

We have been examining the next major section of 1 Thess., 2:17 - 3:13.

And today we'll look @ last part, 3:10-13.

In vs 10, Paul states the missionary team is praying for the Thess believers.

^{10a} Night and day we pray most earnestly ^{10b} in order to see you face to face and to complete what is lacking in your faith.

In vs 10a, Paul says, Night and day we pray most earnestly.

2 Observations regarding 10a

1st, w/ the phrase Night and day, Paul is emphasizing the consistency with which the team prayed for these believers.

➤ Not a once-in-awhile thing. ☞ **Habitually prayed for them.**

▷ Paul & associates were marked by a habitual prayer life. ☞ **Model.**

➤ In Eph., **Pray at all times.**

▷ Means, prayer is to become a habit for us.

▷ Prayer in the believer's life is not just an option for meal times or occasional emergencies.

▷ Rather, it is to become a routine part of our daily lives. ☞ **So prayer for the believer can never be a sporadic thing. 1/9**

And the 2nd observation we can make concerning vs 10a.

➤ Their prayers were sincere.

▷ We pray most earnestly.

➤ Means = an extraordinary degree, involving a considerable excess over what would be expected.

→ There was nothing mechanical or halfhearted about their praying.

In vs 10b, notes a 2-fold purpose of these most earnest prayers.

^{10a} Night and day we pray most earnestly ^{10b} in order ① to see you face to face and ② to complete what is lacking in your faith.

1st, the team is praying to be able to see these new believers in person, something they strongly desired to do.

➤ This is not merely physical sight, but association and fellowship.

➤ Recall that Satan had hindered them from returning to Thessalonica.

➤ But never forget, Satan's hindrances only happen with God's permission & w/in the boundaries God sets.

▷ Not cosmic dualism.

➤ Satan is not omnipotent, omnipresent, or omniscient.

▷ He is able to work only with God's permission & w/in the limits God sets. 2/9

▷ & rest assured, when God does allow it, it is for our ultimate spiritual good.

‣ Never for our detriment.

‣ God gave permission to Satan to hinder the missionary team's return.

▷ So Paul asked God to allow them to go back.

‣ In & of ourselves, we do not have the power to defeat Satan or overturn his work against us.

▷ But our heavenly Father does.

And the 2nd purpose in vs 10b of these most earnest prayers.

‣ To complete what is lacking in your faith.

‣ **lacking** does not refer to any wrongdoing on their part.

▷ That which is lacking in what is essential or needed.

‣ what is lacking, what is needed.

▷ Simply, to fill in the gaps in their faith.

‣ **faith.**

▷ Not loyalty 3/9

▷ Chaps 4-5 provide a clue.

‣ Instructions in Christian doctrine & practice.

▷ Most likely then, faith should be looked at as the way Jude uses it.

‣ Jude 3, Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

▷ I.e., faith = the body of God's revealed truth that Scripture contains and the apostles preached.

‣ Briefly put, God's wd.

▷ Sound doctrine, which encompasses teaching of right beliefs & of right behavior.

‣ The wd **complete** in vs 10b occurred often in educational contexts to refer to the teacher completing the student's instruction so that he or she could live fully as an adult.

▷ This supports this def. of faith referring to sound doctrine here.

‣ And remember, team abruptly left.

▷ So there were gaps in the instruction of sound doctrine in these new believers' Christian lives.

▷ Basically then, there was more for them to know, to apply, to live out.

▷ Fill in those gaps. **4/9**

▷ From paganism to Christianity.

▷ Old for new.

▷ So in addition to conversion, needed a resocialization.

▷ I.e., needed to go through the process of learning the new attitudes and norms required for our new life in Christ.

→ Briefly, a renewal of minds.

▶ I see at least 2 implications here for us.

▷ I.e., 2 imp in vs 10b and in Paul wanting & needing to fill in the gaps in the instruction of these new believers.

▷ 1st, we see here that evangelism involves the dual task of converting people & of teaching them how to live as Christians. ↪ Discipleship.

▷ Meaningful evangelism must aim for more than acceptance of Christian beliefs by converts.

→ We need to strive to create a new social context or community.

↳ One in which converts may be resocialized into a new and distinctively Christian pattern of behavior and practice.

→ Without this, conversion is not complete and has little chance of being genuinely transformative in the long term. 5/9

▷ 2nd Implication in vs 10b and in Paul wanting & needing to fill in the gaps in the instruction of these new believers..

▷ All believers need a resocialization. ⇨ Old for new.

▷ Rom. 12:2 (CSB), Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

▷ Tense.

▷ Starts w/ minds.

→ A total change from inside out.

→ The key to this change is the mind, the control center of one's attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and actions.

→ This renewal radiates outward and transforms our behavior.

▷ And of course this continual renewal of our minds takes place by constantly saturating our minds with the word of God.

Vv 11-13, moves from speaking of the team's prayers to actually praying.

3:11-13 (CSB), ¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow with love for one another and for everyone, just as we do for you. ¹³ May he make your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Vs 11 simply puts what he said in vs 10 into prayer form.

▷ In vv 12-13, Paul had 2 concerns for believers. 6/9

1st, vs 12, that believers increase and overflow with love for one another [i.e., believers] and for everyone [i.e., unbelievers].

► Whether the missionary team could return or not, they knew that the church needed to sustain itself.

▷ A key ingredient would be love among the believers.

▷ As opposed to disunity, factions, or disagreements.

▷ The church would need love to survive.

▷ This is a lesson that all local churches need to hear & apply.

▷ Col. 3:12-14.**

→** The imagery here suggests that the final and most important new article of clothing for God's people is love,

↳ This is the perfect bond of unity that binds believers together in complete oneness.

► As we'll see in 3:6, Paul had received good news from Timothy of the Thessalonians' love.

▷ But he knew that love can always be strengthened and deepened with God's help.

▷ So Paul prayed that the Lord would make the believers' love overflow.

▷ Another lesson, always room for growth. 7/9

➤(Vs. 12) Now, need to understand the kind of love Paul is talking about.

▷The love in view here describes the selfless love that comes from God.

➤In Rom Paul notes that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

▷Such love looks out for the best interests of those loved.

➤Caring for fellow believers and reaching out to unbelievers.

The 2nd concern Paul had is in vs 13.

➤Prayed that the Lord would make believers' hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

➤Paul wants believers to be blameless and holy to meet the Lord when he returns.

▷He is not praying that the Thessalonians will grow and develop so as to be blameless at some future point when the Lord comes.

▷Rather, he believes that the Lord can come very soon.

▷But not immediately, to be sure, as 2 Thes. 2 indicates.

▷& therefore Paul prays God will make their conduct and moral resolve firm in these qualities now and that they will continue in this state right up until the Lord's coming.

▷This is an important lesson for us as well. 8/9

➤ Should note here that Paul did not pray that they would be sinless.

▷ That's impossible.

▷ Complete perfection is not attainable in this life.

▷ But the process of sanctification brings believers ever closer to perfection.

▷ So we are to be growing in blamelessness & holiness.

▷ In this life we will not become sinless.

▷ However, we are to be sinning less & less in our Christian life.

▷ & 1 day, the process will be over, and all believers will be made perfect when we stand before God our Father.

➤ The phrase, [at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints](#), refers to his 2nd coming when he will establish his eternal Kingdom.

▷ At that time, Christ will gather all believers, those who have died and those who are alive, into one united family under his rule.

▷ All believers from all times, including these Thessalonians, will be with Christ in his Kingdom. 9/9