

# Concerns for your Christianity

## I Thess. 3:1-13

Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, <sup>2</sup> and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, <sup>3</sup> that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. <sup>4</sup> For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. <sup>5</sup> For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

<sup>6</sup> But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to see you*—<sup>7</sup> therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. <sup>8</sup> For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, <sup>10</sup> night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, <sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

## INTRODUCTION

On February 15, 2015, the Islamic State in Libya released another gruesome video of 21 Coptic Christians being beheaded on the beach in Libya.

The video captures this brother below praying moments before his death. His final words were, “Ya Rab Yesua,” or in English, “Yeah, Lord Jesus.”

*I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. — **Revelation 20:4***

What worries me is that from the West, we see these things, and we think not in terms of joining our brothers and sisters in becoming such martyr/witnesses for Jesus (Greek: *martus*), but more often we respond in fear or anger or in raging for revenge. This is somewhat understandable. But the early Church had a very defined theology of martyrdom. That martyrdom embodied the highest form of witness of God.

**According to the 2015 Open Doors World Watch List, the Middle East Remains Most Violent While Africa Sees Largest Increase in Persecution of Christians**

Approximately 100 million Christians are persecuted worldwide, making them one of the most persecuted religious groups in the world.

Islamic extremism is the main source of persecution in 40 of the 50 countries on the 2015 World Watch List. While persecution can take many forms, Christians throughout the world risk imprisonment, torture, rape and even death as result of their faith.

*“Even Christian-majority states are experiencing unprecedented levels of exclusion, discrimination and violence,”* said David Curry, president and CEO of Open Doors USA. *“The 2015 World Watch List reveals that a staggering number of Christians are becoming victims of intolerance and violence because of their faith. They are being forced to be more secretive about their faith.”*

### **Middle East**

The Middle East remains one of the most violent areas of the world for Christians. Violence against Christians by the Islamic State and other Islamic terrorist groups increased in countries like Iraq (3) and Syria (4). More than 70 percent of Christians have fled Iraq since 2003, and more than 700,000 Christians have left Syria since the civil war began in 2011. Afghanistan (5) and Pakistan (8) have both increased in persecution.

### **Africa**

For the third year in a row, the majority of African nations on the World Watch List have increased in rank due to Islamic extremism. Kenya made the largest jump, moving up from number 43 to number 19. With no functioning government, Christian persecution remains severe in Somalia, which retained the No. 2 spot on the list. Both Sudan (6) and Eritrea (9) reentered the top 10 and Nigeria (10) appeared in the top 10 for the first time.

### **Asia**

North Korea remains the most dangerous and difficult place to be a Christian. An estimated 70,000 Christians remain in prison for their faith. The conditions are also worsening for Christians throughout Asia. Countries such as Uzbekistan (15), Vietnam (16) and India (21) have all

seen increases in persecution. Of particular note is India (21), where persecution is driven by Islamic extremism and Hindu fundamentalism.

**I.BE STRONG**

**II.BE STEADFAST**

**III.BE SURE**

**IV.BE SOOTHING**

**V.BE SATURATED**

**VI.BE SPECTACULAR**

**VII.BE SANCTIFIED**

## **Lesson**

### **I.BE STRONG**

**1**Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, <sup>2</sup> and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,

we could no longer endure it,

REPEATED

<sup>5</sup> For this reason, when I could no longer endure it,

## **Endure**

Using the verb **stego** (see below) Paul is saying that his longing for personal communication and follow-up from his spiritual children had become intolerable.

**Endure** (4722)(**stego** from **steg** = to cover, conceal, **stege** = roof) had a fairly broad range of meanings including to cover, to protect, to hold back, to hide, to bear, to endure or to persist.

