

TIMOTHY: A MESSENGER OF PEACE
For Paul—For the Thessalonians
An Exegetical Study of 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13

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“Why did we leave?”

Have you ever found yourself thinking this a few months into a new call? While I have only served in one parish, I remember thinking two weeks after we returned to Mequon from vicar year, “Why did we have to leave?” I wonder if that is the way missionaries sometimes feel when it wasn’t their “choice” to leave? Just think for a moment of the missions we’ve “left behind” or downsized in the last decade as a synod. Think of how many missionaries came “home” wondering, “Why did we have to leave?” As of late, the main reason was because of the lack of funds. But then, there are other mission fields we’ve left because of violence. Think of the amazing and terrifying account of the Russows and Spevaceks fleeing Albania with bullets flying all around through a sleepless night! Think of Missionary Reid, no longer able to return to Indonesia—a place where Christians are at times put to death by beheading!

It’s hard enough to leave people you love and a place you’ve come to know as home. But how much more of a burden it must be to know that those you unwillingly left behind will suffer the same persecution that drove you from that corner of God’s kingdom! How unsettling to think that those you leave behind may face even worse persecution—even death!

Some of our own men and their families know just what Paul, Silas and Timothy were going through before this letter was written. I wonder how many times they asked themselves, “Why did we leave?” Persecution from the Jews drove them out (Acts 17:5-10), and persecution from the unbelieving populace of Thessalonica threatened the church (1 Thess. 2:14). Needless to say, their hearts were restless. They needed the peace of knowing the Thessalonians were enduring these hardships. The Thessalonians needed the strengthening and peace of Christ to be brought to them by their pastors.

What do we do when we can’t stand waiting for an update? We call. We write. We Skype. The Apostle and Silas sent Timothy: A Messenger Of Peace—For Paul; For the Thessalonians.

Our Study

To guide our digging today, I have divided the text into four sections. We'll study them as follows:

- 1) Satan's Roadblock—2:17-20
- 2) Timothy Sent—3:1-5
- 3) Timothy Returns—3:6-10
- 4) The Missionaries' Prayer—3:11-13

A note on the NIV translation. When the NIV is referenced in the translation box it reads from NIV84 and the bracketed sections note what is different in the NIV11.

Satan's Roadblock

2:17

Ἡμεῖς δέ, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ' ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας, προσώπῳ οὐ καρδίᾳ, περισσοτέρως ἐσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ.

BAE- But we, brothers, when we were orphaned from you for a short time (in person, not in heart), took great pains to see your faces with great longing.

NIV- But, brothers [and sisters], when we were torn away [orphaned by being separated] from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you.

HCSB- But as for us, brothers, after we were forced to leave you for a short time (in person, not in heart), we greatly desired and made every effort to return and see you face to face.

ESV- But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face,

What a vivid description of their separation! ἀπορφανισθέντες—an aorist passive participle with a temporal twist used to emphasize that this separation was something forced on them. Obviously this is the word from which we get our own word “orphan.” Just think about that. It was the missionaries who felt like the ones who were orphaned! No one could steal them away in heart (προσώπῳ οὐ καρδίᾳ), but this bodily separation was as if they had lost their own children! Sure, it was only for a “short time” (πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας)¹, and yet how awful it was.

¹ Lenski notes that this is the only time these two nouns are combined. What usually occurs is the preposition with one or the other noun. (Lenski, p. 272) He nor any other commentators referenced noted that this was anything of particular significance.

Why so many of the English translations don't make use of the simplest meaning is beyond me. Sure, "torn away" (NIV84, ESV) and "forced to leave" (HCSB) make an Etch-A-Sketch for us of the pain in their hearts. But why not let the masterpiece Paul paints be seen? Why not let the pitiful and heart-wrenching image of an orphan abandoned by his parents rest on our hearts so that we can peer into the anxious hearts of these three pastors? "We were orphaned from you...!"

Then they pile up words to show just how much their separation has been weighing on their hearts. περισσοτέρως—ἐσπουδάσαμεν—ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ. The aorist ἐσπουδάσαμεν² reminds us that this wasn't just a desire, they took great pains to visit their beloved Thessalonians. There was a lot of real effort involved. Just the basic meaning "to hasten" emphasizes they were restless in trying to find a way to get to them. The comparative adverb περισσοτέρως just piles it on. And just in case anyone was confused, they write ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ. "We really, really really want to see you again!"

Do you feel like that when you go away on vacation? Probably not. In fact, I hope not. You're not being a good husband, father even pastor if you can't let your heart and mind go on vacation when you're on vacation!

Do you feel like that when there is something keeping you from being with your member who needs you? Maybe you couldn't get to them before they went into surgery. Maybe you couldn't be at your member's bedside as they died because you were on vacation. Maybe you feel this way about your delinquents. You wish you could be with them and bring them God's Word. Maybe you even make every effort to try and visit them, but they're full of excuses; they don't show for your meetings; they don't answer the door. Or maybe you do visit again and again, but nothing else happens. You long for them to be in worship. You pray that the Lord would bring them to the divine service, but as you begin the service and look into the flock before you, you don't see their face. Maybe you feel like the one orphaned when you've taken all that time to show them the truth of God's Word, but they leave and go down the street or to the next town to the church that tells them what their itching ears want to hear.

2:18

διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δῖς, καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς.

BAE- For that reason we wanted to come to you, even I, Paul, again and again, and Satan cut us off.

NIV- For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us [blocked our way].

HCSB- So we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.

ESV- ...because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.

² σπουδάζω—BDAG 939,3— "to be especially conscientious in discharging an obligation, be zealous/eager, take pains, make every effort, be conscientious w. inf. foll."

Then comes the third “wish” type word (ἠθελήσαμεν). The missionaries leave no room for the Thessalonians to doubt that they want to come to them. They are not delaying because they’re undecided about coming to them. They’ve been held back because of things beyond their control.

Then we have this seemingly out of place insertion directly from Paul (ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δίδς). Is Paul simply emphasizing his desire, or is he saying he, the chief of sinners, is also the chief of orphaned pastors?

Speaking of orphans, you will notice in this verse that there is an “orphaned” μὲν. Lenski notes that this “is a beautiful instance of μὲν *solitarium*. Μὲν is constructed with ἐγὼ and and is pointedly restrictive (as Robertson puts it): ‘I in particular, Paul.’”³

Now how are we supposed to understand καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δίδς? Literally it means “even once and twice.” Most translations side with BDAG⁴ and translate something like “again and again.” Some, such as Lenski, are rather adamant in stating that Paul made just two efforts.⁵ Others, like Bruce, copout and simply translate “more than once.”⁶ But judging on what Paul has already said, this has been an ongoing process and the Greek permits this.

Now we are given the reason why they had not yet returned to Thessalonica. καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς. BDAG gives a rather “vanilla” meaning for ἐνέκοψεν, “**to make progress slow or difficult, hinder, thwart.**”⁷ This word was originally used to describe the breaking up of a road to render it impassible; breaking through an enemy’s line; and cutting in on someone during a race.

In Acts, the Spirit would not allow them entrance into Bithynia. But with Thessolonica, Satan worked to drive them out and now he was ruining the way back in. Yet notice he has no permissive power. He can only destroy, and at that only what God permits.

What specifically did Satan use to keep them out? Was it the awful conditions for gospel proclamation in Athens? Was it a continuing of the Jewish persecution which drove them out in the first place? Certainly part of it must have been the persecution from their countrymen (2:14).⁸ Perhaps you could also say all of the above. Athens was a thinking man’s town. It was filled with idols and filled with people who were too “wise” to listen to the Gospel. Paul had huge amounts of work to do there too. It was the jealousy of the Jews that sparked the persecution of the Gentiles. Maybe there was a city-wide ban on the rabble-rousers, Paul and Silas. Whatever the case may be,

³ Lenski, p. 274

⁴ It is somewhat interesting that between the two adverbs and their use together BDAG gives slightly different meanings. ἅπαξ—BDAG 97,1— “as a numer. term **pert. to a single occurrence, once...again and again, more than once Phil 4:16; 1 Th 2:18**” δίδς—BDAG 252— “**twice...ἅπαξ καὶ δ. once and again=several times Phil 4:16; 1 Th 2:18**”

⁵ “When the first plan went by the board, the matter was not dropped; plans were made a second time, and these two plans could not be carried out.” (Lenski, p. 275)

⁶ Bruce, p. 53.

⁷ BDAG 274.

⁸ Some commentators say it may have been Paul’s “thorn in the flesh.” But this is very unlikely because all three missionaries were hindered, not just Paul.

the missionaries worried that the Thessalonians might fall prey to the Tempter's temptations and all their work be in vain.

During my research it was surprising to see how many commentators were "surprised" to see Paul referencing Satan as the cause of their "road block." When you don't spend much time reading heterodox sources you forget just how blind the higher-critical method is. Some commentators write as if Paul was trying pass the blame for something that could be reasonably explained. You and I all know that Satan "leads the whole world astray" (Rev. 12:9). He is the one working every day to put a road block in our ministry. Whether it be with our delinquents, couples considering divorce, unfaithful students, or the little old lady who struggles with doubt wondering why God seems to have forgotten to take her to heaven. Thank God he will only let Satan go so far for so long!

2:19, 20

τίς γάρ ἡμῶν ἐλπὶς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως - ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς - ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ; ὑμεῖς γάρ ἐστε ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρὰ.

BAE- For what is our hope or our joy or our crown of boasting in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.

NIV- For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

HCSB- For who is our hope or joy or crown of boasting in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.

ESV- For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.

Here we see the missionaries give a little interlude of praise, looking forward to the hope, joy, glory and boasting that will be theirs on the Last Day. ἐλπὶς for the Christian is not nebulous, it is certain. Our χαρὰ is found in Christ and his promises. But how can the Thessalonians be their ἐλπὶς, χαρὰ and στέφανος καυχήσεως? They are looking to the Last Day when Christ will come⁹ and they will stand before the Lord and hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant! ... Come and share your master's happiness!" (Mt. 25:21). Their hope is that no matter what, they will see them again in heaven, if not in this life. Their joy is knowing that the Thessalonians will one day be saints triumphant and the battle of this life will be over. Their glory will be that they were the vessels God chose to bear

⁹ παρουσία—BDAG 781,2bα— "2b) On the one hand the word served as a sacred expr. for the coming of a hidden divinity, who makes his presence felt by a revelation of his power, or whose presence is celebrated in the cult...On the other hand, π. became the official term for a visit of a person of high rank, esp. of kings and emperors visiting a province... α) of Christ, and nearly always of his Messianic Advent in glory to judge the world at the end of this age"

witness of Christ to the Thessalonians. The Thessalonians are their “crown of boasting”¹⁰ because the Thessalonians are the crown of victory that their labors were not in vain.

