

Scripture

1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Summary

Paul has planted this church and those who have come to faith are very dear to him. Unfortunately he had to flee Thessalonica soon after his ministry there had begun, and so he has been anxious to see how they are progressing in their faith. When Paul finally gets word from Timothy that they are standing firm in their faith he erupts in joyful thanksgiving to God, declaring that 'now he really lives, since they are strong in the Lord'. The joy Paul feels shows us how deeply he values the saints, and how critically important faith in Christ is. Indeed, it's the most

important thing about any person. This joy that Paul feels for their faith in Christ makes his sufferings fade into the background. This joy leads Paul to come before God in prayer for them, praying that he might visit them again to continue to strengthen their faith, and also that God would help them to love each other more. Paul believes that as they grow in love for each other a natural by product of this will be holiness, because love and holiness are two sides of the same coin.

Sermon in a sentence

Because Paul sees people's faith in Christ as being the most important thing in the world, he prays that they may be strengthened in their faith and grow in their practical outworking of that faith (love and holiness).

Main Points

- I. The object of Paul's great delight
- II. What Paul prays for in response
 - a. To see them to strengthen them in their faith
 - b. For their love to abound, leading to holiness

Other Scriptures:

2 Cor 7:5-9; Ephesians 4:15-16; Nehemiah 1:1-4; Romans 13:8-10

Think On This

Many see love and holiness as being two separate aspects of Christianity. In fact, they are two sides of the one coin. True love will lead to holiness, and true holiness to love.

Questions

1. What do you delight in? What makes life worth living?
2. How does Paul's view of what's most important about people shape the way you view people?
3. How much time do you spend praying for your brothers and sisters in Christ?
4. How does Paul's prayer shape your view of Christian relationships and how we should seek to serve each other in our relationships?
5. How do love and holiness tie together and why can we not have one without the other?

RHC Core Values

Gospel-Centredness – To have the gospel in the centre of our ministry, and for everything we do to find its root in the gospel.

Experiential Faith – To actively seek the modern day work of the Holy Spirit, expecting him to move in our midst in signs and wonders, and to lead us to the will of God.

Theological Depth – To pursue a deep and soul satisfying knowledge and understanding of God through the Bible.

Community on Mission – To recognise that we are not here for ourselves, but are on a mission to bring the gospel to the world.

City Renewal – To see the gospel change every aspect of the city we are living in by doing social justice, integrating our faith and work, and seeing the city renewed culturally, socially and spiritually for the glory of God.