

“Have A Heart!”
1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

Introduction:

1. Return To Our Study Of 1 Thessalonians!
 - Remind You Where We’ve Been!
 - Letter Written By Paul, Who Planted This Church But Had To Leave Suddenly, Because Of The Opposition Of The Jews To The Gospel! While Paul Was Gone, The Persecution Continued, And Paul Was Concerned! Unable To Come Himself, He Sent Timothy To See How They Were Doing, And Timothy Reported That They Continued To Walk Worthy Of God!
2. Paul Writes To Encourage Them!
 - Through His Practical Teaching!
 - About The Coming Of Jesus Christ, To Eventually Rescue Them From The Difficulties They Were Facing!
 - Reminds Them Of This Truth In All 5 Chapters!
 - Through His Personal Concern!
 - Read 2:17-20!
 - Through These Verses, We See That Paul Had A Heart For This Young Church!
 - And The Kind Of Heart We Ought To Have For Our Church! The Kind Of Heart That Reflects Our Savior’s Heart Toward His Church!
3. This Is An Important Lesson, Because Sometimes Within The Church, It Is Hard To Love One Another!
 - “I Love My Church! It’s The Members I Can’t Stand!”
4. What Kind Of Heart Do We Need Toward Our Church?
 - Toward One Another?

1. *A Heart Of Devotion!*

- 2:17a - “But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart!”
 - This Verse Follows Several Verses That Describe The Suffering The Thessalonians Were Going Through! (2:14 - “For Ye, Brethren . . . Have Suffered!”)
 - Paul Is Identifying With Them, And Showing His Desire To Be There ***With*** Them & ***For*** Them Through It All!
 - He Was Devoted To Them, No Matter What!
 - **IE:** “An Indian evangelist Sundar Singh wrote about a devastating forest fire in the Himalayas where he was traveling. While many were trying to fight it, a group of men stood looking up at a tree with flames climbing up its branches. They were watching a mother bird flying frantically in circles above the tree. She was chirping out an alarm to her nest full of fledglings. As the nest began to burn, the mother bird didn’t fly away; instead she zoomed down and covered her brood with her wings. In seconds she and her nestlings were burned to ashes!” - This Is Devotion!
- Because Of His Sudden Departure!
 - When Paul Had To Leave Suddenly – Even Though He Was Their Spiritual Father, It Was Like He Became Orphaned From Them!
 - “Being Taken From You!” (Orphanizo)
 - With The Suddenness, Uncertainty, Sadness & Hurt That Comes With It!
 - Paul Wanted To Stay With Them Longer!
 - He Had Much More To Teach & Serve Them!
- Because Of Their Sudden Persecution!
 - He Had Only Been Away From Them For “A Short Time”!
 - It Hadn’t Been Very Long At All!
 - Yet, The Persecution Swept Over Them Like A Sudden Flash Flood!
 - Paul Wanted To Be With Them Now!
 - To Help & Comfort Them!
 - Nothing Could Remove Them From His Heart!
 - He Had Served Them With All His Soul! (2:8)
 - He Loves Them With All His Heart!
- Is This The Kind Of Devotion We Have For One Another?

- If We Are Apart For Any Length Of Time?
- If We Are Hurting?
- Think Of The Kind Of Devotion Jesus Has Toward His Church!
- Jeremiah 31:3 - "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee!"

2. *A Heart Of Desire!*

- 2:17b - "Endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire!"
 - After Hearing About Them & Hurting With Them, Paul's Desire Was To "See Their Face!"
 - So He "Endeavoured" To Do So!
 - To Give All Diligence!
- They Were His Priority!
 - I'm Sure They:
 - Prayed To Come!
 - Prepared To Come!
 - Did Everything They Could To Get Back To Them!
 - **IE:** Wanting To Fly To See Someone For Christmas, But Get Stranded!
- They Were His Motivation!
 - No Matter How High The Obstacle!
 - No Matter How Hard The Opposition!
 - Paul Wanted To See Their Face!
 - A Craving!
 - To See! To Share! To Serve! To Support!
- Is This The Kind Of Desire We Have For One Another?
 - To See? To Share? To Serve? To Support?
 - When Sunday Morning Comes Around, Do We "Endeavor The More Abundantly To See [Each Others'] Face With Great Desire?"
 - Think Of The Kind Of Desire Jesus Has Toward His People!
 - John 14:1-3 - "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also!"

3. *A Heart Of Determination!*

- 2:18 - "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us!"
 - Paul Was Determined To Come To The Thessalonians!
 - This Was His Will! This Was His Goal!
 - "We Would Have Come Unto You!"
 - This Was Attempted!
 - "Once And Again!"
 - This Was Foiled!
 - "But Satan Hindered Us!"
 - How? Not Specifically Stated, But We Can See That He Is Very Interested In What Goes On In A Church – In Our Church!
 - "Hinder" - **IE:** Breaking Up A Road / Cutting In On Someone In A Race (1984 Olympic Runner Mary Decker)
- Satan Tries To Destroy!
 - Through Persecution From The Outside!
- Satan Tries To Discourage!
 - Through Impatience & Dissatisfaction From The Inside!
 - "Where's Paul?" / "Why Did He Leave Us?" / "Why Hasn't He Returned?"
- Satan Tries To Derail!
 - Any Efforts At Coming To Our Aid!
- But All He Could Hinder Was Paul's Physical Presence!
 - He Could Not Hinder His Devotion / Desire / Determination!

- But, His Presence, As Important As It Seemed To Be, Wasn't Really The Main Point!
 - **IE:** Missionaries Never Seeing Their Families Again – Is It Worth It?
- Is This The Kind Of Determination We Have For One Another?
 - Satan May Try To Hinder – Destroy / Discourage / Derail!
 - Be Determined To Help/Assist Each Other!
 - Remember: 1 John 4:4 - “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world!”

4. *A Heart Of Delight!*

- 2:19-20 - “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy!”
 - **This** Is The Main Point!
 - Not Paul's Presence With Them, But Their Presence With Christ!
 - Satan May Hinder Our Physical Help, But He Cannot Hinder Our Heart Or Our Hope!
 - What Is Your Hope?
 - Confident Expectation!
 - **IE:** Not Merely A Wish, Like A Child Flipping A Coin Into A Fountain!
 - Investments? Career? Children Or Grandchildren?
 - Or Your Investment In The Lives Of God's People?
 - What Is Your Joy?
 - Gladness In The Heart!
 - **IE:** Not Just A Smile On The Face, That You Can Fake In A Picture!
 - Your Service For God's People?
 - What Is Your Crown Of Rejoicing?
 - “Crown Of Glory!”
 - The Highest Point / Achievement!
 - What Was Paul's?
 - Not That He Was An Apostle!
 - Not That He Was Used To Plant Churches!
 - Not That He Was Used To Write Scripture!
 - But That The Result Of All His Labor & Effort From His Soul Would Be: Them In The Presence Of Christ!
 - Is This The Kind Of Delight We Have For One Another?
 - Not Just So That We Can Enjoy Heaven!
 - But So That Others Can Enjoy The Presence Christ!
 - Think Of The Kind Of Delight Jesus Has Toward His People!
 - Matthew 20:28 - “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many!”

Conclusion:

1. What Kind Of Heart Do You Have For Your Church?
 - Heart Of Devotion / Desire / Determination / Delight?
 - What If Jesus Had The Same Kind Of Heart For You That You Have For Others?
2. Listen To What Jesus Says:
 - John 15:12-14 - “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you!”

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