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**INTRODUCTION**

- in the last study we considered Paul's great burden for the Thessalonians in the midst of their affliction, and his confidence that the Gospel was what they needed to help them
  - he sent Timothy as a minister of the Gospel to get a report, and to minister the Word to them; now he returns
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**EXPOSITION****I. Timothy's Return with Good News – v.6**

- Timothy sent to check up on them (vv.1-5) because of Paul's earnest concern
- He goes to Paul, who is now in Corinth (Acts 18:1-5 - where there are added afflictions for Paul)
- The word used is usually in reference to "the Gospel"; the return of an answer that was like the Gospel
- Imagine being witness to this meeting... Timothy reports two major things

**A. The Continuance of Their Faith and Love towards Christ**

- 1:3 In the midst of their afflictions, they were clinging to Jesus Christ
- this gave Paul the encouragement he desired, that present circumstances had not shaken them from Christ

**B. Their Love toward These Ministers of the Gospel**

- This seen in their "good remembrance" of them; they had not bought into the accusations against them
- Also seen in their great desire to see them; this was mutual (2:17)
- It is a sad thing when face to face fellowship is avoided rather than longed for
- Here are the two great commandments (love for God and neighbor, particularly Christians); the Gospel was not sown in vain, but were reaping an abundant harvest
- These are two primary things that all true pastors desire and are pleased to see
- This is my goal and desire and labor for you

**II. Paul's Response to that Good News – vv.7-10****A. It Brought Comfort in Their Affliction – v.7**

- in seeing their faith, thus not in vain; though Paul (an Apostle) was suffering, through their joy in suffering he gained strength
- never underestimate the power of words and life on another; they are not petty, but come powerfully from believers

**B. It Brought a Renewed Sense of Life – v.8**

- this because they were standing fast in the Lord

**C. It Brought Inexpressible Worship – v.9**

- rhetorical question expressing great depths of emotion at what God was doing in them
- it was so great, sufficient thanks could not be given

**D. It Brought Prayer for Further Opportunities for Ministry – v.10**

- A longing for a face-to-face ministry
  - In a media age where there is so much teaching available, we would do well to remember the importance of personal interaction and community in the local church.
  - While their faith was standing strong, it was not yet complete/perfect; Paul desired to continue to shepherd them because though they were doing well, they weren't finished in their sanctification
  - There were more things to deal with to help them (5:14)
  - These are the results in the life of pastors who love their flock, and the reward they receive from the Lord
  - This is something of what it means to minister with joy (Hebrews 13:17)
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**APPLICATION**

- I am **continually saddened** by stories I hear of what happens within churches, and especially between pastors and their congregations; the pastor who was found to be going to another congregation by a deacon finding photo on web site
  - I **praise God** for the ongoing blessing of seeing these things in you
  - Let us continue to cherish, and cultivate, and pray, and confess, and forgive, and live with open-faced fellowship with one another, abounding in our love for Christ and one another
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