

The Church and The Blessed Hope **“How to Be a Caring Christian”** **I Thessalonians 3:1-13**

Introduction - A little boy in a first grade Sunday school class was asked by his teacher what a Saint was. Remembering seeing saints in the stained glass windows of the sanctuary he answered, “*A Saint is someone whom the light shines through.*”

The New Testament teaches that all Christians are Saints! Sadly the light doesn't always shine through them! Does the light shine through you? The light shone through Paul. He was a light in a dark world. Why? Because he really cared. I Thess. 3, Paul's passion for people.

Pictures of Paul's passion for people:

1. His Affectionate Care, vv. 1-9
2. His Fervent Prayer, vv. 10-13

I. Paul's Affectionate Care

1. Paul's concern, vs.1. Paul gave of himself for others! Phil. 2:4, “*Look not every man on his own interest, but every man also on the interest of others.*”
2. Timothy's Character, vs. 2.
3. The Church's Conflict, vv. 3-5.
 - Afflictions, vs. 3
 - Tribulation, vs. 4

The Blessings of Bufferings:

1. They prove the reality of our faith, is it real?
2. They deepen our fellowship with God and other believers.
3. They develop certain graces of Christ-like character.
4. They help to remove the dross from our lives.

- Temptations, vs. 5

4. Paul's Comfort, vv. 6-9.

Are you giving of yourself to help others grow in their faith?

A man in his mid - 50s was dying of cancer. Listen to the confession he made to his pastor: “Pastor, 10 years ago the church asked me to teach a class of nine-year-old boys in Sunday school. I told them I was too busy. And I was, with all the heavy demands on my time and energy. I was in the prime of my life and rapidly rising in business affairs. Now, 10 years later, here I am dying with the greatest regret of my life being that I did not accept that responsibility. I know that when I die I shall be with the Lord, but if 10 years ago I had taken the time to teach that class of 10 boys, by now 100 boys would have passed through my class. I would have invested my life in the lives of 100 boys, and many of them would be growing in service and usefulness as Christian young men. I would have made an investment in time and eternity through them. I can’t take any of my money or my stocks or my bonds with me. What a fool I have been!”

II. Paul’s Fervent Prayer, vs. 10

To help establish the young believers in their faith Paul sent them a servant of God, wrote them a letter from God, and now brings them before the throne of God through prayer.

- A. If Jesus prayed and Paul prayed, so we should pray!
- B. It’s important.
- C. It’s power.
- D. It’s not limited by time or place.
- E. How, Paul prayed. vs. 10
- F. What Paul prayed.

First note what he didn’t pray for.

He prayed for three things:

1. A Perfected Faith, vs. 10
2. An Abounding Love, vs. 12
3. An Established Hope, vs. 13

Do you pray? Frequently, earnestly, specifically?

There are so many needing encouragement, so few encouraging.

How about you? Does the light shine through you?

Do You?

- **Love people?**
- **Spend time helping them?**
- **Share God's word with them?**
- **Do you pray for them?**