

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

The Church in the Heart of Christ

Proposition: *Christ keeps the afflicted church in his heart.*

I. The Church Afflicted

a. Orphaned in the World (v. 17)

- i. *We lack Christ's physical presence.* (2 Pt. 3:4; 1 Co. 5:8)
- ii. *We lack Christ's immediate instruction.* (cf. Lk. 24:27)

b. Hindered by the Enemy (v. 18)

- i. *Our plans are frustrated.* (1 Th. 2:14-16; cf. Lk. 4:13)
- ii. *God's intentions are obscured.* (Jb. 33:14)

II. The Church Beloved

a. Christ's Present Object of Affection (v. 17, 18)

- i. *Christ keeps us in his heart.* (Jn. 14:3)
- ii. *Christ desires to see us face to face.* (Jn. 17:24; 1 Co. 13:12)

b. Christ's Future Crown of Glory (vv. 19, 20)

- i. *We are Christ's boast before God.* (Jd. 1:24, 25)
- ii. *We are Christ's joy in the world to come.* (Zp. 3:17; 3 Jn. 1:4; 1 Th. 2:11; Ga. 4:19, cf. Jn. 16:21)

III. Our Response

a. Supplication: If Satan so hinders us, pray for Christ's protection.

- i. *From undue grief in this life.*
 1. Knowing trials and afflictions must surely come.
 2. Knowing he must surely come.
 3. Knowing his heart in his Word by the Holy Spirit.

ii. *From the enemy's opposition.*

1. Hinderance within—self, Satan.
2. Hinderance without—world.

b. Thanksgiving: If Christ so loves us, thank him for his affection.

i. *As Governing Head of the Church.*

1. Conversion of sinners.
2. Preparation for us.
3. Ordination of servants.

ii. *As Shepherding Savior of the Church.*

1. Assurance of affection—despite affliction.
2. Deliverance from affliction—both moral and temporal.