

# JESUS IS COMING!

## How's Your Faith?

### I Thessalonians 3:1-13

#### Introduction

1. How important is faith to living life God's way? The Bible says it is impossible to live a life pleasing to God without faith. Hebrews 11:6 - *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*
2. In I Thessalonians 3 Paul expressed his greatest concern for the believers he left behind when he was forced to leave the city. His pressing question was:

**I Thessalonians 3:1-13** - *Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain. 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--for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 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.*

#### How's Your Faith?

1. **Your faith needs to be established and strengthened. Vs. 2**
  - Establish = "to set firm." The Apostle knew it was critical for their faith to be firmly anchored in their hearts/minds.
  - Strengthen = "encourage." Timothy's mission was to fan the flame of faith so it increased in strength.
2. **Your faith will be attacked by the tempter. Vs. 5**
  - The devil will do all he can to destroy your faith. Luke 22:31-32 - *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."*

- We need to pray “Lord, *increase* our faith.” Luke 17:5 - *The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"*

**3. Your faith will be demonstrated by your love for others. Vs. 6, Gal. 5:6** - *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.*

- Paul linked the news of their strong faith with their expressions of love.
- James explained this relationship in James 2:14-18 - *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*  
- Genuine faith always demands expression in love.

**4. Your faith is a source of encouragement to others. Vs. 7**

- The Apostle was encouraged by the report of their strong faith.
- Believers in distress are strengthened through our faith.  
II Cor. 1:6-7 - *If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.*

**5. Your faith is a lifelong learning process. Vs. 9-13**

- Paul linked their faith’s development to the coming of the Lord.
- Never stop growing in faith.

**The Challenge: “Without faith it is impossible to please God...”**

1. If you have not done so already, turn from your sin and turn to Christ by faith today.
2. Christian, how’s your faith? Do not settle for a weak, watered down version of the real thing.
  - Pray for the Lord to increase your faith.
  - Saturate your heart with the promises of God. Trust Him to do the great things only He can do. Rom. 10:10 - *For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*