

First Thessalonians

VERSE-BY-VERSE



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Letter	Date of Writing	Place of Writing
1st Thessalonians	54 A.D.	Corinth

Verse 16 from Session 8 – **Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles**. Who was forbidding them? It was the Jews referred to in 2:14. That word Jews is the Greek word Ἰουδαῖος | *Ioudaios*, That is Judeans. These are the Jews from the region of Judea (Jerusalem area) who are forbidding Paul and other believers to speak to the Gentiles about Jesus Christ (2:16).

The word Gentiles is the Greek word *ethnos* which means *nations*. In this case these legalizing Judeans were forbidding Paul to speak the gospel to the scattered nations (Gentiles: *ethnos*) of Jews throughout the region of Macedonia and Achaia. The bottom line, the church in Thessalonica was facing persecution by the unbelieving Jews. Paul is worried about their fate.

Chapter 3

Verse 1–

Paul (with Silas) had been ushered out of Thessalonica in the night ([Acts 17:10](#)). A riot (uproar) had occurred in Thessalonica because of Paul's teaching ([Acts 17:5](#)). Paul and Silas went into the city of Berea, and Timothy must have joined them at some later time ([Acts 17:14](#)). Timothy and Silas stayed behind in Berea as Paul left.

Paul left Berea, by sea. He was accompanied by some unknown men all the way to Athens ([Acts 17:15](#)). Upon arriving in Athens, Paul told the men to go back and tell Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible. He waited for them, alone in Athens ([Acts 17:16](#)).

It appears Luke, the author of Acts, doesn't record that Silas and Timothy joined Paul in Athens. A possible chronology is Paul leaves Berea without Silas and Timothy, he arrives in Athens, Silas and Timothy join him, ([1 Thessalonians 3:1](#)) and at some point leave Paul alone.

Therefore, [1 Thessalonians 3:1](#) alludes to Silas and Timothy leaving Paul in Athens. Where Silas went we can't tell, but we know from here 2 exactly where Timothy went.

Verse 2–

Verse 2 happens sometime between [Acts 17:34](#) and 18:1.

1 Thessalonians 3: 1-6 | Session 9

And sent Timotheous. Remember Timotheous means God-honoring. Paul put great trust in Timothy. Timothy was a disciple who probably heard Paul's message when Paul went through the region in [Acts 14:7](#). On Paul's second missionary journey, people in Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium spoke very highly of Timothy (Acts 16:1-2) and Paul invited him to come along with him. This would be the beginning of a very productive friendship and ministry.

Paul refers to Timothy as:

1. Our brother.
2. Minister of God.
3. Our fellowlabourer in the gospel (Paul uses this same term for Timothy in [Romans 16:21](#))

Brother. ἀδελφός (*adelphos*) Depending on the context; fellow believer (male or female), fellow Jew, fellow countryman, also the context could be neighbor ([Matthew 5:21](#)).

Minister. δίακονος | *diakonos*. Translated as servant, minister, or deacon. It is someone who executes the commands of another.

Fellowlabourer. συνεργός | *sunergos*. From the root word, *sun* (*with*) and *ergon* (*to work*). "To work with."

This all revolved around the gospel (to bring good news) of Christ.

Sent. Paul also sent Timothy to Corinth to remind them of what Paul had taught ([1 Corinthians 4:17](#); [1 Corinthians 16:10](#)).

To establish you, στηρίζω | *sterizo*. In this case it means to make stable or put in place. Remember when Paul left t Thessalonica, the entire city and presumably the church, was in an uproar ([Acts 17:5](#)). Timothy was sent back to put the church in place.

Comfort you concerning your faith. Why would they need comforting concerning their faith? They had been accused of going against Caesar and saying there is another king ([Acts 17:7](#)). This was false testimony that had been spread since the trial of Jesus in front of Pilate. It was Pilate who said Jesus was King of the Jews ([Luke 23:2](#); [John 19:12](#)).

Verse 3-

No man should be moved. This is the only time Paul uses this word **moved** in his writings. Literally the word means "wag the tail." There are a couple of ways we can take Paul's meaning. When a dog wags its tail it usually wins our favor. We feel we can approach the dog without being bitten. In this case Paul could be saying, "Don't be moved by these men."

It could also mean, do not get emotionally upset over what is going on in your life. Don't let the afflictions disturb you. I tend to go with this meaning.

Afflictions means the persecution they are going through because they have believed in Jesus Christ. From what we read in the book of Acts (17:8), it doesn't appear to be physical persecution they are under. The passage in Acts just says

1 Thessalonians 3: 1-6 | Session 9

they were troubled. That word just means they were “stirred up.” It was probably more of an emotional shaking. They had an inner turmoil. Probably even questioning whether they should be believing this message of Paul about Jesus Christ.

What they were experiencing is that the Christian life when lived out is not an easy one. Paul says that **we are appointed thereunto**. Meaning, we should expect afflictions when we follow Christ. **Appointed** I think just means “it’s a given.” We should know up front, when we believe it as if affliction is already laid out in front of us. Paul makes this very clear in 2 Timothy 3:12 “*Yea, and all that will live a godly life in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*” The word *shall* is future tense—Follow Christ, persecution will come. Don’t be surprised by it!

Verse 4–

We told you before that we should suffer tribulation. Just as was stated in verse 3, Paul reminds them, Remember when we told you this tribulation was going to happen? The underlying Greek word for **suffer tribulation** is the same word that was used for afflictions in verse 3.

Even as it came to pass, and ye know. Just like Paul said it would happen, the affliction came. Paul is concerned about them because he knew they were going through this tribulation.

Verse 5–

For this cause. Because I told you suffering would come. **I could no longer forbear.** He couldn’t take the suspense any longer. What had happened to this little church in Thessalonica? Did they abandon the faith? Did they give up?

I sent to know your faith. He sent Timothy to find out!

Lest by some means the tempter. I only looked at a couple of commentaries, but I’m certain most of them would identify the tempter as Satan. And that could be a possibility. We could say that Satan is the father of all temptation, but I don’t think Paul necessarily has Satan in mind here in light of the context.

I think the tempter is the one who is trying to change the minds of the believing Jews; the ones who *troubled the people*. Looking back at verse 3, Paul is wondering if they *were moved*.

Labour. If so, then all the trouble Paul went to in sharing the good news would have been **in vain**, or empty.

Verse 6–

But now. Paul was lamenting the possibility that all was in vain in Thessalonica and that the church may have given up. We have to love the words, “But now” in Paul’s writings because it almost always means, *something good is about to follow*.

But now when Timotheous came back to report, he **brought good news.**

1 Thessalonians 3: 1-6 | Session 9

Brought us good news in the Greek is only one word, εὐαγγελίζω | euaggelizo. It is made up of two parts εὖγε | eu /yoo/, which means well, or well done, and even good. And ἄγγελος | aggelos which is where we get our word angel and it means messenger. Therefore "A good message" or "A message that all is well."

What was that good message? **Your faith and charity.** The word faith is the same as believe. The good report from Timotheous is they had kept the faith! The word **charity** meant something different in 1611 when the KJV was translated. Today charity means free stuff, but here it means affection or good will. It is the Greek word *agape*.

That ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us. The message of Paul had remained strong, the church was alive and well, and they had not forgotten what they had been taught. Paul could not wait to go back to see them, **as we also to see you.**