



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Letters of Faith

July 2009

“...We sent him [Timothy] to strengthen you, to encourage you in your faith, and to keep you from becoming disturbed by the troubles you were going through.”

1 Thessalonians 3:2-3 NLT

Dear Beloved in Christ,

The apostle Paul was concerned that the newly-born church of the reborn in Thessalonica might be wobbling in their faith under the severe pressures of the Judaizers, the Roman rule, and the heathen idol-worshippers. So he sent Timothy to encourage them and to report back to him the condition of their faith and their ability to stand in the midst of the social and religious whirlwinds they were in. **“That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent Timothy to find out whether your faith was still strong. I was afraid that the Tempter had gotten the best of you and that all our work had been useless.”**

(1 Thes. 3:5)

After all, Thessalonica was the capitol of the Roman province of Macedonia that Paul had been called to in his dream (ref. Acts 16:9-10), and he knew the importance of those early believers being able to stand firm in their faith to establish the Lordship of Jesus in that strategic part of the world. Paul had personally experienced the viscousness of the population of this area in Philippi. **“The whole city is in an uproar because of these Jews!” they shouted. “They are teaching the people to do things that are against Roman customs.”**[Emphasis added] **A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn’t escape. So he took no chances but put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks.”** (Acts 16:20-24)

Can you relate to the pleasure in Paul’s heart when Timothy reported that the Christians in Thessalonica were standing firm in their faith, resisting the enemy, and pressing into the Kingdom of Heaven in spite of the pressures of Satan, religion, and society against them?

We can because the very strong response we received from so many of you to our last *Letters of Faith* (June) encouraged us in exactly the same way. To each of you who e-mailed, called us, or wrote us to say that you were deeply touched, exhorted, and encouraged by our June Letters of Faith, we say thank you! We so appreciate your agreement and support especially when we write a strong and “corrective” word like last month.

We pray that to some small extent our letters to you might be like Timothy was to the Thessalonians— **“...to strengthen you, to encourage you in your faith, and to keep you from becoming disturbed by the troubles you are going through.”**

Beloved, the Church and the world are crossing boundaries into new territory. The world is moving into a final confrontation of evil with righteousness. The Church is crossing the Jordan into the promised land where we will re-present Jesus Christ to a bankrupt but spiritually hungry world! Joshua told the people of Israel as they prepared to cross the Jordan to keep their eyes on the Ark of the Covenant because they had never walked that way before. We sense the Lord Jesus telling us, the Church, to keep our eyes on Him because we have never walked this way before either.

Walked what way? Walking in total dependence on God’s promises, His protection, and His provision in the midst of natural, financial, social, and spiritual challenges we have never even dreamed of before.

Now, we know so many of you, especially you hundreds in the forty-some foreign countries these letters go to, are already pressed hard even as those in Thessalonica were. To you we say: stand firm in the faith and prepare to be pressed harder and more viciously. To those of you in this country we also say: stand firm in the faith, and prepare to be pressed harder and more viciously. And to all we say: Do what He tells you to do, and be of good cheer!

“Those who follow the right path fear the Lord; those who take the wrong path despise Him.” (Prov. 14:2) We are all facing new decision times. We are being given opportunities, sometimes very unpleasant ones, to make choices to go with our loving God, or with the crowd (the world!). Please see the shocking disparity between going with your Lord Jesus and going against Him with the crowd in this special verse above: not going with Jesus is seen in the heavenly courts as despising Him. The apostle James put it this way: **“Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.”** (James 4:17) Sin = bad! Despise = really scary bad!

There is no compromise here: stray instead of obey equals sin and shows a despising of our loving Lord! Yes, there is forgiveness for sin and repentance brings us back into His righteousness. Our hope is that, along with our sin, He forgets the despising bit because we would never ever intentionally do that—and we know you wouldn’t either.

So we all try our best to do what He tells us to do and reap the rewards like Jesus promised in John 3:21 NLT: **“But those who do what is right come to the light gladly, so everyone can see that they are doing what God wants.”**

Our daughter, Alexis, pointed out to us recently from one of her times of mining the Word of God with Jesus, how much emphasis Jesus placed on our *being of good cheer*. This is more than a flip exhortation to “put on a happy face!” The Greek word used in the New Testament for “*good cheer*” (tharseo) literally means to be of “*good courage, cheerful*.” So in the times Jesus specifically urged His disciples to choose to be of good cheer, He was really saying to them *be courageously cheerful*—because He knew it would take divine courage to be cheerful in their situation.

For example, Jesus said we were to be *courageously cheerful* when we need forgiveness and healing! **“And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer (courageously cheerful); thy sins be forgiven thee.”** (Matt. 9:2 KJV) **“But Jesus turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort (cheer—courageously cheerful); thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.”** (Matt. 9:22 KJV)

Jesus said we were to be *courageously cheerful* when we are afraid and full of fear! **“And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good comfort (cheer—courageously cheerful); it is I; be not afraid.”** (Matt. 14:26-27 KJV)

So when we say we are hearing the Lord tell us to do what He tells us to do, and *be of good cheer* (courageously cheerful) while we are doing it, we are simply saying that He is preparing us for times when it will not be easy to do His will—and it will take great courage to do so—and especially to do His will with cheerfulness—with joy. But remember, our strength is built on our joy of and in the Lord! **“...Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”** (Neh. 8:10 NASB)

Many of you responding to last month’s letter mentioned such similar situations in your local churches where you wished your leadership team could read that letter. We boldly say, then take it to them! To all of you who feel that way we say *be of good cheer and share your hearts with your leadership*. They might just be waiting for the body to wake up to desiring the same things and you will be a great encouragement to them, and them to you.

Open and loving communication amongst the Body of Christ is of utmost importance during these changing and challenging times. Share your heart’s desire for more of God’s manifest presence in your gatherings, for more of Holy Spirit’s healings, and for more Godward worship. Share your desires to take the living Christ Jesus out into the marketplace and the malls and shops.

And, **“Let all that you do be done in love.”** (1 Cor. 16:14 NASB)

“... may the Lord make your love grow and overflow to each other and to everyone else, just as our love overflows toward you. As a result, Christ will make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy when you stand before God our Father on that day when our Lord Jesus comes with all those who belong to him.” (1 Thes. 3:12 NLT)

With Love and Holy Hugs to God’s strong, blameless, and holy ones,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul & Gretel". The script is cursive and fluid, with the ampersand being a simple, stylized symbol.

PS: Thank you to all who are receiving this letter via e-mail or the web. Please let us know if your e-mail address changes; otherwise we might lose track of you!!