**Hiebert** explains...

indicates that they were unable to continue enduring the suspense that they felt because of the lack of personal communication with the Thessalonians. The continued separation from their beloved converts and the lack of information about their reaction under the pressure of persecution produced a strain of suspense that was unbearable. And there was ground for feeling anxious about their converts. If the unbelieving Jews were so relentless in their antagonism to the gospel as to hound the missionaries all the way to Berea, what might they be doing to their followers at home? The load of suspense was so heavy that they felt they had to take some action. (Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996)

to be left in Athens alone, <sup>2</sup> and sent Timothy,

**Left behind (2641)**(**kataleipo** from **kata** = intensifies meaning + **leipo** = leave behind) signifies to leave behind, to leave remaining, to forsake in the sense of abandoning. It means to cause to be left in a place.

Paul use the **passive voice** in this verse which means to “be left alone or behind” or “to be forsaken.”

The word **kataleipo** was used in secular Greek to describe the leaving of a loved one behind at death and clearly expresses how serious Paul took his separation from his coworkers.

**Hiebert** adds that **kataleipo**...

implies the feeling of loneliness and desolation that swept over him when left all alone in Athens.

Paul's strong affection for the young church in Thessalonica is shown here by his selflessness and willingness to be left alone in Athens. Paul, Silvanus and Timothy did not love the church only when they were face to face with them. They carried these believers in their hearts

**Sent (3992)**(**pempo**) means to dispatch, send, thrust out. The verb is the general word for sending and means that Timothy was sent to do something. The fact that he was **sent** and not asked to go is consistent with the fact that his sending was under the authority of the apostle Paul.

Paul subsequently sent Timothy on other missions to the churches in...

**Corinth...**

For this reason I have sent to you **Timothy**, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church. ([1 Cor 4:17](#))

Now if **Timothy** comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid; for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. Let no one therefore despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren. (1Cor 16:10,11)

### **Philippi...**

But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send **Timothy** to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. 20 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. 23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

### **Gloag** writes that the sending of Timothy...

This was a great act of self-sacrifice on the part of Paul; because to be without an assistant and fellow-labourer in the gospel in such a city as Athens, the very centre and strong hold of heathenism, full of temples and idols, must necessarily have brought upon him many discomforts; and yet his anxiety for the Thessalonians overcame all motives of personal convenience. (The Pulpit Commentary: New Testament; Old Testament; Ages Software or Logos)

## **establish**

**stérizó: to make fast, establish**

**Original Word:** στηρίζω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** stérizó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (stay-rid'-zo)

**Short Definition:** I fix firmly, strengthen

**Definition:** (a) I fix firmly, direct myself towards, (b) generally met: I buttress, prop, support; I strengthen, establish.

### **HELPS Word-studies**

**4741** *stērizō* (from *stēringks*, "a support that fixes, plants down"; akin to **2476** /*hístēmi*, "to stand," having a duplication of the primitive Gk root/*sta*, "to make stand") – properly, set fast (fix); give support to secure (firmly establish); solidly plant (which eliminates vacillation).

**Strengthen** (**sterizo** from **histemi** = to stand) means to make firm or solid, to set fast, to fix firmly in a place, to establish (make firm or stable), to cause to be inwardly firm or committed, to strengthen. The basic idea is that of stabilizing something by providing a support or buttress (a projecting structure of masonry or wood for supporting or giving stability to a wall or building), so that it will not totter. The word implies fixedness.

**Sterizo** is employed frequently in those contexts where someone is in danger of falling in some way or another. Eg, in the Apocryphal book Sirach we read "When the rich person totters he is **supported** by friends". **Philo** comments that those who are carried in different directions in their life are those who cannot be established. Diogenes Laertius refers to those people who are never firmly established in any dogma.

