

Title: When Difficulty Comes and We Can't Catch a Break!

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5 **Date:** Oct 8, 2017

The Issue. While Paul is away from them, he is seeking an update on the Thessalonians' spiritual health. He wants to personally check on them but is unable to do so because of spiritual warfare. Paul sends Timothy to Thessalonica to encourage and strengthen the believers as they face persecution and hardship.

Main Idea. In 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5, Paul was prevented from returning to Thessalonica, so he sent Timothy in his place to encourage and strengthen the believers facing hardship.

Jeremy's main application point → *Difficulty exists because of Satan and sin in our fallen world, but Jesus rescues those who trust in Him!*

Key takeaways: Paul's pastoral heart...Satan brings havoc...believers keep reaching for Jesus.

Possible Discussion Questions:

1. How did Paul continue to view the Thessalonian church after his abrupt removal from the city?
2. How does Paul's love for the Thessalonians speak to us today about the way we should love others? Can you think of examples of sacrificial love?
3. What do you think most people attribute their pain and suffering to? Read Ephesians 6:10-13. Can you explain the ultimate "source" of our conflict within the human race?
4. Can you describe a time when you made a good plan, but your plan was frustrated or incomplete because the door of opportunity closed? How did you respond?
5. The most intense persecution of the Thessalonians occurred after Paul, the leader, left town. How does Satan attack our vulnerabilities? Our weaknesses? Does Satan know just the right time to push our buttons? Is Satan crafty?
6. How can Christians prepare themselves for the reality of persecution?
7. How does Satan seek to destroy the work of God's church? What steps can we take to counter his strategy?
8. How do the Christians you know cope with pain and discouragement?
9. What implications does the doctrine of Christ's return have for the church? How does it provide both hope and a warning?
10. How should Christians strengthen their faith in a world that seems hostile to Christian values?