

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

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**Love Abounding – Hearts
Established in Holiness**

Related Topics: Prayer; Love; Holiness;
Heart; Blameless; The Lord's Return

REVIEW

The close of Chapter 3 brings to an end the theme that began in Chapter 2:17.

In that section the Holy Spirit unfolded for us the UNBEARABLE CARE that Paul experienced for the new believers in Thessalonica. While Paul was overwhelmed with this unbearable care for the new believers, Paul experienced crushing adversity in his own life. The crushed servant was comforted by the report that Timothy brought back from Thessalonica.



1 Thessalonians 3:6-10 6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you - 7for this reason, brothers in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. 8For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. 9For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, 10as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

For all that he heard of their faith that COMFORTED and VITALIZED him – Paul understood that there was still work that the Lord wanted to do in their lives. As the chapter closes we come to the content of Paul's prayers for the believers in Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 3:11 11Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you,

NOTE:

Paul's complete dependence upon the Lord to DIRECT him in ministry, his GREAT motive – getting back to the Thessalonians to help them mature in their faith, but he was going to depend upon the LORD to direct him back to them.

Ministry is God's work. It must be DIRECTED by God and EMPOWERED by God. THAT is the record of Acts.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 12 and may the Lord make you increase and abound...

NOTE:

Paul's understanding that fruitfulness is the LORD'S WORK.

1 Corinthians 3:5-7 5What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the

Lord assigned to each. 6I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

Jesus said — ...and on this rock I WILL BUILD MY Church...

[Matthew 16:18](#)

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 12and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

GREAT PRAYER POINTS — LOVE and HOLINESS

To make up what is lacking, they needed to experience the work of God in their lives causing them to increase and abound in love to one another and to all. This was not a loveless church (labor of love), but they had room to grow in love because love is an essential mark of the Christian faith.

John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

- To make up what is lacking, they needed to experience the work of God in their lives causing them to increase and abound in love for all. This love begins in the family of God — Love ALL the saints!

But it must go beyond.

Matthew 5:46 If you only love those who love you, what reward is there for that? (NLT)

NOTE:

1 Thessalonians 3:12 12and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,...

“...as we do for you,...” Paul daringly sets himself as a standard of love to be emulated.

How many would say the same thing today?

- To make up what is lacking, they needed hearts established in holiness.

HOLINESS = hagosune

Hagosune refers to holiness — not in the sense of describing the process of becoming “holy” — but rather the quality of “being holy”. It is the quality of holiness as an expression of the divine in contrast with the human.

CRUCIAL:

Time and again the Bible refers to God as BEING HOLY:

- It speaks of MORE than God’s MORAL PERFECTION.
- It speaks of the OTHERNESS of God.
- He is HOLY in that He is SEPARATE from His creation.

EVERY one of God’s attributes are an expression of His HOLINESS — His OTHERNESS. God is not merely MORE loving than man — His love is OTHER THAN any love known to man. God is not merely MORE JUST than man — His justice is OTHER THAN any known to man.

DON’T MISS THIS — The devil wants us to view holiness as wrapped up in maintaining the outward appearances of religion! He wants us to pour our energies into developing a holy exterior while neglecting the interior, like whitewashed tombs, full of death [Matthew 23:27](#) .

CRUCIAL:

TRUE HOLINESS begins with the heart being established in the OTHERNESS of God. THIS IS RELATIONAL! It is PARTICIPATING in the very nature of God!

The Greek word for BLAMELESS is *Amemptos*, which means literally "Unblamable." The pre-fix "a" in *amemptos* means "without." The suffix, "mémphomai" means "find fault."

Amemptos signifies that whatever charges might be made, no charge could be maintained.

THIS IS HUGE — Paul sets the standard for the child of God by speaking with:

- The authority of an Apostle.
- The love of a spiritual dad.
- A profound understanding of being their BROTHER in the Lord.

Paul wants their aim to be to live in such a way that no charge against them could ever stand.