Isn't this part of our joy, comfort and confidence when we take a call somewhere else or when we as a synod need to pull out of a mission field? We know we will see God's people again. When Christ gathers us to himself we will see the crowns of righteous boasting which Christ will place upon our heads. It brings to mind the last stanza of CW 542: “When all their labor seems in vain, revive their sinking hopes again; and when success *crowns* what they do, oh, keep them humble, Lord and true until before your judgment seat they lay their trophies at your feet.”

Timothy Sent

3:1-3a

Διὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις.

BAE- Therefore, when we could bear it no longer, we resolved / consented to remain behind alone in Athens and we sent Timothy, our brother and fellow worker of God in the Gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your faith so that no one is disturbed by these afflictions.

NIV- So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker [co-worker in God's service] in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials.

HCSB- Therefore, when we could no longer stand it, we thought it was better to be left alone in Athens. And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you concerning your faith, so that no one will be shaken by these persecutions.

ESV- 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.

¹⁰ Gordon Fee aptly reminds us of the type of crown the missionaries are referring to. “The first problem is with the word ‘crown’ itself, whose first meaning in English refers to the (usually) metal diadem worn by a king or other royalty; and it is hard to imagine that the English reader will picture anything else when hearing this word in a context like this. On the contrary, the ‘crown’ Paul expects to receive at the coming of Christ has nothing at all to do with royalty; rather, its primary referent is the (usually laurel) wreath bestowed on the victor in one of the contests in the games, the winner's ultimate prize, as it were. Thus it is not the symbol of royalty, but of victory, or achievement.” (Fee, p. 109)

We couldn't take it

Finally the three missionaries resolved to take action, and to some extent thwart the evil plans of Satan. They couldn't take it any more. The picture *στέγοντες*¹¹ paints is one of a dam holding back water. The missionaries couldn't hold it any longer, the water was flowing over the dam. It was time to find peace for their anxious hearts.

We'll stay here alone

Before we look at anything else within this phrase we have to ask, "Who is the 'we'?" Think of the timeline of Acts 17 & 18. Did Timothy and Silas meet up with Paul briefly in Athens before Corinth? When we read Acts 17 and 18 it appears that Paul was alone the whole time in Athens, and that Timothy and Silas only met up with him in Corinth. So, who is the "we"? With the following verse it seems very unlikely that Paul could be referring to anyone else but Silas and Timothy, because they are those who shared in this ministry. Acts 17:34 mentions Dionysius and Damaris, but only as converts, not fellow missionaries.

To try and explain this, Wanamaker notes: "Could this be an example of an epistolary plural? Most commentators argue against this possibility in favor of a genuine plural, but in v. 5, where Paul mentions sending Timothy to Thessalonica, he slips into the first person singular. This should warn us against assuming too hastily that the plural of 3:1 is genuine."¹² I'll follow the bandwagon and disagree with Wanamaker.

The best way to explain would be to follow Lightfoot. It seems that Luke simply doesn't give us all the little details of travel in Acts.

In order to reconcile the expressions here with the account in the Acts, the occurrences may be supposed to have happened in the following order. St Paul is waiting in Athens for Silvanus and Timotheus, having left them at Berea, and charged them by message to join him without delay (Acts 17:15,16). They join him at Athens. Paul and Silvanus despatch Timotheus to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:2). Silvanus is despatched on some other mission to Macedonia, perhaps to Berea. St Paul goes forward to Corinth (Acts 18:1). After he had been in Corinth for some time, Silvanus and Timotheus return to him from Macedonia (Acts 18:4,5). Thereupon the Apostle writes from Corinth to the Thessalonians, in the joint names of himself, Silvanus and Timotheus.¹³

εὐδοκῆσαμεν (1pl. aor.) has an interesting nuance. BDAG notes: "**to consider someth. as good and therefore worthy of choice, consent, determine, resolve** w. inf. foll."¹⁴ To me the words "consent" and "resolve" carry significantly different meanings. "Consent" has the idea of compromise or concession, whereas "resolve" is sticking to a plan and not budging. So which is it? Paul, Silas and Timothy all wanted to return. Because Paul and

¹¹ pres. act. pt. of *στέγω*—BDAG 942,2— "**to bear up against difficulties, bear, stand, endure...** μηκέτι στέγοντες *since I could not bear it any longer 1 Th 3:5...*"

Bruce notes that the verb held the original meaning of "keeping out or keeping in water or another fluid, comes from the latter sense to mean generally 'to contain' and then 'to endure'." (Bruce, p. 60)

¹² Wanamaker, p. 127

¹³ Lightfoot, p. 40

¹⁴ BDAG 404,1.

Silas were being held back, they conceded to just send Timothy. They would remain behind (καταλειφθῆναι)¹⁵, though reluctantly.

Why Timothy?

Why was Timothy able to return to Thessalonica? Was it because he wasn't there before? Luke doesn't mention him in Acts 17 during the initial visit. He is included in the author of the letter and sent as one with whom the Thessalonians were familiar. Could it be because as a "junior" member of the mission team he wasn't on the "front-lines" in their visit like Paul and Silas? Or could some of it have to do with the personality of Timothy? At times Paul could be very "Peter-like." Think of his disagreement with Barnabas. Was Paul more of a Luther personality and Timothy like Melancthon (minus the doctrinal wishy-washyness of course)? I'm sure it helped that Timothy was "physically" a Jew. Then again he was also the son of a Greek, and outwardly may have blended in very well. Any way you want to look at it, Timothy was the one able to return to Thessalonica.

Timothy's Credentials

Although Timothy had already been there and back, Paul and Silas give some credentials for Timothy, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Here's were we run into all kinds of variant and translation fun! There are four main variants.

- 1) καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ¹⁶
- 2) καὶ διάκονον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ¹⁷
- 3) διάκονον καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ¹⁸
- 4) καὶ διάκονον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ συνεργὸν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ¹⁹

¹⁵ aor. pass. inf. of καταλείπω—BDAG 520.1α— "to cause to be left in a place, leave (behind)...by leaving a place...Elsewh. the pass. has the mng. *remain behind*...J 8:9. ἐν Ἀθήναις 1 Th 3:1."

¹⁶ (B omit τοῦ θεοῦ) D* 33 it^{b, d, mon, o} vg^{ms} Ambrosiaster Pelagius—This reading really only covers 4th & 5th century Gaul and B in 4th century Egypt. So it is fairly early, but not widespread at all. This is the preferred reading of the UBS editors who rated it as a "B."

¹⁷ Ⲙ A P Ψ 6 81 263 424^c 1241 1739 1881 1912 2464 l 596 it^{ar} vg (vg^{mss}) cop^{sa, bo, fay} geo¹ Basil Theodore^{lat}; (Cassiodorus)—This reading covers Egypt in the 4th 5th and 10th centuries; Asia Minor in the 4th, and Asia Minor and Syria late; Gaul in the 4th, 6th and 10th centuries; Georgia in the 10th. So this reading is found just as early and is more widespread.

¹⁸ F G it^{f, g}—Obviously this reading is extremely limited.

¹⁹ D² 075 0150 104 256 365 424* 436 459 (1319 omit ἐν) 1573 1852 (1962 καὶ συνεργὸν ἡμῶν before καὶ διάκονον) 2127 2200 Byz [K L] Lect syr^{p, h, with*} eth geo² slav Chrysostom Theodoret—This reading is much more widespread, but much of it is also later. The earliest comes from 4th 5th and 6th century Syria. This is the reading the AV follows: "our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ." NKJV does not deviate from this either. This is also pretty much how Luther translates it: "unsern Bruder und Diener Gottes und unsern Gehilfen im Evangelium Christi."

So what is Timothy? Is he a co-worker? Is he a servant? Is he both? Is he a co-worker with God or is he a co-worker with Paul and Silas who all belong to God? If you take τοῦ θεοῦ as a subjective genitive, then Timothy is God's co-worker. There are some who would rather take it simply as a possessive (e.g., Fee²⁰).

I think Bruce handles these variants best when he says the “variant readings seem to be mainly designed to avoid the boldness of calling Timothy ‘God’s fellow-worker.’...The strength of συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ is that it explains the rise of the other readings.”²¹ To support this, all one has to do is look to 1 Corinthians 3:9—θεοῦ γὰρ ἔσμεν συνεργοί — “For we are God’s fellow workers” (NIV84); “For we are co-workers in God’s service” (NIV11) You notice that in our section and in 1 Cor. that the NIV11 no longer takes τοῦ θεοῦ as a subjective genitive. And then also 2 Corinthians 5:20—Ἐπεὶ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι’ ἡμῶν— “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.” (NIV84,11)

Brothers, think of the awesome responsibility we have! We don’t just work for God, we work alongside God! Who is worthy of such a task? Not one of us! And yet God did not choose his holy angels to work with him in preaching the gospel, he chose us, crumbling clay jars that we are! What a source of comfort that is for us as we go about our duties. He is the one who equips us (Heb. 13:21). He is the one who gives us his powerful Word. He is the one who reminds us that “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first” (Jn. 15:18). God has chosen us to be the instrument to work alongside him in bringing the Means of Grace to people’s troubled souls!

The purpose

The reason Timothy was sent was to give peace to the missionaries’ hearts, but also to bring peace to the Thessalonians. Paul starts with a purpose infinitive clause, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς. He continues using the beautiful Greek word, παρακαλέσαι. The most basic meaning is “to call someone to your side.” Their goal in sending Timothy was to strengthen and comfort the Thessalonians ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν “for the sake of your faith.”

Timothy was sent to put a loving arm around the Thessalonian Christians τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις. We’ll talk about the verb in a minute. The reason and purpose of sending Timothy was because they knew the affliction the Thessalonians were enduring. They were being persecuted by God’s chosen people who had the Word all their lives, and yet rejected the Savior. They were being persecuted by their own countrymen for

²⁰ “What Paul dictated was ‘our brother and co-worker’; but when he then added the possessive (‘God’s’) to his clause, he left himself with a legacy of difficulties for later readers. The present difficulty thus lies with the fact that the word ‘co-worker’ is followed by the possessive genitive ‘God’s.’ As with the same combination later in 1 Corinthians 3:9, where Paul speaks of himself and Apollos as co-workers who both belong to God, any genitive that immediately follows this particular word will be instinctively understood *not* as a possessive, but as the one *with whom* one is a co-worker. Thus if Paul were merely to have said ‘our co-worker,’ everyone in both Greek and English would correctly understand that to mean ‘one who works alongside us.’ Since Paul could hardly have meant ‘God’s co-worker’ in that sense, early scribes did their best to help Paul out, hence the considerable array of secondary options to Paul’s original text noted above (n. 28). But what Paul almost certainly intended is what one finds in the TNIV, that Timothy, who ultimately belongs to God, is being commended first of all as Paul’s and Silas’s own ‘brother,’ and further as their co-worker ‘in the gospel of Christ.’ At the same time he is *God’s* person in all this missionary activity.” (Fee, p. 115,116)

²¹ Bruce, p. 59.

abandoning the ways and religion of their ancestors. In a way you could say that the Thessalonians had no place in the world. And how true that is! "I'm but a stranger here, heaven is my home."²²

Now the question is, what were the missionaries afraid that ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις would do? The verb σαίνεσθαι (pres. pass. inf.) comes from σαίνω, a *hapax* in the NT. BDAG lists two meanings: 1) "**to try to win favor by an ingratiating manner, fawn upon, flatter**" ... and 2) "**to cause to be emotionally upset, move, disturb, agitate.**"²³ If you notice the note below, the meaning "to flatter" comes from dogs wagging their tails. Maybe it's just the Greek's way of looking at things, but when I see a dog wagging its tail I don't think that it's trying to flatter me. I see a happy dog. Some have taken this meaning and said that those who were persecuting the Thessalonian Christians were trying to lure them back into their old ways by showing them that their hardships would cease if they let go of this "new" religion. While this certainly could have been the temptation the Thessalonians were facing, perhaps there might have been a different word Paul would have used if that were the case.

