**1 Thessalonians Chapter 3**

Chapter 3:1-5

* Continuing on directly from the last chapter, Paul shares what he did because he was worried about the church in Thessalonica and wanted to know how they were doing. He sent Timothy to them, as an envoy who would be less likely to be harmed upon arriving in the city.
* Paul declares one of the main reasons he’s writing this letter: Timothy has returned with good news. They are suffering persecution, but they haven’t lost their faith.
* How do you understand holding fast to faith? What does that entail in your everyday life?
* Paul is worried that the persecutions the Thessalonians are facing may make them waver in their faith. What causes may make us or other waver in our faith? How do we respond to them?

Chapter 3:6-13

* Paul is not simply reminiscing about his time with the Thessalonians in beginning their church for the sake of remembering. He is connecting this part of his letter with the beginning of it where he gives thanks to God for all that God has done in them.
* He will address a couple of teachings that need reinforcing in the next sections, but he begins with specific thanksgiving and remembering ways that God was present with them.
* When we are engaging in our community of faith, do we take time to give thanks for specific parts of the community? What might that look like in our own community?
* Paul is especially grateful for the love the community of the Thessalonian church has for one another. This was one of the major hallmarks of the early church - people gathering across social status and groups, and living lives of genuine caring for one another.
* Paul finishes his thanksgiving for the church with a specific prayer. From his own prayers, we can learn more about prayer in general.
* Paul twice mentions the work that God is doing in the church in his prayer. He is focused not just on the needs and works of the people, but on the assurance that God is at work in them too. How do we see God at work in us, as people of faith?
* In his prayer Paul is also focused on the coming of the kingdom of God. Whenever we pray the Lord’s prayer we pray that God’s kingdom will come, and God’s will will be done on earth as in heaven. How do we pray for the inbreaking of the kingdom in our own lives and community? Where do we see that inbreaking taking place?
* What supports your own prayer life? How does it help support your life of faith? What are ways you might renew and refresh your prayer life?