



What Are We Waiting For? – 1 Thessalonians Suffering & Comfort

Date: Sunday 18th September

Speaker: Jo Ramdas-Harsia (City Centre Site), Eleanor Masters (South Site)

Key Verses: 1 Thessalonians 3

Talk Summary:

In this letter to the Thessalonians in Chapter 3, Paul has a deep sense of parental worry – he is worrying that his spiritual children are going to lose their faith, in this particular case, in the face of persecution and suffering.

Paul's main concern was that 'the tempter' would 'tempt' them through this. Would well-meaning friends and family be asking: 'Is it really worth it? How do you know the strangers told the truth? If God is good, why are you suffering in this way?'

Paul sends Timothy to find out how they're doing, to strengthen and encourage them and Timothy brings back a fantastic report. Paul ends up being encouraged by their faith. But what does the passage tell us about how to find comfort in suffering?

- **The comfort of God through truth** - we can find comfort through the truth of God's Word and the truth of our own journeys.
- **The comfort of God through others** - we can find comfort through the faith and testimonies of others
- **The comfort of God through prayer** - we can find comfort in thanksgiving and learning how to pray for each other through trials. Paul's prayers for the Thessalonians are grounded in the character of God as revealed through Jesus Christ. He prays for an increase in love and for strength of heart for them. These are great prayers for those going through long-term trials, where we need to be

topped up with God's love for each other so we can continue to be kind and gracious and strengthened so we don't lose heart and start to despair.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- What do we learn about Paul and his views on suffering from this chapter?
- Have you been through any trials which you are willing to share about? How has God brought you comfort in them?
- What does the 'voice of the tempter' sound like when you are suffering in some way and what do you find most encouraging for your faith when this happens?
- What have your experiences of trouble taught you about how to pray for and support people in similar situations?

Witness - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
 - Upcoming Events (go to bvc.so/whats-on for details)
 - Encounter Night – 24th September, City Centre Site, 7.30pm