I think it is better for us to follow the lead of the Greek interpreters and ancient versions.²⁴ The goal was to relieve any emotional and spiritual stress the Thessalonians were enduring because of these afflictions. Isn't this why we visit our shut-ins, those in the hospital, those with familial hardships, those who have lost their jobs or are suffering any other kind of calamity? Again and again we do it to bring the peace of Christ to God's people. We go to put a spiritual arm around their shoulder and pick them back up. We go to assure them that God will carry out his eternal plan for them in their lives.

²² CW, 417.

²³ BDAG 910,1— "prim., of dogs, 'wag the tail' (Hom. et al.), hence **to try to win favor by an ingratiating manner, fawn upon, flatter**...It is in this direction that many prefer to take the mng. of the pass. in the only place in our lit. where the word occurs, **1 Th 3:3** ...so that no one might be deceived....It is prob. that the misfortunes of the new converts would provide opportunity for Paul's opponents to show them exceptional kindness and so perh. beguile them into adopting their own views. Others, following the ancient versions and the Gk. interpreters prefer to understand σ. in the sense **2) to cause to be emotionally upset, move, disturb, agitate**...so that no one might be shaken or disturbed..."

²⁴ FYI. The Vulgate reads *moveatur...istis* "to disturb, trouble, torment." And Luther reads *weichen* "to yield, give way, give in."

3:3b,4

αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα· καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν, προελέγομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι, καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἴδατε.

BAE- For you yourselves know that we are appointed for this. For even when we were with you we kept telling you in advance that it was inevitable for us to be afflicted; and indeed it happened just as you know.

NIV- You know quite well that we were [are] destined for them. In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.

HCSB- For you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. In fact, when we were with you, we told you previously that we were going to suffer persecution, and as you know, it happened.

ESV- 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.

This was no surprise

The missionary team told the Thessalonians this was going to come, just as Jesus had told his disciples (Jn. 13:19). Notice that οἴδατε is perfect. This is a knowledge they have had since they first believed. Notice too that κείμεθα is present tense. This is a present, everyday fact of life for the Christian. It might seem strange at first that Paul now switches to the singular τοῦτο, but Lenski gives a fine explanation: “Now Paul uses the comprehensive singular ‘this thing’ which summarizes the plural ‘these afflictions.’ ‘This’ and ‘these’ are deictic and point to the affliction.”²⁵

Once again the missionaries pile up their words to make sure they aren’t misunderstood. προελέγομεν—imperfect, “to tell beforehand”—μέλλομεν—present, “to be inevitable”—θλίβεσθαι²⁶—present pass. inf., “to be afflicted.” And just in case you didn’t notice, καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἴδατε. It’s happening right now. Although ἐγένετο is aorist, it is not emphasizing a past event but that it actually happened and is still happening. That’s why Paul and Silas still aren’t there.

We had an excellent reminder of this truth just this Sunday (Pentecost 17 Gospel, Mark 8:27-35). If we carry Christ’s name it will also mean that we will carry the cross. Gordon Fee aptly reminds us of this truth.

The Christian faith, after all, beginning with our Lord himself, stands in total contradiction to the primary worldview and values of our fallen, broken world. It should therefore not be surprising that those who stand in opposition to such a world and its primary values—even if not verbally so,

²⁵ Lenski, p. 285.

²⁶ θλίβω—BDAG 457— “1) to press or crowd close against, press upon, crowd...2) to cause someth. to be constricted or narrow, press together, compress, make narrow...3) to cause to be troubled, oppress, afflict...Esp., as in some of the aforementioned pass., of the persecution of Christians 1 Th 3:4...”

but by contrasting lifestyles—should regularly experience the scorn and hatred of those who prefer Satan’s values to Christ’s. Perhaps the single most unfortunate result of Christendom as a cultural reality has been that the overlay of a less than radical Christian worldview allows God’s people to ‘coast’ rather than to experience the kind of expected discipleship Paul speaks of here.²⁷

3:5

διὰ τοῦτο ἀγὼ μὴκέτι στέγων ἔπεμψα εἰς τὸ γινῶναι τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν, μή πως ἐπείρασεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων καὶ εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν.

BAE- On account of this even when I could no longer bear it I sent to learn about your faith, lest the Tempter tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

NIV- For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have [had] tempted you and our efforts [labors] might have been useless [in vain].

HCSB- For this reason, when I could no longer stand it, I also sent [him] to find out about your faith, fearing that the tempter had tempted you and that our labor might be for nothing.

ESV- 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.

Paul returns to his initial thoughts at the beginning of this chapter. Paul needed peace! Notice he again uses a form of στέγω as he did in 3:1. “I sent” followed by εἰς + art. inf. purpose clause. He sent to learn about their faith, whether or not they had kept their faith in Christ or if they succumbed to the temptations of the Tempter. Paul brings us back to 1:3 with the word κόπος. BDAG gives the meaning “**to engage in activity that is burdensome, work, labor toil.**”²⁸ It was no easy work. The missionaries had poured out their souls to bring God’s Word to the Thessalonians. Although it can be burdensome, it is a labor of love and they didn’t want all that work to be in vain (εἰς κενὸν, result).

Had the Thessalonians fallen away, their work would have been in vain, but how? Was it because they would have just wasted their time in Thessalonica? Or, would it have been in vain because the Thessalonians would have thrown away what was given them? Isn’t it the latter? Think how often we are tempted to view our labor that’s done in vain as a waste of time on our part. When you have patiently worked with a weak brother or sister and they become a persistent errorist, have you wasted your time? Or what about the times you have faithfully carried out Matthew 18 only to have the person continue in their sin and unbelief which brings the church to excommunicate them? Have you wasted your time? I think all too often we think that we do. Brothers, let us

²⁷ Fee, p. 119.

²⁸ BDAG, 558,2.

repent of our sin and remember God's promise: "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor (κόπος) in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58). God will not let his work that we, his co-workers, do go by the wayside. "It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Is. 55:11).

Timothy Returns

3:6

Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ' ὑμῶν καὶ εὐαγγελισμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μνήμην ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε, ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς,

BAE- But now that Timothy has come to us from you and has told us the good news of your faith and love and that you always have a good remembrance of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you...

NIV- But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you.

HCSB- But now Timothy has come to us from you and brought us good news about your faith and love and [reported] that you always have good memories of us, wanting to see us, as we also want to see you.

ESV- 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—

Finally! The messenger of peace returned! Paul and Silas could rest at ease. Just think how anxiously Timothy approached Thessalonica. What would he find there? Would they all be there? Would just the core members remain? Would any be left? Can you imagine the joy to find them all there? Can you imagine the relief when Timothy returned? You can just picture Paul looking out the window every day, wondering, "Is today the day Timothy will return? What will the news be like?" And praise God, Timothy returns εὐαγγελισμένου (aor. mid. pt.). Yes, he has good news to tell indeed!

This is the only time in the New Testament that a form of εὐαγγελίζω is used in reference to receiving good news about people. Every other time it is used to speak of The Good News, a.k.a., the Gospel. So why do they use this word here? Maybe it is simply because they have this good news because of the Good News working in the hearts of the Thessalonians. By the power of the gospel, the Thessalonians did not lose their faith and they continue to live in love for God and for each other.

The Thessalonians also have nothing but love for their pastors (μνείαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν²⁹). There is no animosity towards them for leaving. They understood. They were the ones who in love sent them away (Acts 17:10). Paul and Silas get to hear the wonderful news that the Thessalonians are looking forward to seeing them just as much as they long (ἐπιποθοῦντες³⁰, pres. act. pt.) to see the Thessalonians.

3:7,8

διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφ' ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως, ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ.

BAE- ...on account of this we have been encouraged, brothers, concerning you during all our calamity and affliction through your faith, because now we live if you stand firm in the Lord.

NIV- Therefore, brothers [and sisters], in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.

HCSB- Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution, we were encouraged about you through your faith. For now we live, if you stand firm in the Lord.

ESV- ...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.

Just as the missionaries' intent was to encourage/comfort the Thessalonians, now they too have been encouraged/comforted (παρεκλήθημεν, aor. pass. ind.). They needed this encouragement because through all this they too were going through τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει. Again, Paul is piling up words to show us and the Thessalonians just how hard it has been for them too. ἀνάγκη carries three interesting nuances. **"1) necessity or constraint as inherent in the nature of things, necessity, pressure...2) a state of distress or trouble, distress, calamity, pressure...3) compulsion by forcible means, torture"**³¹

Was this "calamity and affliction" the missionaries faced just because of the afflictions of the Thessalonians, or was there more to it than that? Was it simply mission work in general? Or was it because of some of the recent hardships they've had in Macedonia and Achaia? They keep getting kicked out of all the towns they visit. When

²⁹ ἀγαθός—BDAG 4,2aβ— "of things characterized esp. in terms of social significance and worth...*kindly remembrance* **1 Th 3:6**

³⁰ ἐπιποθέω—BDAG 377— "to have a strong desire for someth., with implication of need, long for, desire"

³¹ BDAG, 61,2.

Timothy was sent they were serving in Athens which was already filled with “wisdom.” Now as they write they’re serving in Corinth, a city that might even make Las Vegas blush! Perhaps it was all of the above.³²

Verse 8 continues with an interesting phrase ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ. Here we have a general conditional that goes against the common rules. We have ἐὰν with the indicative and not the subjunctive. BDF notes: “With reference to a present reality = ‘if...really’ (as you say, as is believed, as you see, etc.) or = ‘if therefore’ (resulting from what has been said), often closely bordering on causal ‘since’...a) with the present... 1a)...Sporadically ἐὰν appears for εἰ (=ἐπεὶ) with such causal pres. (perf.) indicatives...”³³ So you could translate this phrase two ways. 1) “because we now live since you stand firm in the Lord”; or 2) “because we now live if you stand firm in the Lord, and we know you do.”