Archeologists have found the adverb form of this word on Christian tombs from ancient Thessalonica. When people wanted to identify a deceased friend or loved one as a Christian, they inscribed *amemptos* or "blameless" on his or her grave.

PLEASE NOTE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOLINESS and BLAMELESS. He prayed that their hearts would be established blameless IN HOLINESS. Paul's prayer makes it clear that BLAMELESS is the outcome of a heart established in the OTHERNESS of God.

FELLOWSHIP with the God who is HOLY leads to a BLAMELESS life. The degree to which the heart of a man or woman is established in the OTHERNESS of God is the degree to which their outward behavior is BLAMELESS. I believe that this is what Peter meant in 2 Peter 1:4 when he spoke of us being PARTAKERS of the Divine nature.

THAT is the ESSENCE of the Christian life! [2 Peter 1:4](#)

NOTE:

Careless living is a SYMPTOM of:

- A lack of participation in the otherness of God.
- A diminished intimacy with Christ.

[1 Thessalonians 3:13](#) so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

NOTHING can encourage us to desire holiness like remembering that Jesus might come today.

[1 John 3:2-3](#) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

THAT IS WHY the devil works so hard to get the church to DIMINISH or DISMISS the return of Christ.

NOTE:

FIRST CENTURY believers lived with a sense of the IMMINENCY of Christ's return. In THREE Sabbath's time Paul had taught them about the RETURN OF Christ, the RETURN FOR the Church (Rapture), and his RETURN WITH the Church (Second Coming).

Those who want to DIMINISH or DISMISS the return of Christ say, "Let's not be sidetracked from orthodoxy by prophecy. Let's talk about the atonement and propitiation, and the virgin birth." I love ALL of those things, but how can we say that the second coming of Christ is NOT orthodoxy.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 23For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

There are more references to the second coming of Christ than any other orthodox issue you can talk about. There are about seven references to the new birth. There are about 80 references to baptisms with water and Spirit. There are over 300 references to the second coming of Christ in the New Testament - about 1 out of 10 verses. The second coming of Christ is by far the broadest subject in the New Testament. Can I tell you why? The Bible says that the Church is the Bride of Christ. The Bible says that Jesus LOVES His BRIDE and GAVE Himself for her. The night before He died on the cross to redeem her He said that He was going away to prepare a place for her.

He knew that He was leaving her in a HOSTILE world; a world where the enemy has influence, but Jesus KNEW that He was going to SECURE, for His Bride in heaven, something so beyond ANYTHING that could ever be known or experienced in this world, so infinitely awesome that anything in this world doesn't amount to a hill of beans compared to what He was preparing.

Jesus loves His Bride SO MUCH that He couldn't stop writing to her about His coming for her. "I know I've told you this, but I want to tell you again." "I know I've told you this, but I want to tell you again what I'm preparing for you in heaven." "I know I've told you this, but I want to tell you again that I'm coming for you so that where I am you might also be." THIS makes the subject of His coming for His Bride one of the most prominent themes in the New Testament.

Paul understood this relationship between Christ and the Church.

2 Corinthians 11:2 I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

THAT is why Paul made sure that the subject of Christ's return FOR His Church and the subject of the return of Christ WITH His church was CENTRAL to the faith of these three-week old, bunch of believers!

LISTEN - The reality of the return of Christ is essential to the Christian life, BECAUSE it has a direct impact upon EVANGELISM. If we believe He is coming for us we should be BURDENED for the lost. The return of Christ has a direct impact upon our PERSONAL HOLINESS. If we believe that Jesus is coming for us as a groom for His bride, how can we drink, or get high, or watch trashy movies, or treat our spouse or kids like a doormat.

What should our PRIORITIES be in light of Christ's return? PRAY. STUDY the bible. Use our time for SERVICE. GIVE our finances to further the work of the Kingdom.

Jesus is coming - What REALLY is important?

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