**The Enemy Will Hinder You**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 Thessalonians 2:16-20**

**Wednesday Evening**

**September 15, 2021**

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16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. 17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire.

18 Therefore we wanted to come to you--even I, Paul, time and again--but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

**16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.**

Saints, the Jews’ natural animosity against Gentiles extended to fearing that some might be saved. As the people who should have recognized the Messiah and welcomed all who would come to the one true God, the Jewish leaders had failed miserably—they actually feared that others might find salvation.

The inevitable consequence of this attitude would be the anger of God. Most likely, Paul was using language conveying the “dramatic present.”

He was talking about the future as though it had already happened. Because of their continual rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and persecution of his followers, the Jews were not only piling up their guilt, they were hardening their hearts to the point of no return.

**Hebrews 3:1-15**

1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,

6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,

9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' "

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

Saints, these must have been difficult words for Paul, a Jew from birth, to write about his countrymen. In another letter Paul wrote, “The longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that the Jewish people might be saved."

**Romans 10:1**

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved"

Paul understood that the Jews were God’s chosen people and that many of them would come to salvation in Christ. He also knew, however, that many would flatly reject the truth. This pained him greatly.

**17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire.**

Saints, the word “separated” can also be translated “torn away.” In addition, while physically separated, the apostles kept the believers in their hearts.

They had tried hard to come back and had an intense longing to be back in Thessalonica with the believers. Far from being afraid to return, Paul and Silas wanted to go back to Thessalonica.

**Hebrews 10:24-25**

24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

**Psalm 133:1-3**

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing--Life forevermore.

**18 Therefore we wanted to come to you--even I, Paul, time and again--but Satan hindered us.**

Saints, Paul and Silas could not return to Thessalonica because Satan prevented them. What exactly blocked Paul and Silas from returning to Thessalonica—opposition, illness, travel complications, or a direct attack by Satan—is unknown. But, somehow, Satan had been able to keep them away more than once.

Spiritual warfare is real. Satan is constantly at war with God's people. Satan actively works to keep people from accepting Christ. He also works to hinder God’s people from advancing God’s Kingdom.

Some of the difficulties that prevent believers from accomplishing God’s work can be attributed to Satan. While God is more powerful than Satan and sometimes intervenes and overrides, he does not always do so. Therefore, Christians must be vigilant and faithful to Christ.

**Ephesians 6:12**

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"

**Our prayers can be hindered by Satan!**

**Daniel 10:10-14 (New Living Translation)**

10 Just then a hand touched me and lifted me, still trembling, to my hands and knees. 11 And the man said to me, “Daniel, you are very precious to God, so listen carefully to what I have to say to you. Stand up, for I have been sent to you.” When he said this to me, I stood up, still trembling.

12 Then he said, “Don’t be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer.

13 But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. 14 Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come.”

**Satan will bring sexual temptation on those who lack self-control.**

**1 Corinthians 7:5**

Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

**The enemy will attempt to cause division among believers!**

**2 Corinthians 2:10-11**

10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

**Satan will bring in false teaching to lead believers astray!**

**2 Corinthians 11:3-4**

3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted--you may well put up with it!

**Satan can even disguise himself as an angel of light**

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15**

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it

is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Saints, while God is more powerful than Satan and sometimes intervenes and overrides, he does not always do so. Therefore, Christians must be vigilant and faithful to Christ.

**19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?**

Saints, with overflowing love for this young church, Paul asked a question and then answered it himself. What was the hope, joy, or crown in which Paul and Silas would have much joy? It would be the Thessalonian believers!

The word hope describes Paul’s confidence in these believers. The word joy pictures his own inner feelings when he imagined them presented to the Lord and welcomed into the Kingdom. The crown pictures a victor’s wreath—the believers were like a victory crown, giving Paul joy in having “run the race” for their sakes

**1 Corinthians 9:25-27**

25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

**Philippians 4:1**

"Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved"

**20 For you are our glory and joy.**

Saints, one day, all will stand together before the Lord Jesus when he comes back again and God will judge us on our agenda's, actions, motives and especially how we treated the Saints.

Paul and all those who came with him to Thessalonica saw the Glory of God in the His Church!

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**