faith. And Satan knows this. Its not about the sex, or the hate, or unforgiveness, or cheating on your spouse or the test or your taxes that thrills him.
- It’s that you might begin to lose faith in God. Think his way is not really fulfilling, or wise, or joyful. That’s the endgame for him. He wants to destroy your faith in God.

**1 Thessalonians 2:19-20** For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

- Making disciples fueled Paul. It was his life’s mission.
- Paul got joy from seeing the dead come to life, seeing people reconciled to God, casting down idols, worshipping God.
- When Jesus arrives, Paul will open his arms and say, “Here they are, Lord. Here are the disciples I made.”

**1 Thessalonians 3:1-5** Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, 3 that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. 4 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. 5 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.

- Timothy sent for 2 reasons:
  - **Establish you in your faith.** Beginning doctrine, sharing the gospel. Foundations.
  - **Exhort you in your faith.** Continual, lifelong discipleship.
- What could so move, so concern Paul? What makes him worry his labor would be useless?
- Read p. 37 in Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire.
- **“What Paul knew, but what we seem to have forgotten, is that when people break down in their behavior, backslide into sinful living, or grow cold in the Lord, it is because their faith has broken down first.”--Jim Cymbala, Fresh Faith.**
- Two threats to their faith:
- **That they be moved by afflictions.**
  - Paul had told them, repeatedly, they would face afflictions.
  - Do your afflictions drive you TOWARD or AWAY FROM God?
  - Monty Williams video
- **That they be tempted.**
  - Temptations abound. Satan doesn't care where...as long as it's away from God.
  - Temptation is serious, but it is not sin.

**Hebrews 4:14-16** Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- Temptation is serious. It is a warning to RUN. To God, away from sin.
- James 1--lured--enticed by our own desire--desire is conceived--sin is birthed--sin grows--DEATH. EVERY TIME.

### Summary

- Our enemy is real, and his attack is real, and focused.
- How are you holding up? How is your faith? Is it cold? Is it weak? Do other things seem more desirable?