

Have you ever...

- ...‘worried’ about someone?
  - What causes this *worry*?
- ...felt pressured to fit in?
  - What might *pressure* look like?
- ...watched someone wrestle with peer pressure?



*Paul's Letter to the  
Church at Thessalonica*



# I Thessalonians

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*A Letter from the Heart*

1 Thess. 2:17 - 3:10

# 1 Thess. 2:17-3:10

1. Bereaved (2:17-20)
2. Deceived? (3:1-5)
3. Relieved (3:6-10)



# 1. Bereaved (2:17-20)

- Explaining or defending?
  - Accusation: “Paul doesn’t care about you. He left you here and won’t come back.”
  - Counter: expressions of relationship, deep emotion and desire



# 1. Bereaved (2:17-20)

- But we, brethren
  - As opposed to the Jews (2:15-16)
- Having been taken away
  - *Orphaned from you*
  - *In face, not in heart*
    - 'Bookends' (see 3:10)



# 1. Bereaved (2:17-20)

- We wanted [attempted] to come
  - Even though it had only been a short time he had made several attempts to return
  - These are not recorded so we have no information about them



# 1. Bereaved (2:17-20)

- Yet Satan hindered us
  - How? Where? When? Not recorded
  - *How could* Satan hinder him?
  - Is all hindrance from Satan?
    - *Forbidden* by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6)
  - God allows/uses it (cf. 2 Cor. 12:7-10)





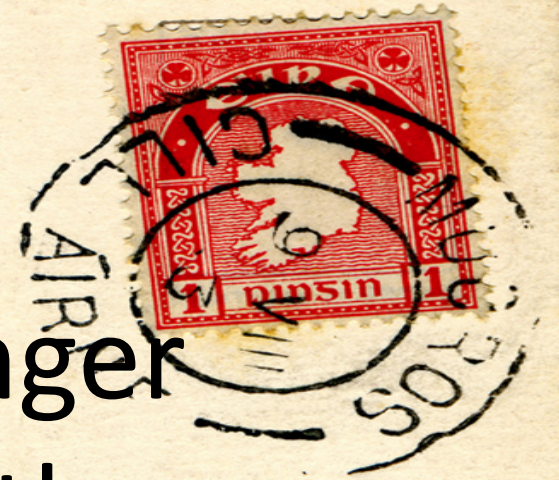
# 1. Bereaved (2:17-20)

- Our hope, joy, crown
  - Looking to the future fulfillment of his ministry—when they stand before Christ!
  - Then his mission and joy would be complete



## 2. Deceived? (3:1-5)

- When we could endure it no longer
  - The suspense of not knowing the condition or well-being of the believers was too much to bear (3:1)
  - Add to that the suspense of not knowing if they remained faithful (3:5)



## 2. Deceived? (3:1-5)

- Disturbed by these afflictions (3)

- *To shake back and forth; a wagging tail*

- *To flatter -> to beguile or deceive*

1. Were they *shaken* from their faith?

2. Were they *beguiled* by their foes?



## 2. Deceived? (3:1-5)

- We sent Timothy (2)

- *Our bother and God's fellow worker*

- *My beloved and faithful child in the Lord*

- *Bond-servant of Christ Jesus*

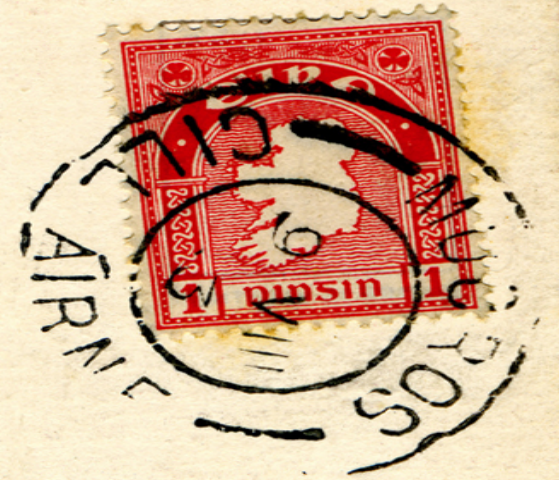
- *My true child in the faith*

- *My beloved son*



## 2. Deceived? (3:1-5)

- We sent Timothy (2)
  - To strengthen and encourage you
    - *To shore-up and exhort*
    - To prepare them to stand firm in the midst of their affliction
    - Insufficient time for discipleship training (see Acts 17:10)



## 2. Deceived? (3:1-5)

- Afflictions (3)

- We have been *destined* for this

- Christians are *appointed* for suffering

- It is part of God's plan for sanctification (2 Cor. 1:4; 4:16-18; Rom. 5:3-5; 1 Pet. 1:3-9, 13-16; Acts 14:22)



## 2. Deceived? (3:1-5)

- Afflictions (3)

- *To crush, compress, squeeze*

- Distress, trouble, calamity, anxiety, suffering, persecution, etc.

- Much tribulation (1:6; 2 Cor. 8:2), but they stood fast (2 Thess. 1:3)



## 2. Deceived? (3:1-5)

- Responding to afflictions
  - Persevere – Rom. 12:12
  - Bless those who persecute – Rom. 12:14
  - Be prepared to answer – 1 Pet. 3:15
  - Act in faith – Heb. 10:32-39 (11:35-38)
  - Rejoice & trust – 1 Pet. 4:12-19





## 2. Deceived? (3:1-5)

- The tempter

- From: *To put to the test*

- Satan *tempts* to condemn (Matt. 4:1, 3)

- God *tests* to confirm (e.g.-Heb. 11:17)

- Jesus tested to stretch (e.g. -John 6:6)

- How do we know who's behind it?



# Responding to Testing/Temptation

- Count it all joy (James 1:2)
- Persevere / be faithful (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10)
  - This brings life (*crown which is life*)
  - Based on our love for God
  - Following lusts brings death (14-15)



# Responding to Testing/Temptation

- Remember 1 Cor. 10:13:
  - God will not allow you to be tested/tempted beyond what you are able
  - God will prove a way of escape
  - You will be able to endure it



## 2. Deceived? (3:1-5)

- Labor would be in vain
  - Had his labors proved to be *empty*?
  - Rocky soil? (Matt. 13:20-21)
  - True faith or emotional response?
    - Affliction proves who is true and *weeds out* the insincere



### 3. Relieved (3:6-10)

- Good News!

- Of their *faith* – they stood firm; they did not turn away from the living God
- Of their *love* – they were loving one another as they should (4:9-10)
- Of their *affection* – thinking kindly, longing to see them, too



### 3. Relieved (3:6-10)

- Comforted in distress and affliction
  - *Encouraged, strengthened* (see 3:2)
  - What did Paul know of distress?
    - 2 Cor. 11:22-29



### 3. Relieved (3:6-10)

- He was revitalized by the confirmation of their steadfast faith (8)
- He was overflowing with joy because of them (9)
- He longed to see them again (10a)



### 3. Relieved (3:6-10)

- Complete what is lacking?
  - Further discipleship / encouragement
    - *Exhorting, encouraging, imploring* (2:11)
- It was not *defective* but *deficient*
  - Paul was forced to leave before he could show them everything they needed





# So What?

- Trials/testing/temptation
  - Satan uses many things to try to deceive or distract us from faithfulness
  - We should expect it (1 Thess. 3:3)
  - Count it all joy and persevere (James 1:2)
  - Stand firm in the Lord! (1 Thess. 3:8)



# So What?

- Expressions of *True Love*
  - Desire for fellowship with the one loved
  - Desire to help the one loved
  - Desire to build up the one loved
  - Praying for the one loved