Fee quotes Marshall as to how we should understand this odd case of ἐὰν with an indicative and not a subjunctive: “...it emphasizes its factuality and at the same time contains an implicit admonition to them to continue to stand fast and not be moved by their afflictions.”³⁴ I prefer Williams who says “The difference is between what might be and what is the case—they were in fact standing.”³⁵

Now for the interesting part. What do the missionaries mean when they say that they live so long as the Thessalonians stand firm in the Lord? Obviously they are not talking about physical life. Certainly they cannot be speaking of spiritual life. Lenski summarizes this well. “The figure is a strong one: before the good news came, there was deadness. We might picture it as a leaden weight, the heart seemed to have no life. Now, in consequence of the good news, there is once more life with all that this means to the writers in their arduous work. The implication is that, if the faith of the Thessalonians had failed, if the church had broken up, it would have been a deathblow to the writers.”³⁶

Think of how our hearts feel when we bring missionaries home. It makes for a miserable day. For the missionaries, I’m sure it makes for some miserable months. Now think how much more pain there would be in our hearts to see a mission fall apart along with the faith of those we left behind. It would have been death! Yet

³² This is pretty much how Bruce takes it. “The distress and affliction at this time may have been more psychological than physical. For one thing, their anxiety over the Thessalonians had been hard to bear; for another thing, it is evident that the first phase of Paul’s stay in Corinth was beset by ‘weakness and much fear and trembling’ (1 Cor 2:3). And no wonder: having been expelled from one place after another in Macedonia, Paul and the others might well have wondered if, in spite of their confidence interpretation of the call of God (Acts 16:10), they had been divinely guided to that province after all. They had no reason to expect more positive acceptance in Achaia, to which they had now perforce come. But Timothy’s report on the state of the Thessalonian church dissipated their fears. The gospel had taken firm root in the capital city of Macedonia: the seed had been sown in the fertile ground and the fruit was already beginning to appear. If the Thessalonians had not allowed their tribulations to destroy their Christian faith and love, Paul and Silvanus found in this good news a sovereign remedy for their own ‘distress and affliction.’” (Bruce, p. 67)

³³ BDF, 372,1a.

³⁴ Fee, p. 125, footnote 69.

³⁵ Williams, p. 63.

³⁶ Lenski, p. 291.

even as we leave, the church continues to march forward. Perhaps not at the pace we would prefer, but we see the Lord preserve his people, and what a joy that is in the face of such opposition!

Or just think of how “dead” our hearts feel when it seems God’s Word is falling on deaf ears. We rightly apply law and gospel, but the behavior of that married couple doesn’t change. We encourage a family to worship on a regular basis, you go into their home and you visit. They bring their child to Sunday School, but then don’t come to worship and the little child looks forward to and even brags about not having to stay for worship!

Then the Lord sends the good news. A prospect wants to take BIC. Myrtle’s cancer has gone into remission. The suffering old man has finally been brought to Jesus’ side. Your little child who can barely string a sentence together confesses her faith in her Savior. He balances our heartache with joy.

3:9

τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣν χαίρομεν δι’ ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν,

BAE- For what thanks are we able to repay to God concerning you in view of all the joy for which we rejoice because of you before our God?

NIV- How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?

HCSB- How can we thank God for you in return for all the joy we experience before our God because of you,

ESV- For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God,

The missionaries are speechless! They know they owe a great debt of gratitude to God, but they have no idea how they could even begin to repay it (ἀνταποδοῦναι³⁷, pres. pass. ind.). They don’t know what to say but to say “Thank You!” They are speechless because “of all the joy for which we rejoice because of you” (ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣν χαίρομεν δι’ ὑμᾶς). I know it may not be the best English, but why not let the Greek be a little more evident in our translation? The verb is present and this joy they have is always present in their hearts. They can’t stop rejoicing. It’s in their very nature as a child of God. That joy, brothers, is ours too! When we’re feeling like Elijah, moping underneath a broom tree, God sends us some good news. News that is better than we’ve imagined and we’re speechless. We are filled with joy and all we can say to God is “Thank You!”

Notice again that the missionaries direct our attention to the Last Day (ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν). As we faithfully serve God’s people, there will be no reason for us to hang our head in shame when we stand before the Lord on the Last Day. We can rejoice because of the beautiful things God has accomplished through us.

³⁷ ἀνταποδίδομι—BDAG 87,1— “to practice reciprocity with respect to obligation, repay, pay back, requite”

3:10

νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν;

BAE- Night and day without ceasing we keep pleading that we might see your faces and complete that which your faith lacks.

NIV- Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

HCSB- ...as we pray very earnestly night and day to see you face to face and to complete what is lacking in your faith?

ESV- ...as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

The missionaries give a quick introduction to their prayer before they actually write it. The Thessalonians are on their hearts every day and every night. They pray ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ. BDAG notes: “*quite beyond all measure* (highest form of comparison imaginable) ... *pray as earnestly as possible* (to God) **1 Th 3:10**”³⁸

And what do they pray about? They pray εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν³⁹ ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι⁴⁰ τὰ ὑστερήματα⁴¹ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν. The article governs both infinitives and shows that the two go hand in hand. Sure, it’s great just to see people. But how much more to encourage them and build them up in their faith!

What needed completing? Remember they weren’t there as long as they would have preferred. There was still work to be done. It wasn’t as though their subjective faith was lacking. Faith is faith no matter how “great” or “small” it is. It was the objective faith. There were certain teachings that they either had not yet touched on or had not gone into great depth. But aren’t you amazed by how much was already accomplished in that time? Sure, maybe a handful of prospects, but a whole congregation? Who of us can say that our work has been blessed to such an extent? But we see this was part of the Holy Spirit’s plan. He knew they would have to leave and he poured out his blessings accordingly.

³⁸ BDAG, 1033.

³⁹ εἰς + art. inf. denoting purpose.

⁴⁰ aor. act. inf. of καταρτίζω—BDAG 526,1b— “**to cause to be in a condition to function well, put in order, restore...b) put into proper condition, adjust, complete, make complete...to fix up any deficiencies in your faith or to complete what is lacking in your faith 1 Th 3:10**”

⁴¹ ὑστέρημα—BDAG 1044,2— “**1) the lack of what is needed or desirable, freq. in contrast to abundance, need, want, deficiency...2) a defect that must be removed so that perfection can be attained, lack, shortcoming...1 Th 3:10**”

And isn't this our goal every week, month and year? To complete what is lacking in the faith of our people. It is no easy task. Because of this, it would be good for us to also pray without ceasing that the Lord would give us the opportunity and love to do just that.

The Missionaries' Prayer

3:11-13

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθύναι τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ.

BAE- But may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in your love for each other and for all just as ours for you so that your hearts may be strengthened blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones.

NIV- Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

HCSB- Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you. And may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow with love for one another and for everyone, just as we also do for you. May He make your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. Amen.

ESV- 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.

Notice right away the three wish optatives (κατευθύναι⁴², πλεονάσαι⁴³ & περισσεύσαι⁴⁴). They pray that the Lord would at last bring them to the Thessalonians. Then they heap up words again, imploring that the Lord fill them

⁴² 3sg. aor. of κατευθύνω—BDAG 532— “gener. ‘make/keep straight’, *lead, direct...direct our way to you 1 Th 3:11*”

⁴³ 3sg. aor. of πλεονάζω—BDAG 824,3b— “**to be responsible for increase...to cause to increase** (w. περισσεύω) ὑμᾶς ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ *may the Lord cause you to increase (=become rich) in love 1 Th 3:12*”

⁴⁴ 3sg. aor. of περισσεύω—BDAG 805,2b— “**to cause someth. to exist in abundance, cause to abound...of persons who receive someth. in great abundance** ὑμᾶς ὁ κύριος περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ *may the Lord cause you to abound in love 1 Th 3:12*”

up with his love so that they in turn would be filled with love for each other and for all people. Love for each other was going to be important to keep them united and to survive the persecution. But their love was also to be for those who were persecuting them. They were to put out the fires of persecution by heaping burning coals of kindness on their heads (Rom. 12:20).

Here again we see the pastoral hearts of these missionaries. Sure, they sent Timothy as a messenger of peace for their own hearts, but more than anything else they sent him as a messenger of peace for the Thessalonians. They are their life! They are their all. There is nothing more important than the flock God has given to them.

And so they conclude their prayer, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους⁴⁵ ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ⁴⁶ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ. The whole purpose is so that the Thessalonians be strengthened in their faith so that they would be able to stand blameless in holiness before God the Father on the Last Day ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων⁴⁷ αὐτοῦ. That's the goal. That's always the goal.

That's our goal too, brothers. Let's never forget that. This isn't just some job and the people we serve aren't just customers coming through the check-out line. These are souls redeemed by God! Let us give our lives to them! Let us be Christ to them as they have called us to be! Is it going to be hard? Yes. Is it going to weigh us down? Yes. Will it ever be a waste of time? Never!

Why do we stay?

Brothers, just as Timothy was a messenger of peace for Paul, Silas and the Thessalonians, may he also be a source of peace for you and your people. Pray for them. Long to be with them and serve them faithfully. Usher them to the gates of heaven. And even when you are separated by a new call, remember that God will keep his people safe. He will shepherd his people with other shepherds. Place your confidence in the gospel because "it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). Finally, remember that God will direct our way to one another again as we meet him in the sky!

SDG

⁴⁵ Lenski notes that "blameless" is a predicate adjective. "'Holiness' is the quality of being holy, and when it is used with reference to us, it, like the adjective 'holy' implies our separation from sin and our devotion to God." (Lenski, p. 299)

⁴⁶ Fee comments on the whole phrase ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ: "...'blameless' with regard to their outward, visible conduct toward each other and the world; and 'in holiness' with regard to their relationship with God and Christ." (Fee, p. 133)

⁴⁷ There is some debate as to what the missionaries are referring to with μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ. Some think it must refer to the angels because the Lord won't be coming with his saints. Others say it refers to both angels and saints. One thing to keep in mind is that this is the NT word for believers. I don't think it would be wise to go against the common usage of this word. Anyways, he's just finished talking about believers being blameless in holiness before the Lord on the Last Day. With this phrase Paul is connecting the saints in Thessalonica with all the saints past, present and future. Just as the Lord strengthened the hearts of his people by giving the holiness of Christ to them so that they may stand before God on the Last Day, so God has also done this for the saints in Thessalonica.

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Note: The following pages are my actual study notes should anyone want to look at pure text study and notes.

