



**Static – Mettle**  
**Sermon Discussion Questions – October 23**

***Scripture Passages:***

**1 Thessalonians 1:5**

...our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction...

**1 Thessalonians 2:8**

8 ... we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

**1 Thessalonians 2:19-20**

For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? 20 Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

**1 Thessalonians 3:2-4 (NIV84)** <sup>2</sup> We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, <sup>3</sup> so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. <sup>4</sup> In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.

**John 16:33 (NIV84)** <sup>33</sup> . . . I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

**Romans 5:3–5 (NIV84)** <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

**1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 (NIV 84)** <sup>10</sup> Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. <sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. <sup>12</sup> May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. <sup>13</sup> May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

### **Warm Up:**

In this series we've been talking about times of static – times when it is difficult to know who is leading or where we are going.

Just for fun can you think of some examples of times in your life when you have been lost geographically or felt lost? How did you get out?

### **Discussion:**

1. In this static series we have been talking about gray zones, or areas of static between one era and another. Pastor Tom shared this description of gray zones:  
*Gray zones contain the influence of both the passing and forming era; this makes gray zones confusing and contradictory, a time of static. This moment of static, a moment which lacks clarity, is affecting our culture, and not in a positive way. We have become an anxious global village defined by our worry, our fear and our anger.*  
Can you relate to this description? If so, why or why not? What might be some symptoms that we have become “an anxious global village?”
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 3:2-4.  
What does Paul do in this passage and why does he do it? What are some things that might strengthen or encourage others who are walking through a season of static?
3. Look back at 1 Thessalonians 3:2-4 and then read John 16:33.  
What can we learn about trials from these verses? How might knowing these things impact the way you view trials in your own life?
4. In this message Pastor Tom wrestled with the question of why we go through suffering.  
Can you think of some times in your own life when you have wrestled with this question? What was it that brought you comfort in these times? What are some truths that you have held onto during times of suffering? What questions do you still carry related to suffering? (As you talk through these, resist the need to answer the questions or to fix questions we still carry.) How can we take these honest questions to Jesus?
5. Read Hebrews 5:8 and Romans 5:3-4.  
According to these passages, what are some positive outcomes that may come on the other side of suffering? Can you think of a time when you've experienced the reality of any of these verses in your own life? If so, what was that like?

6. Read 1 Thessalonians 3:10-13.  
How does Paul pray for the church in these verses? How might this prayer shape our perspective of suffering? As you look at the blessings Paul asks for on behalf of the church, which of these things sounds like something you'd most like to experience in your own life and why?
7. Toward the end of his message Pastor Tom shared a story to illustrate overflowing love. He then made this statement: Genuine Christian love ... is the one thing in the Christian life which cannot be carried to excess.  
What might it look like for love to overflow from your life? How have you experienced love overflowing from someone else?
8. As you think back on this message, what one or two truths did you find most challenging or helpful and why? What's one way you could respond to that truth this week?

***Next Steps:***

At the end of his message, Pastor Tom shared this quote from Timothy Keller:

"Some suffering is given in order to chastise and correct a person for wrongful patterns of life (as in the case of Jonah imperiled by the storm), some suffering is given not to correct past wrongs but to prevent future ones (as in the case of Joseph sold into slavery), and some suffering has no purpose other than to lead a person to love God more ardently for himself alone and so discover the ultimate peace and freedom."

Take a few minutes to think about suffering in your own life. Are there times when you have experienced meaning in the midst of suffering?

Which areas of suffering still feel unresolved or are difficult to experience meaning in? Take some time to pray about those areas and invite God to show you His perspective.

Don't feel the need to force this, but if you hear from God, write down one or two words of what God might be saying to you about your suffering.