In the present verse **sterizo** is used metaphorically referring to their continual state of spiritual stability, especially in the face of potential apostasy or persecution

## Paul's practice

### **Acts 14:21**

<sup>21</sup> And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, <sup>22</sup> strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith,

### **Acts 16:4**

<sup>4</sup> And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

### **Eph 6:10**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

### **I Cor 16:13**

<sup>13</sup> Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

### **2 Tim 2:1-3**

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. <sup>3</sup> You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

### **2 Tim 4:16**

<sup>16</sup> At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

<sup>17</sup> But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. <sup>18</sup> And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

### **Col 1:9**

<sup>9</sup> For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup> that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power

Peter

### **I Peter 5:8**

<sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. <sup>10</sup> But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

**Believers are strengthened...**

### **By fervent, Scripturally based prayers of the saints...**

May the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you that He may **establish** ([sterizo](#)) your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. (see [notes 1Thes 3:12; 13](#))

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and **strengthen** ([sterizo](#)) your hearts in every good work and word. ([2Th 2:16-17](#))

### **By the Lord Himself, our Strength and Protector...**

But the Lord is faithful, and He will **strengthen** ([sterizo](#)) and protect you from the evil one. ([2Thes 3:3](#))

### **By looking and living for the Lord's return...**

You too **be patient** ([makrothumeo](#) - have a "long fuse" especially with difficult people - [aorist imperative](#)); **strengthen** ([sterizo](#) - [aorist imperative](#) Do it now - it's urgent!, [active voice](#) = you make the choice to do this) your hearts (the "control center" of your life), for the coming ([parousia](#)) of the Lord is at hand. ([Jas 5:8](#))

### **By the God of all grace working through suffering...**

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, **confirm**, strengthen and establish you. ([1Pe 5:10](#))

### **By the truth of God's Word...**

Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been **established** ([sterizo](#)) in the truth which is present with you. ([2Pe 1:12](#))

### **By the revealing of the mystery of the gospel...**

Now to Him who is able to **establish** ([sterizo](#)) you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past ([Ro 16:25-note](#));

**By the strengthening ministered through His saints who come alongside...**

(Peter) Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen (sterizo - aorist imperative conveys a sense of urgency. Do it effectively! When the opportunity presents itself, don't delay) your brothers." [Lk 22:31,32](#)

(Timothy) and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen (sterizo) and encourage you as to your faith,

(Paul) For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established (sterizo) (Ro 1:11-note).

So although it is the God Himself Who ultimately strengthens and stabilizes us, these other NT uses of **sterizo** teach that God uses the the encouragement and prayers of the saints, the certainty of Christ's return and the truth of His Word and the gospel to supernaturally exert a stabilizing effect on our faith.

**Jesus** warns the church at **Sardis**

**Wake up** (gregoreuo as in [1Pe 5:8-note](#) "be on the alert" - there was no time for indifference; they could not just go with the flow, they had to reverse it), and **strengthen** (sterizo - aorist imperative - command to do this now - it is urgent) the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. ([Re 3:2-note](#))

## encourage

**parakaleó: to call to or for, to exhort, to encourage**

**Original Word:** παρακαλέω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** parakaleó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (par-ak-al-eh'-o)

**Short Definition:** I summon, entreat, admonish, comfort

**Definition:** (a) I send for, summon, invite, (b) I beseech, entreat, beg, (c) I exhort, admonish, (d) I comfort, encourage, console.

### **HELPS Word-studies**

**3870** *parakaléō* (from **3844** /*pará*, "from close-beside" and **2564** /*kaléō*, "to call") – properly, "make a call" from being "close-up and personal." **3870** / *parakaléō* ("personally make a call") refers to believers *offering up evidence that stands up in God's court.*

**Kent Hughes** illustrates the root idea of **parakaleo** "to come alongside and encourage" with the following example

I see this exemplified every time my church has a roller skating party, and the parents put their little ones on skates for the first time. Mom and Dad skate with their child, holding on to his or her hands, sometimes with the child's feet on the ground and sometimes in the air. But all the time the parents are alongside **encouraging**.... [exhortation] is a wonderful gift, and we are to place it at Christ's feet and be willing to be worn out in its use.

**Encourage one another - Study the "one anothers" - most positive, some negative**

The English word "encourage" means "with heart." To encourage in a sense is to give them new heart. Shallow sympathy makes people feel worse-true spiritual encouragement makes them feel better. It brings out the best in people.

