



1 Thessalonians 3:6-13
From Sermon 1.9.22

Read *1 Thessalonians 3:6-13*

Review from Sunday's sermon: After receiving the report back from this baby church, Paul is moved to prayers of thanksgiving and blessing. Yet, although they were thriving, Paul knew two things: 1) they could not be content with status-quo and need to continue to grow and mature. 2) dark days were ahead as the enemy led the culture to persecute the Church. As their spiritual father, Paul intercedes in prayer, on their behalf. The verses contain more practical and vital lessons for the church and the leaders.

1. Can you think of a time when you got bad news that led you directly to prayer? Various personal answers and stories. Examples: Medical report. Someone struggling. A job loss...

1a. How about good news? More various personal answers and experiences. Example: An answered prayer. Deliverance from some problem. Something you weren't expecting....

2. Study Guide Question 1—page 26. Who was Paul's emissary to the beleaguered Thessalonians, and what was his mission assignment? Paul's own spiritual son/protégé, Timothy. [To whom he would later also write 2 letters]. Timothy was to get an update on their spiritual health and growth, bring back any questions or concerns, and inform Paul on what the false teachers were spreading in the church.

3. On Sunday, what was pointed out as the two main priorities of the Elder(s): The Word and Prayer.
See also *Acts 6:1-4*

3a. Why do you suppose these are the most important? Various answers. Everything else flows from these. All other ministries can be delegated out [serving, visits, administration, problems, events....]. But, only the biblically qualified Elders/Pastors are to study, prepare, and deliver God's Word. And, while everyone can and should pray, it's in the Elder's biblical job description to intercede on behalf of the flock.

4. Discuss the Spirit having Paul use "*increase and abound*". It's both growth and maturity. Think of your garden or fruit trees. You'd like to see a good amount and good, quality fruit that is usable. Quantity (= amount) and Quality (= purity, accuracy). That their growth in each discipline would overflow. Point: Never be satisfied with the minimum in our Christian life or church. Something I'm afraid, the current church culture is okay with. See also *Hebrews 5:12-6:2*

5. Study Guide Question 5—page 27. What was the content of Paul's prayer (vv. 10-13)? That they would "increase and abound" in faith, love, fellowship, strength, maturity, holiness, a forward focus. Although not explicit in this short prayer, we know Paul also prayed continually for their protection.

5a. What was the result of that prayer which is revealed in *2 Thessalonians 1:1-4*? God granted all that Paul had prayed for! Paul's prayers of intercession had turned into prayers of thanksgiving.