

“Night and day we pray earnestly for you, asking God to let us see you again to fill the gaps in your faith.” 1 Thessalonians 3:10 NLT

## lectio // 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

The Apostle Paul's letter to the young churches in Thessalonica are among the most tenderly worded thoughts in the pastoral epistles. Paul uses very emotional words to express a longing concern for the people's well being. His heart is torn over leaving and possibly never returning. He writes to them about his constant prayer. He writes about his desire to see them "face to face" and to pick up where he left off in teaching them about their faith in Christ. He says he wants to "καταρτίζω" their faith. [(I) To refit, repair, mend that which is broken such as the nets (Matt. 4:21; Mark 1:19). Metaphorically, of a person in error, to restore, set right (Gal. 6:1). By implication and in the proper force of κατά (2596), meaning to make a perfect fit, suitable, such as one should be, deficient in no part.] Questions: What were their "gaps"?; What was missing? Was it to fill in their limited knowledge about what happens to the believer when they die? Was it about persevering under persecution? Was Paul wanting to answer their "what" questions or their "why" questions? We often struggle with both. But the why questions make the what questions a whole lot easier to endure. My biggest takeaway, Paul knew that some things are best dealt with in person. Like he writes, "face to face." It is a pastoral response. Sometimes a letter, a phone call or Zoom has to suffice, but nothing communicates better than a face to face, heart to heart conversation. Things take on a life of their own when you sit down with someone or a group of people and share your thoughts, prayer and gratefulness for their life.

## oratio

Dad,

I know a phone call or Zoom is good when there is no other way. And letters are amazing at communicating words of love and gratitude. But there is something unique about a connection face to face. We sang the song, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus...look full in his wonderful face." What a joy to look forward to seeing you face to face!

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root