In this usage of **parakaleo** the idea is to urge the Thessalonian saints to persevere and pursue a course of conduct specifically regarding their faith. Timothy came alongside them in order to encourage them to live according to sound doctrine which alone would assure that they stay firm and press on ahead in their faith.

**Do you know someone going through trials and afflictions? Have you come alongside them? Have you considered sending them an encouraging (parakaleo) note or email to let them know you are standing with them and praying for them? What effect might this have on their faith?**

## **II. BE STEADFAST**

<sup>3</sup> that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. <sup>4</sup> For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.

**NO ONE**

**médeis, médemia, méden: no one, nothing****Original Word:** μηδείς, μηδεμία, μηδέν**Part of Speech:** Adjective**Transliteration:** médeis, médemia, méden**Phonetic Spelling:** (may-dice')**Short Definition:** no one, nothing**Definition:** no one, none, nothing.**HELPS Word-studies**

**3367** *mēdeís* (from **3361** /*mé*, "not a possibility" and **1520** /*heís*, "one") – properly, "no one, nothing" – literally, "not even one."

**No man (3367)** (**medeis** from **medé** = and not, also not, neither, nor, not even + **heís** = one) means not even one, no one, no one whoever he may be. This phrase emphasizes that God intends for all believers to become spiritually strong and stable in the midst of the disturbing problems of life. Paul has God's heart that not a single believer's faith be set back by the **afflictions**.

**should be shaken****USED ONLY ONCE****sainó:** to wag the tail, hence to greet, flatter, disturb**Original Word:** σαίνω**Part of Speech:** Verb**Transliteration:** sainó**Phonetic Spelling:** (sah'-ee-no)**Short Definition:** I move, disturb**Definition:** I fawn upon, flatter, beguile; pass: I am perturbed.

(shaken, unsettled, perturbed or deceived, deluded - see below) (4525)(**saino**) means to wag, to move to and fro as dogs wag their tails in friendliness. As a dog wags his tail to allure, it gives rise to the meaning so to fascinate, beguile, flatter. To draw aside from the right path.

**Chadwick** mentions an occurrence of **saino** (actually "sainein") with the meaning "to perturb mentally" in a papyrus from Tura which reads...

all matters concerning the faith which **have perturbed** us  
have been examined

**Saino** pictures one who has become so emotionally disturbed as to be shaken in his/her beliefs and even to give up his/her beliefs. The **present tense** speaks of being continually disturbed. It's difficult to avoid being disturbed initially when a "surprise attack" occurs (as they will for all believers) but Paul's desire is that this "disturbance" doesn't continue to resonate.

## afflictions;

### thlipsis: tribulation

**Original Word:** θλίψις, εως, ἡ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine

**Transliteration:** thlipsis

**Phonetic Spelling:** (thlip'-sis)

**Short Definition:** persecution, affliction, distress

**Definition:** persecution, affliction, distress, tribulation.

### HELPS Word-studies

**2347** *thlipsis* – properly, *pressure* (what constricts or rubs together), used of a narrow place that "hems someone in"; *tribulation*, especially *internal pressure* that causes someone to feel confined (restricted, "without options").

**2347** /*thlipsis* ("compression, tribulation") carries the challenge of coping with the *internal pressure* of a *tribulation*, especially when feeling there is "no way of escape" ("hemmed in").

**John MacArthur** writes that...

**Thlipsis** (tribulations) has the underlying meaning of being under pressure and was used of squeezing olives in a press in order to extract the oil and of squeezing grapes to extract the juice...In Scripture the word **thlipsis** is perhaps most often used of outward difficulties, but it is also used of emotional stress." (MacArthur, J: Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press)

**Tribulation** is the normal lot of Christians and is a fact repeatedly emphasized in the NT. In the first NT use, **Jesus** taught that **thlipsis** (affliction) comes because of the Word of God but that holding fast to the Word in the face of tribulation proves one to be genuine.

