

ULC Sermon Study Resource

Face to Face: Faith to Stand

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Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: If you could bring back any fashion trend, what would it be?

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

Outline:

- I. Suffering challenges us (v1-4).
 - a. In the face of suffering, we have opportunities to grow and are challenged to change.
 - b. The crisis of suffering strips us down to our bare essentials, and God brings renewal and newness from that place.

Q: How did Paul change how he did ministry in light of the Thessalonians' trials?
- II. Suffering strengthens us (v5-10).
 - a. We rejoice in suffering because God produces growth and strength in us through it.
 - b. When everything is stripped away, we are taught to rely not on ourselves but on the power of the resurrected Jesus.

Q: What did Timothy find in Thessalonica?
- III. We confront suffering in prayer (v11-13).
 - a. In prayer, we throw ourselves into the hands of God, trusting that the work of the gospel and strengthening of our faith is not our work but God's work in and through us.
 - b. Suffering pushes us to seek God in prayer, long for his word, and love what he does.

Q: What does Paul ask God to do in his prayer?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How have you grown from suffering in your life?
- 2) How are you being challenged in this time?
- 3) What could God be producing in you right now?
- 4) Is prayer the main way you confront suffering? If not, what is?
- 5) Have you encountered Jesus in times of suffering?

Suggestions for further study:

- John 15:18-21 **Q: Why do we face trials and persecution?**
- Romans 5:1-11 **Q: What does suffering produce?**
- 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 **Q: What trial is facing Paul in this passage?**

Closing Prayer: *"Gracious God, we trust that even in our pain you are near. We trust that even when it feels like you're absent and far off and have forgotten us that you're still working. Lord, we have hope because we trust that our suffering and our hurts are never wasted. So Lord, we ask that you would use the suffering and pain in the world right now, that you would use those experiences of isolation and distance from one another, those longings for connection. We ask that you would use those to grow us, challenge us, shape us, and draw us near to you. That in our hurt and pain we would remember the one who cried out in pain for us, the one who suffered for our sake that we might know life. God we ask this in the name and the power of Jesus. Amen."*