2:17		
Ἡμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ’ ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας, προσώπῳ οὐ καρδία, περισσοτέρως ἐσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ.		
Ἡμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί	adv.	“but we, brothers”
ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ’ ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας	aor. pass. pt. m. pl. nom. (temp.) prep. + gen. pers. pron. 2pl. gen. prep. + acc. n. m. sg. acc. n. f. sg. gen.	<p>“when we were orphaned from you for a short time”</p> <p>ἀπορφανίζω—BDAG 119— “<i>make an orphan of</i> someone fig., of the apostle separated from his church”</p> <p>The passive of this verb emphasizes that this separation was something forced on them.</p> <p>πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας—Lenski notes that this is the only time these two nouns are combined. It is usually just the preposition with one or the other noun. (Lenski, p. 272)</p> <p>Think about that! It was the apostles who felt like the ones who were orphaned!</p> <p>Do you feel like that when you go away on vacation? But that’s not the same setting. Do you feel like that when there is something keeping you from being with your member who needs you? Maybe you couldn’t get to them before they went into surgery. Maybe you feel this way about your delinquents. You wish you could be with them and bring them God’s Word. Maybe you even make every effort to try and visit them, but they’re full of excuses; they don’t show for your meeting; they don’t answer the door. Or maybe you do visit again and again, but nothing else happens. You long for them to be in worship. You pray that the Lord would bring them to the divine service, but as you begin the service you don’t see their face.</p> <p>Maybe you feel like the one orphaned when you’ve taken all that time to show them the truth of God’s Word, but they leave and go down the street or to the next town to the church that tells them what their itching ears want to hear.</p>
προσώπῳ οὐ καρδία	n. n. sg. dat. n. f. sg. dat.	“in person, not in heart”

<p>περισσότερως ἔσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ</p>	<p>adv. comparative 1pl. aor. act. ind. n. n. sg. acc. pers. pron. 2pl. gen. aor. act. inf. prep. + dat. adj. f. sg. dat. n. f. sg. dat.</p>	<p>“we were very eager to see your faces with great longing” περισσότερως—BDAG 806— “<i>especially</i>, relative...<i>all the more</i> 1 Th 2:17.” σπουδάζω—BDAG 939,3— “to be especially conscientious in discharging an obligation, be zealous/eager, take pains, make every effort, be conscientious w. inf. foll.” Wanamaker notes: “σπουδάζειν indicates more than mere desire; it denotes actual effort on Paul’s part to fulfill his desire, as v. 18 is intended to demonstrate.” (Wanamaker, p. 121) ἐπιθυμία—BDAG 372,1b— “a great desire for someth., desire, longing, craving... ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ w. <i>great longing</i> 1 Th 2:17.” When we say that we are zealous and eager for something, are we always talking about “making every effort”?</p>
<p>BAE- But we, brothers, when we were orphaned from you for a short time (in person, not in heart), took great pains to see your faces with great longing.</p>		
<p>In this section of the letter we see Paul pouring out his heart to his dear Thessalonians.</p> <p>When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” he said. ⁴ Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women. ⁵ But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.” ⁸ When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. ⁹ Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go. ¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea.</p> <p>“At first reading, it may seem that Paul was only in Thessalonica for three weeks because of his preaching in the synagogue on three Sabbaths. However, the way in which he writes suggests that he was either: a) conducting ministry for a longer time, but only preached for three Sabbaths in the synagogue; or b) after the events of Acts 16 & 17, he returned for a longer period of time. The fact that Paul dealt with the Thessalonians as a “father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and urging them to live lives worthy of God,” (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12) suggests there was a relationship built that would require a lengthier stay.</p> <p>Likewise, Paul thanks the Philippians for sending him aid “again and again” (Philippians 4:16) when he was in Thessalonica. In pre FedEx days, it would have seemed nearly impossible to receive multiple gift packages from a town 100 miles away within a 3-week span.” (<i>Encourage Each Other With These Words: An Overview of 1 Thessalonians & an Exegesis of Chapter One</i>. Joel Heckendorf, FRVPC, Bethany Lutheran Church ~ Appleton, WI, September 27, 2011)</p>		

2:18

διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δῖς, καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς.

<p>διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς</p>	<p>sub. conj. causal 1pl. aor. act. ind. aor. act. inf. prep. + acc. pers. pron. 2pl. acc.</p>	<p>“for that reason we wanted to come to you”</p> <p>This is the third “wish” type word. He’s leaving no doubt in their minds that he wants to come to them. He’s not delayed because he’s wishy-washy about coming to them. He’s been held back because of things beyond his control.</p> <p>How often can we say that is the case. We desire to visit the delinquent, but do we make every effort to visit them?</p>
<p>ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δῖς</p>		<p>“even I, Paul, again and again”</p> <p>Lenski notes that this “orphaned” μὲν “is a beautiful instance of μὲν <i>solitarium</i>. Μὲν is constructed with ἐγὼ and and is pointedly restrictive (as Robertson puts it): ‘I in particular, Paul.’” (Lenski, p. 274)</p> <p>ἄπαξ—BDAG 97,1— “as a numer. term pert. to a single occurrence, once...again and again, more than once Phil 4:16; 1 Th 2:18”</p> <p>δῖς—BDAG 252— “twice...ἄπαξ καὶ δ. once and again=several times Phil 4:16; 1 Th 2:18”</p> <p>Bruce translates “I Paul, for my part, more than once” (WBC, p. 53)</p>
<p>καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς</p>	<p>3sg. aor. act. ind. pers. pron. 1pl. acc.</p>	<p>“and Satan hindered us” “and Satan cut us off”</p> <p>ἐγκόπτω—BDAG 274, “to make progress slow or difficult, hinder, thwart”</p> <p>Orig. used for breaking up a road to render it impassable. Breaking through the enemy’s line. Cutting in on someone during a race.</p> <p>In Acts, the Spirit would not allow them entrance into Bithynia. But with Thessalonica Satan ruined the way back. He has no permissive power, he can only destroy and at that only what God permits.</p> <p>What kept them out? The awful condition for gospel proclamation in Athens? Was it the persecution from the Jews in Thess. that had driven them out in the first place? It is certainly because of the persecution in Thessalonica, that is why Paul worried that they might fall prey to the Tempter’s temptations and all their work be in vain. But perhaps you could also say both. Athens was a thinking man’s town. It was filled with idols and filled with people who were too “wise” to listen to the Gospel. Paul had huge amounts of work to do there too.</p>

BAE- For that reason we wanted to come to you, even I, Paul, again and again, and Satan cut us off.

“Apparently Paul had hoped that the Jews’ opposition to gospel preaching in Thessalonica might cool down so he could return. It just didn’t happen. This red-hot fire of opposition that Satan kept fanning not only kept Paul from coming back, but its continuing intensity made Paul worry all the more about whether the Thessalonians were holding fast to the faith.” (PB, Kuske, p. 30)

2:19

τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπίς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχίσεως - ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς - ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ;

<p>τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπίς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχίσεως</p>	<p>interr. pron. f. sg. nom. explan. pers. pron. 1pl. gen. n. f. sg. nom. n. f. sg. nom. n. m. sg. nom. n. f. sg. gen.</p>	<p>“for what is our hope or our joy or our crown of boasting”</p> <p>στέφανος—BDAG 944,2— “that which serves as an adornment or source of pride, adornment, pride,...</p> <p>στέφανος καυχίσεως prize <i>to be proud of</i> (Goodsp.: cp. Pr 16:31) 1 Th 2:19.”</p> <p>How can people be a “hope” (ἐλπίς)?</p> <p>How are the Thessalonians a “crown of boasting” (στέφανος καυχίσεως)?</p> <p>Lenski notes: “All of the ‘or’ are conjunctive and not disjunctive: call it our hope, <i>or</i> call it our joy, <i>or</i> call it our crown of boasting, whichever way you look at it, the hope we now have regarding what shall be at the last day, or the joy we now anticipate regarding that final joy, or the crowns of which we boast as being ours already now and to be placed upon our heads at that day. Who is any one, yea, all three of these?” (Lenski, p. 277)</p> <p>“The first problem is with the word ‘crown’ itself, whose first meaning in English refers to the (usually) metal diadem worn by a king or other royalty; and it is hard to imagine that the English reader will picture anything else when hearing this word in a context like this. On the contrary, the ‘crown’ Paul expects to receive at the coming of Christ has nothing at all to do with royalty; rather, its primary referent is the (usually laurel) wreath bestowed on the victor in one of the contests in the games, the winner’s ultimate prize, as it were. Thus it is not the symbol of royalty, but of victory, or achievement.” (Fee, p. 109)</p>
<p>- ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς -</p>	<p>interr. negative</p>	<p>“is it not you”</p>
<p>ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ</p>	<p>improp. prep. + gen. (orig. an adv. of place, then used as prep.) n. m. sg. gen. pers. pron. 1pl. gen. prep. + dat. pers. pron. 3sg. m. gen. n. f. sg. dat.</p>	<p>“in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming”</p> <p>παρουσία—BDAG 781,2bα— “2b) On the one hand the word served as a sacred expr. for the coming of a hidden divinity, who makes his presence felt by a revelation of his power, or whose presence is celebrated in the cult....On the other hand, π. became the official term for a visit of a person of high rank, esp. of kings and emperors visiting a province... α)of Christ, and nearly always of his Messianic Advent in glory to judge the world at the end of this age”</p> <p>Cf., “Dear Lord to your true servants give... esp. lay their trophies at your feet.”</p>

BAE- For what is our hope or our joy or our crown of boasting in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

Paul has to point himself and the Thessalonians to the certainty that one day they will be together. It may not be when they want and it may not even be in this life. But perfect joy and union will be theirs in heaven.

Isn't this also part of our joy, comfort and confidence when we take a call somewhere else or especially when we as a synod need to pull out of a mission field?

Sometimes it is hard for us to look to the crowns we will wear one day too. It's hard when we see so many who won't listen, who won't worship or who we've failed to reach out to.

2:20

ὕμεις γὰρ ἐστε ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρά.

ὕμεις γὰρ ἐστε ἡ
δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ
χαρά

pers. pron. 2pl. nom.
explan.
2pl. pres. act. ind.
n. f. sg. nom.
pers. pron. 1pl. gen.
n. f. sg. nom.

“for you are our glory and joy”

Notice the use of the article with the two nouns in this verse as opposed to the lack thereof in the previous verse. In the former Paul is generic because he is asking the question. Now he gives the answer and their glory and joy is very specific. It is the Thessalonians.

Does this emphasize the reason why he really really wanted to come to them? Are they his congregation *par excellence*?

But thus far, were they his congregation *par excellence*?

What's the point of the WELS Connection? It's not to put you down or to show what you need to do, but to show you what Christ is doing in that corner of his Church and us to rejoice in it.

BAE- For you are our glory and joy.

