"Vested Interest"
1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13

C.I.T.—Paul expresses his genuine interest in the faith of the Thessalonian church.
C.I.S.—When we belong to a fellowship, we have an vested interest in the faith of others.
Purpose—I want our church to recognize that they have a vested interest in the faith of fellow church members.
Introduction

- Vested interest—a personal stake or involvement in an undertaking or state of affairs—skin in the game.
- The "one anothers" in Scripture—members of a church have a vested interest in one another.
- Paul had a vested interest in the church in Thessalonica, and this vested interest elicited things in his faith.

I. ***Vested Interest Brings Pride***. Vs 2:17-20
   a. The Missionary Team had to leave Thessalonica quickly and under duress.
      i. Paul viewed his relationship to the baby church as a parent to them.
      ii. So when he had to leave, they were metaphorically orphaned, without their spiritual father.
      iii. While he wasn't present with them, his heart was still with them.—He was focused on their wellbeing.
   b. This focus led him to want to visit them.
      i. He wasn't able to because he was opposed by Satan.
      ii. This may have been allowed by God or simply spiritual; warfare.
   c. His sense of pride in their faith led him to these feelings.
      i. They were his hope.
      ii. They were his joy
      iii. They were his crown of boasting
         1. Crown refers to the victors crown in the Olympics, not the kings crown
         2. This was a crown of victory.
      iv. This hope, joy, and crown would be recognized at the appearing of Jesus.
         1. Parousia—refers to the special visit from the Caesar.
         2. They would celebrate and he would inspect the city.
         3. No doubt the city would bring out their best for the visiting Caesar.
      v. When Jesus comes, he will inspect our finest work.
      vi. For Paul, it was this church that was his finest work and thus his hope, joy, and crown at the Parousia of Christ.
   d. Illus.—Children are our source of pride
   e. Application
      i. When we are connected to a church family, we have a vested interest in their faith because they become our source of pride.
      ii. When we stand before God at his coming, what will we bring him?
      iii. The kingdom work done in the context of our church family is the only thing of value to Him.
      iv. We are vested because they are our pride.

II. ***Vested Interest Brings Passion***. Vs. 3:1-5
   a. Sent Timothy to check on them.
      i. No longer stand it—frustrated by the opposition of Satan, which led to an overwhelming anxiety for the church

ii. Timothy—Paul's apprentice, fellow worker with God for evangelization of the world

b. Sent to strengthen and encourage
   i. Strengthen—to establish—build a foundation, reinforce a foundation
   ii. Encourage—come along side, help/comfort
   iii. Because of the existence of persecution, Paul was concerned of the potential that they were shaken in their faith.
      1. Dog's tail wagging
      2. Figuratively—shaking or wavering in their faith.
   iv. This was predicted and prophecyied, but that didn't make it any easier.
   v. This in fact did happen.
c. Sent to comfort Paul.
   i. His concern for their faith caused him anxiety.
   ii. So he sent Timothy to see if they were remaining in the faith.
   iii. The tempter was tempting them to abandon Jesus.
   iv. If this would have happened, the fruit of their labor would have been in vain.
d. Illus.—parents wanting to know details about how their child is doing at camp. Why aren't you putting pictures on the photo circle?
e. Application
   i. When we have a vested interest, we care about others.
   ii. We keep up with others.
   iii. We don't just forget them and let them fall of the face of the earth.

III. ***Vested Interest Brings Power*** vs. 6-10

a. Timothy brought back a glowing report.
   i. Good news—non-technical use of evangelize
   ii. Your faith—not salvation, but belief
   iii. Your love—exercising this faith within and without
   iv. Remembered us fondly—not remember who they were, but held a high view of the character and message of the Missionary Team.
   v. The longed to see Paul as well.
   vi. For some reason Paul was concerned that the tempter had slandered Paul's character.
b. This report served to encourage Paul.
   i. Encouraged his anxiety--We can live now that we know this—he was burdened with anxiety and now receive the relief for which he was longing
   ii. Encouraged his worship—We cannot repay God enough with thanksgiving for His faithfulness in this matter.
   iii. Encouraged his love for them—more earnestdly and passionately do they pray to be reconnected with the church.
c. Illus.—Ever send a text message, and the other person doesn't answer right away? Start thinking they are mad or upset, or something. Then finally, the respond positively to you.
d. Application
   i. When the ministry of vested interest is reciprocated, it leads to encouragement for both parties.
   ii. When we reach out to minister and they return the favor, we are strengthened in our walk with Christ.

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iii. The same thing happens when they reach out to us.

IV. ***Vested Interest Brings Prayer***. Vs. 11-13
   a. This desire for them, but inability to see them personally, led Paul to pray for them instead.
   b. Prayer is the best way to impact long distance.
   c. Our God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ—same person grammatically.
   d. 1—Lead us back to you.
   e. 2—Make you abound and love.
      i. Results in spiritual growth within and without.
      ii. Growth in quality and quantity.
   f. 3—Mature them for Christ’s coming
      i. Establish—strengthen their hearts
      ii. Blameless and holy before God
      iii. So that when Jesus comes with his retinue, as the Caesar would arrive, they would have something to present him.
   g. Illus.—Prayer list
   h. Application
      i. We cannot fix all of their issues, but we can talk to the one who can.
      ii. Praying for one another is the greatest thing you can do for someone.
      iii. When you have a vested interest, you will add people to your prayer list and they will add you to theirs.

Conclusion
- Get in on the investment.
- You will receive pride, concern, encouragement, and prayer.
- You will be part of the bride of Christ.
- Three ways to join the church:
   - By profession of faith and baptism.
   - By statement of faith.
   - By transfer of letter from another Southern Baptist Church.
- Joining a Sunday School class.
- Many of you are members, but are disconnected.
- Encourage to reconnect to FBC.

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I. Vested Interest Brings P_____.
II. Vested Interest Brings P_____.
III. Vested Interest Brings P_____.
IV. Vested Interest Brings P_____.