



Now we really live

Imagine the day Timothy arrived back in Athens from Thessalonica. What news did he bring? How was the church doing? Was there even a church at all anymore?

News

Read 1 Thessalonians 3 v 6

- ❓ What is the news—good or bad?
- ❓ Notice the order of the news here. What does Paul care about more than whether the Thessalonians still like him?

Therefore

Read 1 Thessalonians 3 v 7-9

- ❓ What impact does the news have on Paul? • v 7 • v 8

Emotionally, the news from Thessalonica was life or death to Paul. His distress and persecution paled into insignificance when he heard this young church was standing firm in faith. V 8 is the words of a man who had invested his heart in this church, and who would have been heartbroken if the news had been bad. We are seeing the heart of someone who lives as though the gospel is true—as if carrying on with it or falling away from it is literally life and death.

Apply

- ❓ What do you most want for your Christian friends? Their happiness, or their salvation? Their comfort, or their Christ-likeness?
- ❓ If you said “salvation and Christ-likeness”, how does, or should, this show itself in your prayers for them and your conversations with them?

- ❓ If you have a spouse and/or children, is your answer the same for them?

Requests

One sign that we have a heart like Paul's is that we will pray like Paul.

Read 1 Thessalonians 3 v 10-13

- ❓ What is challenging about the frequency and emotion of Paul's prayers for this church (v 10)?
- ❓ What is he praying for them?
• v 11 • v 12 • v 13

This prayer seems to ascend in intensity. Paul really wants to be able to visit, to help this church grow in maturity (v 11). But he really really wants God to minister to them, so they grow in love for others, within and without the church (v 12). Yet what he really, really, really wants is for them to continue in faith, so that they will stand before Jesus as saved people when he returns (v 13).

Pray

Pray for some Christians you know, both in your church and further afield. Consider the faith God has given them and the salvation that lies before them, and let your heart be moved in praise to God. Pray that you would be able to serve them in some way. Pray that he would be growing them in love in every way. And pray that you would see them on that final day, and together enjoy eternity with Jesus for ever.