3:1

Διὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι

Διὸ μηκέτι
στέγοντες

infer.
adv.
pres. act. pt. m. pl. nom. (temp.)

“therefore, no longer enduring”

στέγω—BDAG 942,2— “**to bear up against difficulties, bear, stand, endure...** μηκέτι στέγοντες *since I could not bear it any longer 1 Th 3:5...*”

Bruce notes that the verb held the original meaning of “keeping out or keeping in water or another fluid, comes from the latter sense to mean generally ‘to contain’ and then ‘to endure’.” (WBC, p. 60)

Therefore, when we couldn't stand all of us being separated from you any longer...

<p>εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι</p>	<p>1pl. aor. act. ind. aor. pass. inf. prep. + dat. n. f. pl. dat. adj. m. pl. nom.</p>	<p>“we resolved to remain behind alone in Athens”</p> <p>εὐδοκέω—BDAG 404,1— “to consider someth. as good and therefore worthy of choice, consent, determine, resolve w. inf. foll.”</p> <p>καταλείπω—BDAG 520.1α— “to cause to be left in a place, leave (behind)...by leaving a place...Elsewh. the pass. has the mng. <i>remain behind</i>...J 8:9. ἐν Ἀθήναις 1 Th 3:1.”</p> <p>Think of how we resolve to stay behind yet send friends and family in our place to the far reaches of the world.</p> <p>Or is it more of an idea of consent? Paul, Silas and Timothy all really wanted to return. But because of Paul and Silas’ were being held back they conceded to just send Timothy and they would remain behind, though reluctantly. Timothy was not sent because he was less important to their work in Athens but because he wasn’t with them in Thessalonica when they had been chased out of town.</p> <p>Bruce notes that Timothy was with Paul and Silas in Thessalonica. (Bible Guides: Paul & His Converts, p. 23)</p> <p>As does Fee. (NICNT, p. 6)</p>
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BAE- Therefore, when we could bear it no longer, we resolved/consented to remain behind alone in Athens...

Who is the “we”? Did Timothy and Silas meet up with Paul briefly in Athens before Corinth? When we read Acts 17 and 18 it appears that Paul was alone the whole time in Athens and that Timothy and Silas only met up with him in Corinth. So, who is the “we”? With the following verse it seems very unlikely that Paul could be referring to anyone else but Silas and Timothy because they are those who shared in this ministry. Acts 17:34 mentions Dionysius and Damaris, but only as converts, not fellow missionaries.

To explain this Wanamaker notes: “Could this be an example of an epistolary plural? Most commentators argue against this possibility in favor of a genuine plural, but in v. 5, where Paul mentions sending Timothy to Thessalonica, he slips into the first person singular. This should warn us against assuming too hastily that the plural of 3:1 is genuine.” (Wanamaker, p. 127)

The best way to explain would be to follow Lightfoot. It seems that Luke just doesn’t give us all the little details of travel in Acts. “In order to reconcile the expressions here with the account in the Acts, the occurrences may be supposed to have happened in the following order. St Paul is waiting in Athens for Silvanus and Timotheus, having left them at Berea, and charged them by message to join him without delay (Acts 17:15,16). They join him at Athens. Paul and Silvanus despatch Timotheus to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:2). Silvanus is despatched on some other mission to Macedonia, perhaps to Berea. St Paul goes forward to Corinth (Acts 18:1). After he had been in Corinth for some time, Silvanus and Timotheus return to him from Macedonia (Acts 18:4,5). Thereupon the Apostle writes from Corinth to the Thessalonians, in the joint names of himself, Silvanus and Timotheus.” (Lightfoot, p. 40)

3:2

καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν

<p>καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ</p>	<p>1pl. aor. act. ind. n. m. sg. acc. pers. pron. 1pl. gen. n. m. sg. acc. n. m. sg. gen. prep. + dat. n. n. sg. dat.</p>	<p>“and we sent Timothy, our brother and fellow worker of God in the Gospel of Christ”</p> <p>What kind of genitive is τοῦ θεοῦ? Subjective Genitive.</p> <p>What kind of genitive is τοῦ Χριστοῦ? Objective Genitive, the content of the Gospel is Christ.</p> <p>There are several variant readings for this portion of the verse. What is in the UBS text the editors give a “B” rating.</p> <p>καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (B <i>omit</i> τοῦ θεοῦ) D* 33 it^{b, d, mon, o} vg^{ms} Ambrosiaster Pelagius—This reading really only covers 4th & 5th century Gaul and B in 4th century Egypt. So it is fairly early, but not widespread at all.</p> <p>καὶ διάκονον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ⲡ A P Ψ 6 81 263 424^c 1241 1739 1881 1912 2464 / 596 it^{ar} vg (vg^{mss}) cop^{sa, bo, fay} geo¹ Basil Theodore^{lat}; (Cassiodorus)—This reading covers Egypt in the 4th 5th and 10th centuries; Asia Minor in the 4th, and Asia Minor and Syria late; Gaul in the 4th, 6th and 10th centuries; Georgia in the 10th. So this reading is found just as early and is more widespread.</p> <p>διάκονον καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ F G it^{f, g}—Obviously this reading is extremely limited.</p> <p>καὶ διάκονον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ συνεργὸν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ D² 075 0150 104 256 365 424* 436 459 (1319 <i>omit</i> ἐν) 1573 1852 (1962 καὶ συνεργὸν ἡμῶν <i>before</i> καὶ διάκονον) 2127 2200 Byz [K L] <i>Lect</i> syr^{p, h, with*} eth geo² slav Chrysostom Theodore—This reading is much more widespread, but much of it is also later. The earliest comes from 4th 5th and 6th century Syria. This is the reading the AV follows: “our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ.” NKJV does not deviate from this either. This is also pretty much how Luther translates it: “unsern Bruder und Diener Gottes und unsern Gehilfen im Evangelium Christi.”</p> <p>It seems to me that the UBS editors went with what they did because it was early and the harder reading. The second reading is just as early, more widespread and also makes perfect sense.</p> <p>1 Cor. 3:9—θεοῦ γὰρ ἔσμεν συνεργοί—“For we are God’s fellow workers” (NIV84); “For we are co-workers in God’s service” (NIV11) & 2 Cor. 5:20—Ἐπεὶ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι’ ἡμῶν—“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.” (NIV84,11)</p>
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<p>εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν</p>	<p>prep. + acc. (purpose) article n. sg. acc. aor. act. inf. pers. pron. 2pl. acc. aor. act. inf. prep. + gen. n. f. sg. gen. pers. pron. 2pl. gen.</p>	<p>“to strengthen and to encourage you for the sake of your faith”</p> <p>στηρίζω—BDAG 945,2— “to cause to be inwardly firm or committed, confirm, establish, strengthen”</p> <p>παρακαλέω—BDAG 765,4— “to instill someone with courage or cheer, comfort, encourage, cheer up” The most basic meaning is to call someone to your side. We go and stand beside the person who is down, put our arm around them and pick them back up.</p> <p>ὑπὲρ—BDAG 1030,1b— “a marker indicating that an activity or event is in some entity’s interest, for, in behalf of, for the sake of someone/someth....b) w. gen. of thing, in which case it must be variously translated... ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν <i>for the strengthening of our faith</i> 1 Th 3:2.”</p> <p>There are several rather insignificant variants. None change the meaning of the verse.</p> <p>The UBS text has “and fellow worker of God in the Gospel of Christ” Others have, “and servant of God in the Gospel of Christ”; “servant and fellow worker of God in the Gospel of Christ”; “and servant of God and our fellow worker in the Gospel of Christ”; ect.</p> <p>NIV 11 kind of melds together the variant readings.</p> <p>Faith is the thing that must be strengthened and encouraged because it is the thing that matters most in our lives. You strengthen your faith, it may fail. Then everything else in life will be pointless.</p>
<p>BAE- ...and we sent Timothy, our brother and fellow worker of God in the Gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your faith...</p>		
<p>Bruce notes: “Variant readings seem to be mainly designed to avoid the boldness of calling Timothy ‘God’s fellow-worker.’...The strength of συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ is that it explains the rise of the other readings.” (WBC, p. 59)</p> <p>Fee notes: “But in this case, what Paul says about Timothy has had a substantial history of being tampered with by subsequent copyists, since at first blush there is a considerable degree of ambiguity to the commendation. What Paul dictated was ‘our brother and co-worker’; but when he then added the possessive (‘God’s’) to his clause, he left himself with a legacy of difficulties for later readers. The present difficulty thus lies with the fact that the word ‘co-worker’ is followed by the possessive genitive ‘God’s.’ As with the same combination later in 1 Corinthians 3:9, where Paul speaks of himself and Apollos as co-workers who both belong to God, any genitive that immediately follows this particular word will be instinctively understood <i>not</i> as a possessive, but as the one <i>with whom</i> one is a co-worker. Thus if Paul were merely to have said ‘our co-worker,’ everyone in both Greek and English would correctly understand that to mean ‘one who works alongside us.’ Since Paul could hardly have meant ‘God’s co-worker’ in that sense, early scribes did their best to help Paul out, hence the considerable array of secondary options to Paul’s original text noted above (n. 28). But what Paul almost certainly intended is what one finds in the TNIV, that Timothy, who ultimately belongs to God, is being commended first of all as Paul’s and Silas’s own ‘brother,’ and further as their co-worker ‘in the gospel of Christ.’ At the same time he is <i>God’s</i> person in all this missionary activity.” (Fee, p. 115,116)</p>		

3:3

τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις. αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα·

<p>τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις</p>	<p>art. n. sg. acc. adj. m. sg. acc. pres. pass. inf. (purpose/result) prep. + dat. (agent) n. f. pl. dat. dem. pron. f. pl. dat.</p>	<p>“so that no one is disturbed by these afflictions”</p> <p>σαίνω—BDAG 910,1— “prim., of dogs, ‘wag the tail’ (Hom. et al.), hence to try to win favor by an ingratiating manner, fawn upon, flatter...It is in this direction that many prefer to take the mng. of the pass. in the only place in our lit. where the word occurs, 1 Th 3:3 ...<i>so that no one might be deceived</i>....It is prob. that the misfortunes of the new converts would provide opportunity for Paul’s opponents to show them exceptional kindness and so perh. beguile them into adopting their own views. Others, following the ancient versions and the Gk. interpreters prefer to understand σ. in the sense 2) to cause to be emotionally upset, move, disturb, agitate...<i>so that no one might be shaken or disturbed</i>...”</p> <p>There are two ways to take this phrase. What changes in the emphasis of the passage?</p> <p>Lenski takes the passive as permissive and says it means to be deceived.</p> <p>Luther used <i>weichen</i> “to yield, give way, give in”.</p> <p>The Vulgate reads <i>moveatur...istis</i> “to disturb, trouble, torment”</p> <p>These afflictions come not only from the Jews but also from their own countrymen (cf. 2:14).</p>
<p>αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα</p>	<p>pers. pron. m. pl. nom. (intens.) causal 2pl. pf. act. ind. content prep. + acc. (purpose) dem. pron. n. sg. acc. 1pl. pres. mid. ind.</p>	<p>“for you yourselves know that we were appointed for this”</p> <p>κεῖμαι—BDAG 537,3a— “In a variety of transferred senses involving esp. abstractions to exist, have place, or be there(for someth.)—a) be appointed, set, destined”</p> <p>To what does τοῦτο refer?</p> <p>Lenski notes: “Now Paul uses the comprehensive singular ‘this thing’ which summarizes the plural ‘these afflictions.’ ‘This’ and ‘these’ are deictic and point to the affliction.” (Lenski, p. 285)</p> <p>Their afflictions not only point to the fact they are God’s children but it also points them all the more to the joy and glory that is theirs in heaven. (Cf. 2 Thes. 1:4-10)</p>
<p>BAE- ...so that no one is disturbed by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are appointed for this.</p>		