And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the Word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when **affliction (thlipsis)** or persecution arises **because of the word**, immediately he falls away. (Matthew 13:20-21)

## we are appointed to this

### **keimai: to be laid, lie**

**Original Word:** κείμαι

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** keimai

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ki'-mahee)

**Short Definition:** I lie, recline, am laid

**Definition:** I lie, recline, am placed, am laid, set, specially appointed, destined.

**Destined** (appointed) (2749) (**keimai**) means literally to be in a recumbent position, to lie down, to be laid down. The root meaning refers to lying down or reclining and came to be used of

an official appointment and sometimes of destiny. In the military **keimai** was used of a special assignment, such as guard duty or defense of a strategic position - the soldier was placed (set) on duty.

Figuratively then, **keimai** means appointed (determined or decided upon) or **destined** as in this verse (and [Lu 2:34](#) and [Php 1:16-note](#) where we see that Paul was **divinely appointed** for the defense of the gospel). **Destined** means intended or chosen for a particular purpose or end. The idea is that God “sets (lays down)” something for a particular purpose. In context this usage of **keimai** affirms God's sovereignty and ultimate control of all things.

Note that destined is in the **present tense** which speaks of a continuing "appointment" (until we see Jesus face to face). The **passive voice** implies that God is the active agent (He certainly is the Agent in not destining believers for wrath in [1Thessalonians 5:9](#)). Paul is not referring to the pagan idea of an impersonal fate nor to the Islamic idea of determinism. As discussed above, afflictions are the norm for believers in a fallen world.

### **Eph 3:13**

<sup>13</sup> Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

### **2 Thess 1:3**

<sup>3</sup> We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, <sup>4</sup> so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, <sup>5</sup> which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer

## 2 Tim 1:8

<sup>8</sup> Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,

## I Peter 4:12-16

<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; <sup>13</sup> but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. <sup>14</sup> If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. <sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. <sup>16</sup> Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

## Rev. 2:10

<sup>10</sup> Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

## Rev. 6:9

<sup>9</sup> When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. <sup>10</sup> And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" <sup>11</sup> Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of their*

fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were*, was completed.

### **Rev. 13:5**

<sup>5</sup> And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup> It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation

**AW Tozer** was right when he said, *Before God can use a person greatly, He must allow that person to be hurt deeply.*

God is not being cruel, but He knows that we cannot comfort others unless we have been comforted ourselves. So beloved, no matter what you might be experiencing you must remember the truth about God, that He is "*the Father of mercies and God of all comfort who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*" [2Cor 1:3, 4](#)

**Spurgeon** writes that...

It is ordained of old that the cross of trouble should be engraved on every vessel of mercy, as the royal mark whereby the King's vessels of honour are distinguished. But although tribulation is thus the path of God's children, they have the comfort of knowing that their Master has traversed it before them; they have his

presence and sympathy to cheer them, his grace to support them, and his example to teach them how to endure; and when they reach “the kingdom,” it will more than make amends for the “much tribulation” through which they passed to enter it.” (Morning and evening: Daily readings: Morning, March 8)

In **Our Daily Homily**, **F B Meyer** writes the following note on [1Thessalonians 3:3...](#)

WE all love the sunshine, but the Arabs have a proverb that "all sunshine makes the desert"; and it is a matter for common observation that the graces of Christian living are more often apparent in the case of those who have passed through great tribulation. God desires to get as rich crops as possible from the soil of our natures. There are certain plants of the Christian life, such as meekness, gentleness, kindness, humility, which cannot come to perfection if the sun of prosperity always shines.

### **III. BE SURE**

<sup>5</sup> For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

### **IV. BE SOOTHING**

<sup>6</sup> But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to*

see you—<sup>7</sup> therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. <sup>8</sup> For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

## **V.BE SATURATED**

<sup>9</sup> For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, <sup>10</sup> night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

## **VI.BE SPECTACULAR**

<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you,

## **VII. BE SANCTIFIED**

<sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.