

1 Thess 3:1-13

God's Fellow Worker

"We sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker" (3:2)

Paul's sending of Timothy to Thessalonica teaches us about the need for and role of fellow servants in the life of the church. *Do we view ourselves as needing help? Do we view ourselves as helpers of others?*

Phil. 2:25 - Paul sent Epaphroditus and also describes Timothy; Romans 16:3,9

Everyone needs a Barnabas: an encourager to pour into me; a mentor (Acts 11:23)

Everyone needs a Timothy: someone that I can encourage and disciple (Acts 16:1-3)

2 Cor. 6:1: and working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain. Ephesians 2:10: We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works

God not only gives us the Bible, but people - at every stage, helpers; His coworkers...

- People of the Word . .
- Develop and send them out, to encourage and examine other churches. .(2 Timothy 2:2)

1. **The Reason:** "We could endure it no longer; the tempter might have tempted you"

- a. Love flourished; yet enemies and resistance abound
- b. Love, concern, separation like an orphan
- c. Love creates a weight... heaviness... affection... about to burst!
 - i. God's love for His people in slavery...(The Exodus)
- d. How are the Thessalonians?
- e. We love them, and we are concerned about them and their faith
 - i. We all need help - we are a spiritual 'charity case'; needy

2. **The Resources:** (Our brother; God's fellow worker) "A Valued Apostolic Emissary"

- a. Timothy did not go to Thessalonica empty-handed... Holy Character
- b. Brother, Coworker, servant, Gospel - show me your credentials
 - i. Family: our brother
 - ii. Faithful: God's fellow worker
 - iii. Fuel: motivated by the Gospel...
- c. Timothy has a certain character - trustworthy, etc.- credibility, and is fully equipped!
 - i. Synergos: He is in rhythm and harmony with the Gospel and us and you
 - ii. He gets the Gospel . . you can't just send anybody
- d. At this point he is young, timid, sickly . . but a good heritage and upbringing

3. **The Responsibility:** mission trip to Thessalonica - what was the mission's purpose?
 - a. Not our rights, but our responsibility- not an option; accountability
 - i. Our attitude is often fear, avoidance rather than courageous acceptance
 - ii. God calling Moses, after Joseph is forgotten; Joshua replacing Moses
 - b. One who is receiving grace: strength, courage, and faith
 - c. To settle them... they would not be agitated... unsettled... just your presence
 - i. **Infuse** with Christian stability and joy and peace
 - ii. **Inform**; Instruct: remind them of what this is: we expected this; Jn. 16:33; John 15:18 - 16:4 (Notice the emphasis Jesus puts on the Helper who is sent)
 - iii. **Investigate**: to find out about your faith: follow-up appointment
 1. How is their progress?
 2. There is a tempter . . to derail and entangle; a roaring lion
 - d. One who is giving grace: giving strength, courage, and faith
 - e. God gives, we receive and then share
 - i. We grow as individuals
 - ii. The church grows
 1. "I will build my church"
 2. How does this happen in and through me? Read 1 Tim. 4:6-16
4. **The Report:** (v.6-8)
 - a. Timothy has come to us and brought us good news -
 - i. They are growing, defending, etc.
 1. Faith: who is this so important? FAITH - Heb. 11:6; a gift that's all you got
 2. Love
 3. Affection for us . . still there . . do you love me or not?
 4. He love me, loves me not
 5. Hope: the return of Christ... keep coming back to these three . .
 6. Conduct - - needs improvement . .
 - b. Stand firm in the Lord; this will enable us to live
 - c. There are some things still lacking... He will address those later
5. **The Results** (v.10-13) *Praying to Our Kind Heavenly Father*
 - a. They became God-focused; worship, praise, thanks . . not self or humanistic but rather the eternal became longed for . . . great expectations; how encouraging
 - b. The danger is to become self-preserving; discouraged and disoriented; make bad choices; (Paul went from distress and affliction to Joy and Praise)
 - c. Began well, doing well, finishing well . .
 - i. God will finish this out: Phil. 1:6
 - d. Unity, patience, hope - - so as to not be prey for the enemy
 - e. Pray that we will be together . .

The Need to Remember:

- How has God helped you? Hebrews 13: "The Lord is My Helper"
- God sent His help to us . . in Christ, in His Spirit, in the Church. . .
- We are called to go and do likewise...

The Good Samaritan - Go and do likewise... (Luke 10:30-37)

The Gospel

- God sent Christ to us; We too are sent . .
- God's passion - the time fulfilled, He sent His Son
- Surely, they will receive Him
- We could not bear it. but He has
 - To give us forgiveness, transformation, eternal security

"Men are mirrors, or 'carriers' of Christ to other men. Sometimes unconscious carriers. This 'good infection' can be carried by those who have not got it themselves. People who were not Christians themselves helped me to Christianity. But usually it is those who know Him that bring Him to others. That is why the Church, the whole body of Christians showing Him to one another, is so important."

"I simply want to tell you that there are some men in this world who were born to do our unpleasant jobs for us. Your father's one of them." **Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird**

Usefulness in the world and Church--a humble readiness to do anything, and put our hands to any good work--a cheerful willingness to fill any post, however lowly, and discharge any office, however unpleasant, if we can only promote happiness and holiness on earth--these are the true tests of Christian greatness. The hero in Christ's army is not the man who has rank, and title, and dignity, and chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. It is the man who looks not on his own things, but the things of others. It is the man who is kind to all, tender to all, thoughtful for all, with a hand to help all, and a heart to feel for all. It is the man who spends and is spent to make the vice and misery of the world less, to bind up the broken-hearted, to befriend the friendless, to cheer the sorrowful, to enlighten the ignorant, and to raise the poor. This is the truly great man in the eyes of God. The world may ridicule his labors and deny the sincerity of his motives. But while the world is sneering, God is pleased. This is the man who is walking most closely in the steps of Christ.

—J.C. Ryle, 'Expository Thoughts on Luke'