3:4		
καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν, προελέγομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι, καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἴδατε.		
καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν	adv. explan. temp. prep. + acc. pers. pron. 2pl. acc. 1pl. impf. act. ind.	“for even when we were with you”
προελέγομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι	1pl. impf. act. ind. pers. pron. 2pl. dat. content 1pl. pres. act. ind. pres. pass. inf.	<p>“we kept telling you in advance that it was inevitable for us to be afflicted”</p> <p>προλέγω—BDAG 872,1— “to say someth. in advance of an event, tell beforehand/in advance”</p> <p>μέλλω—BDAG 628,2a— “to be inevitable, be destined, inevitable—a) w. pres. inf. to denote an action that necessarily follows a divine decree <i>is destined, must, will certainly...</i> μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι <i>that we were to be afflicted 1 Th 3:4.</i>”</p> <p>θλίβω—BDAG 457— “1) to press or crowd close against, press upon, crowd...2) to cause someth. to be constricted or narrow, press together, compress, make narrow...3) to cause to be troubled, oppress, afflict...Esp., as in some of the aforementioned pass., of the persecution of Christians 1 Th 3:4...”</p>
καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἴδατε	conj. comparative adv. 3sg. aor. mid. ind. 2pl. pf. act. ind.	“just as it even happened and you know”
BAE- For even when we were with you we kept telling you in advance that it was inevitable for us to be afflicted; and indeed it happened just as you know.		
Fee notes: “The Christian faith, after all, beginning with our Lord himself, stand in total contradiction to the primary worldview and values of our fallen, broken world. It should therefore not be surprising that those who stand in opposition to such a world and its primary values—even if not verbally so, but by contrasting lifestyles—should regularly experience the scorn and hatred of those who prefer Satan’s values to Christ’s. Perhaps the single most unfortunate result of Christendom as a cultural reality has been that the overlay of a less than radical Christian worldview allows God’s people to ‘coast’ rather than to experience the king of expected discipleship Paul speaks of here.” (Fee, p. 119)		

3:5		
διὰ τοῦτο κἀγὼ μηκέτι στέγων ἔπεμψα εἰς τὸ γνῶναι τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν, μή πως ἐπίρασεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων καὶ εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν.		
διὰ τοῦτο κἀγὼ μηκέτι στέγων	pres. act. pt. m. sg. nom.	<p>“on account of this even I no longer bearing it”</p> <p>στέγω— BDAG 942,2— “to bear up against difficulties, bear, stand, endure... μηκέτι στέγοντες <i>since I could not bear it any longer 1 Th 3:5...</i>”</p>

ἔπεμψα εἰς τὸ γνῶναι τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν	1sg. aor. act. ind. prep. + acc. (purpose) aor. act. inf. n. f. sg. acc. pers. pron. 2pl. gen.	“I sent to learn about your faith”
μή πως ἐπείρασεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων	neg. conj. indef. particle 3sg. aor. act. ind. pers. pron. 2pl. acc. pres. act. pt. m. sg. nom.	“lest the Tempter tempted you” μή πως—BDAG 901,2b— “as a conj.: in the form μή πως ... marker of a negative perspective expressing misgiving , frequently rendered <i>lest...b</i>) in object clauses, after verbs of apprehension <i>that perhaps, lest somehow w. aor. subj....</i> ” πειράζω—BDAG 793,4— “ to entice to improper behavior, tempt... Above all the devil works in this way; hence he is directly called ὁ πειράζων <i>the tempter Mt 4:3; 1 Th 3:5b...</i> He tempts humans...”
καὶ εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν	prep. + acc. adj. n. sg. acc. 3sg. aor. mid. subj. n. m. sg. nom. pers. pron. 1pl. gen.	“and our labor would be in vain” κενός—BDAG 539,3— “ pert. to being without purpose or result, in vain ” κόπος—BDAG 558,2— “ to engage in activity that is burdensome, work, labor, toil ”
BAE- On account of this even when I could no longer bear it I sent to learn about your faith, lest the Tempter tempted you and our labor would be in vain.		

3:6

Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ’ ὑμῶν καὶ εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μνεΐαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε, ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς,

<p>Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ' ὑμῶν</p>	<p>adv. continuative aor. act. pt. m. sg. gen. (gen. abs.) prep. + acc. pers. pron. 1pl. acc. prep. + gen. pers. pron. 2pl. gen.</p>	<p>“but now that Timothy has come to us from you”</p> <p>Notice that Timothy wasn’t forced out. He left of his own volition. His time in Thessalonica was obviously successful despite the continued hostilities towards the Christians.</p> <p>I wonder what it was about Timothy that made it easier for him to travel to Thessalonica. Was it because he wasn’t there before? Luke doesn’t mention him in Acts 17 during the initial visit. But he is included in the author of the letter and sent as one with whom the Thessalonians were familiar. Was it just because Paul was the leader of the expedition with Silas as his right hand man? Or could some of it have to do with the personality of Timothy. At times Paul could be very “Peter-like.” Think of his disagreement with Barnabas. Was Paul more of a Luther personality and Timothy, Melanchthon—minus the doctrinal wishy-washyness of course? I’m sure it helped that Timothy was “physically” a Jew. Then again he was also the son of a Greek and outwardly may have blended in very well.</p> <p>Bruce notes: “How was it possible for Timothy to go back to Thessalonica, when the way was barred for Paul himself—and probably for Silvanus too? We can only speculate, but Timothy, as the junior partner in the missionary team, may not have been so much in the public eye as his two senior colleagues; moreover, Timothy, the son of a Greek father, perhaps looked like a Greek and therefore attracted no special attention in a Greek city, whereas Paul and Silvanus were full Jews and probably immediately recognizable as such—as they had been in Philippi (Acts 16:20).” (WBC, p. 64)</p>
<p>καὶ εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν</p>	<p>aor. mid. pt. m. sg. gen. pers. pron. 1pl. dat. n. f. sg. acc. n. f. sg. acc. pers. pron. 2pl. gen.</p>	<p>“and he told us the good news of your faith and love”</p>
<p>καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μνησίαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε</p>	<p>content 2pl. pres. act. ind. n. f. sg. acc. pers. pron. 1pl. gen. adj. f. sg. acc. adv.</p>	<p>“and that you always have a good remembrance of us”</p> <p>μνησία—654,1— “remembrance, memory w. obj. gen....<i>you always think kindly of us 1 Th 3:6.</i>”</p> <p>ἀγαθός—4,2αβ— “of things characterized esp. in terms of social significance and worth...<i>kindly remembrance 1 Th 3:6</i>”</p>
<p>ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ιδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς</p>	<p>pres. act. pt. m. pl. nom. aor. act. inf. sub. conj. comparative adv,</p>	<p>“longing to see us just as also we long to see you”</p> <p>ἐπιποθέω—BDAG 377— “to have a strong desire for someth., with implication of need, long for, desire”</p>
<p>BAE- But now that Timothy has come to us from you and has told us the good news of your faith and love and that you always have a good remembrance of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you...</p>		

3:7

διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφ’ ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως,

<p>διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί</p>	<p>1pl. aor. pass. ind.</p>	<p>“on account of this we have been encouraged, brothers” παρακαλέω—BDAG 765,4— “to instill someone with courage or cheer, comfort, encourage, cheer up...we have been comforted concerning you 1 Th 3:7.”</p>
<p>ἐφ’ ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως</p>	<p>prep. + dat. (content) prep. + dat. (time) adj. f. sg. dat. n. f. sg. dat. n. f. sg. dat.</p>	<p>“concerning you during all our calamity and affliction through your faith” ἀνάγκη—BDAG 61,2— “1) necessity or constraint as inherent in the nature of things, necessity, pressure...2) a state of distress or trouble, distress, calamity, pressure...3) compulsion by forcible means, torture” “For their faith produced their love and also their loyalty and their desire to see him and his helpers again. Their steadfast faith was Paul’s greatest joy, faith that was unshaken by opposition, so young as yet and nevertheless so true.” (Lenski, p. 290) “The distress and affliction at this time may have been more psychological than physical. For one thing, their anxiety over the Thessalonians had been hard to bear; for another thing, it is evident that the first phase of Paul’s stay in Corinth was beset by ‘weakness and much fear and trembling’ (1 Cor 2:3). And no wonder: having been expelled from one place after another in Macedonia, Paul and the others might well have wondered if, in spite of their confidence interpretation of the call of God (Acts 16:10), they had been divinely guided to that province after all. They had no reason to expect more positive acceptance in Achaia, to which they had now perforce come. But Timothy’s report on the state of the Thessalonian church dissipated their fears. The gospel had taken firm root in the capital city of Macedonia: the seed had been sown in the fertile ground and the fruit was already beginning to appear. If the Thessalonians had not allowed their tribulations to destroy their Christian faith and love, Paul and Silvanus found in this good news a sovereign remedy for their own ‘distress and affliction.’” (Bruce, WBC, p. 67)</p>
<p>BAE- ...on account of this we have been encouraged, brothers, concerning you during all our calamity and affliction through your faith...</p>		
<p> </p>		

3:8

ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ.

