

1 Thessalonians: Chapter 3

Session 12: Stand Firm

- 1 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,
- 2 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,
- 3 that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.
- 4 For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.
- 5 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.
- 6 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—
- 7 therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith.
- 8 For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.
- 9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God,
- 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith



Stand Firm

11 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

13 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.

"1 Thessalonians 3 (New King James Version)." Blue Letter Bible. Sowing Circle. Web. 3 Dec, 2014. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=1Th&c=2&p=0&rl=0&t=NKJV>>.

all Greek and Hebrew definitions are taken from: www.blueletterbible.org



Stand Firm

Welcome back for session 12! Give yourself a pat on the back for persevering in this study. I pray you have been blessed by what you have learned and have drawn closer to God. Please take a few minutes to pray and ask God to forgive your sins and open your heart to the teaching of His Word.

Please read 1 Thessalonians 3, and mark the text as you feel led.

What stood out to you today from your reading?

Today we are going to revisit the theme of suffering and persecution.

What do you remember about suffering from our earlier study on this concept in session 6?

Please go through chapter 3 again and mark *suffering* and its synonyms with a tear.

Verse 3 is where we find the first mention of the concept of suffering/afflictions. In session 6, we studied the word *pascho*, a Greek word for suffering. In verse 3, as directed by the Holy Spirit, Paul uses a different word for afflictions—*thlipsis*. *Thlipsis* means “a pressing, a pressing together.” It also refers to the hardships one experiences due to war.

As Christians, with whom are we at war?

In addition to what we have already learned, *thlipsis* translates as anything that burdens the spirit, and “to be in the straits of want.” Interestingly, *thlipsis* descends from the word *thlibo*, which means, “to press, as grapes, to press hard upon.”



Why do we “press hard upon” grapes?

We press grapes so what is inside can be released. In the case of grapes, the nourishing juice on the inside cannot be accessed except by pressure from the outside. Through pressure the juice is released and many people benefit thereby. What if the juice on the inside is not good? It is still released by pressure. In short, whatever is on the inside is released by pressure

Draw an parallel from the press-ing of grapes to the op-press-sion of people.

Thlibo descends from yet another Greek word, *tribos*, which means a worn path. Many images come to my mind when I think of the phrase “worn path.”

Please draw a picture of what you see in your mind when you hear the phrase “worn path”:

A worn path suggests to me:

1. A route leading to a specific place.
2. A road by which many have and will travel.
3. Jesus’ path to the cross, the Via Delarosa, worn smooth by His feet and the dragging of the cross.

The *tribos* of the cross starts with condemnation and ends with acceptance, begins with death and ends with life, commences with sorrow and ends with joy. The *tribos* of the cross is where the affliction of the One leads to great joy for the many. Let’s take a moment to review what we have learned about



our new word for **affliction**. Please fill the following graphic organizer:

Greek Word	Definition	Picture
Thlipsis: descends from		
Thlibo: descends from		
Tribos:		

Please highlight the definition that is most meaningful to you.

Please go back and read verse 3 again. Write one outcome of affliction.

As Christians, when we are afflicted, we can choose to be shaken. *Saino* is the Greek word used for *shaken* in this verse means, "to move the mind" either agreeably or in a troubled fashion.

As Christians, where should our mind be stayed (Isaiah 26:3)?

If the mind can be moved, where is it moving to?

The mind is the battlefield and the prize for which we are fighting is our peace. As our study infers, we do have another choice when facing affliction than subccumbing to shakiness.

Please read verse 8 and record our other option below.



We can stand fast... shaken or stand. One based on fear, the other on faith. One pleases God, the other finds Him unworthy. The term *steko* is the Greek word for stand firm. It has several thought-provoking definitions that bear further study and application.

First, *steko* means to persevere or persist in godliness. Standing firm in the Lord will take effort, energy and sacrifice. We will have to make hard choices to choose godliness over wordliness and thereby strengthen ourselves.

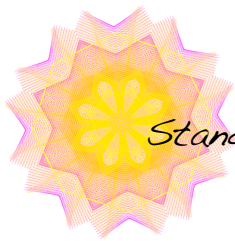
Second, it translates as "to persist in fellowship with the Lord." The implication is then we become fearful and give ground when we cease fellowshiping with the Lord.

Third, *steko* is defined as "to maintain one's freedom." Fear means bondage, while trusting God brings freedom.

Fourth, to be of steadfast mind, one who does not waver or hesitate. We will stand fast in our body and when stand fast in our mind. Steadfastness is a decision, not a feeling.

Fifth, stand fast means to stand in the presence of others. Is there an issue or a circumstance in which God is calling you to take a stand in the presence of your friends, family, co-workers or neighbors? Is there someone in whose presence you are tempted to give ground?

Please reread the definitions of *steko*, and comment on one that is calling you to action. What will you do?



Stand Firm

In the Christian school where I teach, we attend chapel on Wednesdays. A couple of weeks ago, our chapel speaker spoke about about steadfastness. The little girl sitting next to me whispered in my ear, "Mrs. Kane, we must be steady-fast!" How true. There are many issues I need to "quickly" decide to take godly position and hold my ground. I need to be steady fast!

What threatens our steadfastness in the Lord? 2 Thessalonians 2:13 hints at a threat to our steadfastness. Please read the verse and record your thoughts:

What must one do in order to be steadfast? Please read 1 Corinthians 16:13.

Now, write 1 Corinthians 13:16 in the space below.

We must watch, be brave and be strong. Please draw symbols above the words watch, brave and strong.

Interestingly, the word brave means "to be a man; to act like a man." In order to stand firm we must "man-up"! **Strong** means to be strong in the mighty power of God. How can we become strong in God's power? Please read the following verses and record the common key to becoming strong in God's power.

Luke 1:80: "So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel."

Luke 2:40: "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom;



Stand Firm

and the grace of God was upon Him.”

Ephesians 3:16: “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man...”

The common key is _____.

Name an area of your life in which you need to stand strong.

Are you being tempted to give ground to the enemy in this area? If so, how?

Name several specific actions you need to take in order to stand strong.

What can you do to become stronger in the Spirit?

Affliction and pressure can cause us to press in and standfast or it can cause us to shake and give ground. The choice is ours. Let's choose the steadfast life of faith.

Thank you for joining me today for Bible study. Walk in His faith.

by Mary Kane
www.onlybyprayer.com
all rights reserved