

Wisdom Not Worry

Thursday, March 26, 2020

1 Thessalonians 3:6-8

But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your **faith** and **love**. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you **long** to see us, just as we also **long** to see you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.

Many consider James' words, "Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials" (James 1:2) to be a bit of a stretch. Perhaps I can will myself into accepting trials without too much complaining, but to describe them as a reason for "pure joy" seems over the top. Yet, this is exactly how Paul describes his response to the trials he and his spiritual family were experiencing. He writes, "Now we really live..." (vs. 8). To put it another way, "We are really living the life now!" How in the world can trials be the source of such joy? Because great afflictions confirm our salvation. It is not so much a joy for the trials as for what the trials reveal. Any doubt Paul had about the genuineness of their salvation was removed. The pressure of these trials caused three fool-proof evidences of authenticity – **faith, love and longing**– to spill out of their lives. What are these trying times squeezing out of you?

- Do you see **faith**, a deepening reliance upon and firm standing in Jesus who died for your sins, was buried and rose again to forgive your sins and conquer death? Are you hungering for His Word?
- Do you see **love**, a selfless impulse to encourage and strengthen others even at cost to yourself?
- Do you see **longing** to be with your brothers and sisters in Christ? Do you look forward to being together not only in spirit but in body?

If so, be encouraged. Good news! There is no doubt you belong to Jesus. This, dear friend, is reason for joyful celebration...even in the midst of a pandemic.

Grateful,
Pastor Ben