**Lesson 6**

**The Thessalonians: Paul’s Crown of Rejoicing**

1. **Paul’s Intense Desire to Revisit (2:17-20)**
2. **Paul’s Pastoral Love and Affection for the Church (Vv. 17-18a)**

Does this deep love and affection they had for the church describe my feelings for my church? What did the separation from the body due to COVID-19 restrictions teach me?

1. **Paul’s Frustrated Efforts (v. 18b)**

We must remember that Satan is not a rival deity but a rebellious creature. His chief activity and goal in the lives of Christians is to cause them to **think differently than God’s Word** and thus **act disobediently to God’s will**. He **attempts** to accomplish this end through four basic strategies:

1. By distorting or denying the truth of God’s Word (Matt. 4:1-11).
2. By discrediting the testimony of God’s people (Acts 5:1-11).
3. By diminishing or destroying a believer’s zeal to accomplish God’s work (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
4. By diluting the effectiveness of God’s Church (Luke 22:3-6).

God has prepared the believer to not be defeated by Satan and has given us many means by which the spiritual battle can be won. For starters, **Christ’s victory** at Calvary, the **intercessory ministry** of Christ, the **knowledge of Satan’s tactics**, The **Holy Spirit’s power**, **prayers of the saints**, the **armor of God**, and from our own text today **1 Thess. 3:2,**5 we see **how God uses the church and our spiritual leaders to strengthen and encourage** us to stand firm in the sp. battle.

1. **Paul’s Crown of Rejoicing (Vv. 19-20)**
2. **Paul’s Cause for Joy?**
3. **He looked to his people**
4. **He looked to the future**
5. **He looked to God’s Sovereignty**

How would God want me to apply this lesson?

What plan or plans of action must be put to work?

Questions to ponder for application.

What is my source of joy? A joy that is defined as a gladness of heart that leads me to worship. For Paul is what looking to his people, the church, looking to the future, and looking to God’s sovereignty. Which of these three needs the most attention in my life? What’s needed to change?

Am I praying asking God to burden my heart for the lost? Am I willing to invest the necessary time to build relationships with them? Am I planting the seeds and trusting God to cause the growth?

Am I committed to building friendships and relationships within the body of Christ? This takes time, am I willing to invest the time necessary to begin building these relationships?

Do the relationships and friendships I have forged with others within the body of Christ further their souls? This is the connection we should have among the saints in the church. Do I create vulnerability by being willing to open my heart to others in hopes they then would be willing to open their heart to me?

A.Begg, “you will never find a better friend than one who points you to Christ”.

What did the separation from my church body during the Covid restrictions teach me? Am I guilty of forsaking the assembly? Did the separation feel anything like the missionaries felt?

Do I take advantage of all the opportunities our Church grants for my spiritual growth and for fellowship?

Lastly, does my life and obedience to God’s Word bring joy to my church leaders or does my disobedience to the word cause them grief and heartache?