<p>ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ</p>	<p>causal adv. 1pl. pres. act. ind. general conditional 2pl. pres. act. ind.</p>	<p>“because now we live if you stand firm in the Lord”</p> <p>Re: the use of ἐὰν—BDF 372,1a— “With reference to a present reality = ‘if...really’ (as you say, as is believed, as you see, etc.) or = ‘if therefore’ (resulting from what has been said), often closely bordering on causal ‘since’...a) with the present....1a)...Sporadically ἐὰν appears for εἰ (=ἐπεὶ) with such causal pres. (perf.) indicatives...”</p> <p>So you could translate “because we now live since you stand firm in the Lord” or “because now we live if you stand firm in the Lord, and we know you do”</p> <p>Lenski calls the use of ὅτι <i>consecutivum</i>...“seeing that.” (Lenski, p. 291)</p> <p>Fee quoting Marshall as to how we should understand this odd case of ἐὰν with an indicative and not a subjunctive: “...it emphasizes its factuality and at the same time contains an implicit admonition to them to continue to stand fast and not be moved by their afflictions.” (Fee, p. 125, footnote 69)</p> <p>Williams speaking to the use of the indicative as opposed to the usual subjunctive: “The difference is between what might be and what is the case—they were in fact standing.” (Williams, p. 63)</p>
<p>BAE- ...because now we live if you stand firm in the Lord.</p>		

“The figure is a strong one: before the good news came, there was deadness. We might picture it as a leaden weight, the heart seemed to have no life. Now, in consequence of the good news, there is once more life with all that this means to the writers in their arduous work. The implication is that, if the faith of the Thessalonians had failed, if the church had broken up, it would have been a deathblow to the writers.” (Lenski, p. 291)

“Clearly, there was a lot at stake for Paul in Thessalonica. Part of the explanation may be that he saw the mission there as something of a test case. It was the first large city in which he had worked since he left Antioch in Syria (Acts 13:1ff.) and certainly the first large city in Grecian lands. Athens seems not to have produced many converts, and now he had come to Corinth. Would there be converts there? Could a church be established in a city like Corinth? If the Thessalonians were standing firm, the chances were that it could, and in that sense the missionaries ‘lived’—their ministry in Corinth was potentially viable. But this is only part of the explanation. Surely they ‘lived’ not simply in terms of the ongoing mission, but because of the Thessalonians themselves. What happens to the Thessalonians matters intensely to Paul, and if they fall, something in him and the others would die.” (Williams, p. 63)

Chrysostom notes how his students are everything: “The attitude of a teacher should be such as to regard his disciples as everything. ‘Now we live,’ Paul says, ‘if you stand fast in the Lord.’ And again, ‘What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ?’ you see Paul’s concern in this matter, his regard for the good of his disciples, not less than for his own. For teachers ought to surpass natural parents, to be more zealous than they. And it is right for their children to show deep affection for them.” (ACCOS, Vol. 9, p. 76)

Think of how our hearts feel when we bring home missionaries. It makes for a miserable day. For the missionaries, I’m sure a much longer time. Now think how much more pain there would be in our hearts to see a mission fall apart and the faith of those we left behind fail. It would have been death! But even as we leave, the church continues to march forward. Perhaps not at the pace we would prefer, but we see the Lord preserve his people, and what a joy that is in the face of such opposition!

Or just think of how “dead” our hearts feel when it seems God’s Word is falling on deaf ears. We rightly apply law and gospel, but the behavior of that married couple doesn’t change. We encourage a family to worship on a regular basis, you go to their home and you visit. They bring their child to Sunday School, but then don’t come to worship and the little child looks forward to and even brags about not having to stay for worship!

Then the Lord sends the good news. He balances our heartache with joy.

3:9

τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣ
χαίρομεν δι’ ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν,

τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν	interr. pron. f. sg. acc. expl. n. f. sg. acc. 1pl. pres. pass. ind. aor. act. inf. prep. + gen. (content)	“for what thanks are we able to repay to God concerning you” ἀνταποδίδομι—BDAG 87,1— “ to practice reciprocity with respect to obligation, repay, pay back, requite ”
ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣ χαίρομεν δι’ ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν	prep. + dat. (basis) adj. f. sg. dat. n. f. sg. dat. rel. pron. f. sg. dat. 1pl. pres. act. ind.	“in view of all the joy for which we rejoice because of you before our God”

BAE- For what thanks are we able to repay to God concerning you in view of all the joy for which we rejoice because of you before our God?

Aren’t we the same way? We’re feeling down-and-out. We’re feeling like Elijah, moping underneath a broom tree and God sends us some good news. News that is better than we’ve imagined and we’re speechless. All we can say to God is “Thank You!”

3:10		
<p>νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν;</p>		
<p>νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι</p>	<p>adv. pres. pass. pt. m. pl. nom.</p>	<p>“night and day without ceasing we keep requesting”</p> <p>ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ—BDAG 1033— “<i>quite beyond all measure</i> (highest form of comparison imaginable) ... <i>pray as earnestly as possible</i> (to God) 1 Th 3:10”</p> <p>δέομαι—BDAG 218,b— “to ask for something pleadingly, ask, request”</p>
<p>εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν</p>	<p>prep. + acc. (purpose) aor. act. inf. n. n. sg. acc. aor. act. inf. n. n. pl. acc.</p>	<p>“that we might see your faces and complete that which your faith lacks”</p> <p>καταρτίζω—BDAG 526,1b— “to cause to be in a condition to function well, put in order, restore...b) put into proper condition, adjust, complete, make complete...to fix up any deficiencies in your faith or to complete what is lacking in your faith 1 Th 3:10”</p> <p>ὑστέρημα—BDAG 1044,2— “1) the lack of what is needed or desirable, freq. in contrast to abundance, need, want, deficiency...2) a defect that must be removed so that perfection can be attained, lack, shortcoming...1 Th 3:10”</p> <p>The article governs both infinitives and shows that the two go hand in hand. Sure, it’s great just to see people. But how much more to encourage them and build them up in their faith!</p> <p>What needed completing? Remember that Paul and Silas were only there for about four weeks! There was still work to be done. But aren’t you amazed by how much was already accomplished in that short time? Sure, maybe a prospect here or there, but a whole congregation? Who of us can say that our work has been blessed to such an extent? But we see this was part of the Holy Spirit’s plan. He knew Paul would have to leave and he poured out his blessings accordingly.</p>
<p>BAE- Night and day without ceasing we keep pleading that we might see your faces and complete that which your faith lacks.</p>		

3:11		
Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθύναι τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς·		
<p>Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθύναι τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς</p>	<p>adversative intens. pron. m. sg. nom. 3sg. aor. act. opt.</p>	<p>“but may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you”</p> <p>κατευθύνω—BDAG 532— “gener. ‘make/keep straight’, lead, direct...direct our way to you 1 Th 3:11”</p> <p>Notice the singular verb with the plural subject.</p>
BAE- But may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you.		
Paul prays that God would clear the way that it would be safe for him to travel there and so that his presence wouldn't cause an increase in the persecution of the Thessalonians from the Jews.		

3:12		
Ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς,		
<p>Ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας</p>	<p>3sg. aor. act. opt. (wish) 3sg. aor. act. opt.</p>	<p>“and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in your love for each other and for all”</p> <p>πλεονάζω—BDAG 824,3b— “to be responsible for increase...to cause to increase (w. περισσεύω) ὑμᾶς ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ <i>may the Lord cause you to increase (=become rich) in love 1 Th 3:12</i>”</p> <p>περισσεύω—BDAG 805,2b— “to cause someth. to exist in abundance, cause to abound...of persons who receive someth. in great abundance ὑμᾶς ὁ κύριος περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ <i>may the Lord cause you to abound in love 1 Th 3:12</i>”</p>
<p>καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς</p>	<p>sub. conj.</p>	<p>“just as also ours for you”</p> <p>You might expect Paul, Silas and Timothy to direct the Thessalonians to Christ's love and not their love as the example. But consider how they have just pointed the Thessalonians to the source of love—Christ. They have seen this love in action from Paul, Silas and Timothy. The Thessalonians have seen in them the love of Christ and the love they are to have for one another.</p> <p>Question is, can we always say to our people: “You want to know what love looks like? Then look to me.” Is this even something we should be able to do?</p>
BAE- And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in your love for each other and for all just as ours for you...		

“Lest the Thessalonians feel they could not grow in faith without a visit from Paul, he adds a third prayer. In this prayer he asks the Lord to bless and strengthen the Thessalonians. He reminds them it is really God, not Paul, who sustains them.” (PB, Kuske, p. 35)

Love for each other was going to be important to keep them united and to survive the persecution. But their love was also to be for those who were persecuting them. They were to put out to fires of persecution by heaping hot coals of kindness on their heads.

But how does the Lord produce this love? He does it through the gospel! Brothers, remember the wise advice of our forefather Walther. “Alas! many ministers do not meet with these wonderful experiences; their hearers remain sleepy; their misers stay stingy. What is the reason? Not sufficient Gospel has been preached to them. The people who go to church in America really want to hear the Word of God. We are living in a free country, where it is nobody’s concern whether one goes to church or not. In accordance with God’s will it should be the preacher’s aim to proclaim the Gospel to his hearers till their hearts are melted, till they give up their resistance and confess that the Lord has been too strong for them, and henceforth they wish to abide with Jesus.” (L&G, p. 406)

3:13

εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἁγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων αὐτοῦ, [ἀμὴν].

<p>εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἁγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν</p>	<p>prep. + acc. (purpose) aor. act. inf. adj. f. pl. acc. prep. + dat. n. f. sg. dat. improp. prep. + gen.</p>	<p>“so that your hearts may be strengthened blameless in holiness before our God and Father”</p> <p>στηρίζω—BDAG 945,2— “to cause to be inwardly firm or committed, confirm, establish, strengthen”</p> <p>ἄμεμπτος—BDAG 52— “blameless, faultless”</p> <p>Lenski notes that “blameless” is a predicate adjective. “‘Holiness’ is the quality of being holy, and when it is used with reference to us, it, like the adjective ‘holy’ implies our separation from sin and our devotion to God.” (Lenski, p. 299)</p> <p>Fee comments on the ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἁγιωσύνῃ: “...‘blameless’ with regard to their outward, visible conduct toward each other and the world; and ‘in holiness’ with regard to their relationship with God and Christ.” (Fee, p. 133)</p>
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<p>ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων αὐτοῦ, [ἀμήν]</p>		<p>“at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones (amen)”</p> <p>“It is often debated whether Jesus’ coming ‘with all his holy ones’ means with the angels or with believers. The expression ‘holy ones’ is an expression that Paul uses elsewhere in his letters only to refer to believers. Here Paul has just finished speaking of believers being blameless in holiness. When Paul speaks of Christ coming ‘with all his holy ones,’ this simply refers to all those believers who have died and whose souls are with Christ in paradise. Later, in 4:15, Paul will speak of how these believers will return with Christ and share a glorious reunion with the living believers.” (PB, Kuske, p. 37)</p> <p>With this phrase Paul is connecting the saints in Thessalonica with all the saints past, present and future. Just as the Lord strengthened the hearts of his people by giving the holiness of Christ to them so that they may stand before God on the Last Day, so God has also done this for the saints in Thessalonica.</p>
<p>BAE- ...so that your hearts may be strengthened blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones.</p>		