

A Pastoral Prayer: 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: 1 Thessalonians 3.
- B. The true pastor prays for his people.
- C. Paul give the pastor a model of what he should pray for his people.
- D. Spiritual growth is always a goal of prayer: faith, love and hope. (1 Corinthians 3)
- E. God and Jesus are jointly addressed putting them on an equal level. Paul uses a singular pronoun for both showing that they are one.

II. A perfecting faith.

- A. Paul prays that God would thwart Satan.
- B. Satan is never addressed directly. The Lord deals with Satan.
- C. Faith is the ability to trust the truth.
 - 1. One must know the truth to trust it.
 - 2. Bringing faith to perfection is not a mystical thing.
 - 3. Faith is perfected by expanding comprehension of the truth.
- D. The more we trust truth, the more we obey it. (1 Peter 2)
- E. Old Testament truths.
 - 1. God punishes sin, blesses righteousness and is gracious.
 - 2. There must be a sacrifice for sin.
- F. How we know our faith is growing.
 - 1. Our knowledge of the Word is growing.
 - 2. Our confidence in God is greater.
 - 3. Our trust in God's sovereignty is greater.
 - 4. There is greater obedience.

5. There is joy in trials.

III. A posturing love.

A. It is an increasing kind of love.

B. God teaches us love. (John 4:9)

C. Paul is constantly praying for the spiritual growth of the church, and a major dimension of it was increased love. (Philippians 1:9, Romans 1:11)

D. Love is the evidence of growing faith.

E. We are to love all--even our enemies. (Matthew 5, John 13:34-35)

F. The only way to love like this is through truth.

IV. A purifying hope.

A. This means to make one immovable against temptation.

B. Selfless love is the opposite of selfish lust. We ought to love God and others fully so as not to crave the world.

C. Purifying has as its goal blamelessness.

1. We are to be pure before God. (Leviticus 19)

2. We will face God at the coming of Jesus where we will be judged. (1 John 3, 2 Corinthians 5)

Application Questions:

1. How does one grow in faith?

2. What evidences have you seen in your own life of growing faith?

3. What are some practical ways that you can grow in and express your love? Explain.
