



FAITH BIBLE FELLOWSHIP of Fairfield Glade
"All Things New" Series ~ "Take a Stand"

Text: I Thessalonians 3:13-20 ~ Pastor Dave Evangelista ~ February 22, 2009

As we continue in our "**All Things New**" Series, we see how pertinent this book is to "New". This chapter deals with Paul's explanation as to how the church was born and nurtured. Now he deals with the next step in maturity i.e. how the church was **to stand**. Paul explained three ministries that he performed to help these new Christians become firmly established.

1.) He sent them a helper. 2.) He wrote a letter. 3.) He prayed for them. (See *1 Thessalonians 3:1-5*). In our text, Paul chose to be left alone in Athens so that Timothy could return to Thessalonica and establish the spiritually needs of the saints. Timothy was the ideal man to send to the church to help them stand firm. What kind of a person can help younger believers grow in the Lord? To begin with, he must be a Christian himself. We cannot lead another person where we have not been ourselves, nor can we share that which we do not understand or possess. Timothy was a minister, he was not afraid to work. He had faithfully served with Paul and knew how to minister in the churches. According to verse four in our text, we must expect to suffer for His sake (See *Philippians 1:29*). Of course, behind the persecution is Satan, the enemy of all believers (See *1 Peter 5:8-9*).

Paul then **wrote a letter**. (See *1 Thessalonians 3:6-8*). Timothy met Paul at Corinth and gave him happy news that things were going well at Thessalonica.

Timothy reported that the new believers were "standing firm" in spite of persecution. Paul's response was to write two letters to that church as part of God's *inspired word*. Paul strongly suggests that God's word is the tool for establishing new Christians in the faith. Every major doctrine of the faith is touched on in these brief chapters. Since Paul did not remain in Thessalonica very long it is remarkable that he taught his converts so much. God's word is food to nourish us, light to guide us, and a weapon to defend us! One reason God established the local churches is that believers might grow in the word and in turn help others to grow (See *2 Timothy 2:2 and Ephesians 4:11-16*). Paul then ministered to them in a third way.

He prayed for them. (1 Thessalonians 3:9-13). Jesus prayed for his disciples just as Paul prayed for the Christians at Thessalonica—that their faith would not fail. He also prayed that their faith might mature—verse 10. Faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted. God tries our faith—not to destroy it but to develop it. Paul prayed that the suffering Christians in Thessalonica might grow in their faith and God answered his prayer. Paul wrote in his second letter—"...we are bound to thank God always for you brothers because your faith grows exceedingly." *2 Thessalonians 1:3*. The next request Paul prayed was that their love might abound in 3:12. Our growing faith in the Lord ought to result in a growing love for others! We

are taught of God to love one another and some of these lessons are best learned in the school of suffering. True love deepens in times of difficulty. True Christian love is shown not only to believers but toward all men! Then, the apostle prayed for holiness of lifestyle. Again, it is the return of the Lord Jesus that motivates the believer to live a holy life! Our Lord's return is also a source of stability in the Christian life. Where there is stability, there can be sanctity and where there is holiness, there is assurance. The two go together. Notice that Paul's prayers for his friends were not careless or occasional. He prayed night and day, see verse 10.

The Bible pattern for prayer is: to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is the sanctifier of the believer, and this is a prayer for holy living—the address is proper! Paul ended chapter two with a reference to the place of the saints—at the return of Christ, and he ended this chapter the same way. He prayed that his converts might stand blameless and holy before God at Christ's coming. Paul's prayer teaches us how to pray not only for new believers, but for all mankind.

In review: In this study we see how important it is to care for new Christians. We need to lead them on in the Christian life and help them get established.

As your Pastor, my concern for us is—if new Christians are not established, they will fall when the winds of persecution start to blow. If they cannot take a stand for Christ they will never be able to walk! Our challenge as a church is to be sure that they have materials to become grounded as new believers. **Faith Bible Fellowship Institute** offers the Source of Light Correspondence Courses which have been instrumental in winning many souls to Christ and starting them off on the path to understanding, studying and making God's Word the source of strength for their new

life in Christ. If you have a friend who desires to know God better or are not certain they know God at all, invite him or her to church and then make them aware of the classes and courses we have here to help them learn about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Vertical line