

WEEK 5

1st Thessalonians discussion and 2nd Thessalonians background

1st Thessalonians discussion

Theme

Elwell: drawing your identity from what the Lord's work on your behalf tells you about yourself;

encouraging new believers in their faith despite opposition.

hard times are part of God's plan for his people; commending their faith and love;

gives further instruction (more love, nature of apostolic ministry, authority of the

teaching, appropriate sexual expression, work habits); insight into the

last things

Bible discussion questions

What did you think was the theme of 1 Thessalonians ?

What picture do you have of the church/believers after reading 1 Thessalonians ?

How is that the same/ different from our experience today?

Which passages encouraged you?

Which passages challenged you?

Verse 1:3 remind me of James and Galatians working together.

faith leads to work, love prompts labor, and hope inspires endurance

What can you gather from ch. 1 about how the Thessalonians responded to the gospel?

Why might some have considered Paul's visit to Thessalonica a failure?

How does Paul respond to that in 2:1?

2: 1-12 list all the characteristics of a faithful Christian worker

rely on God's help, tell the gospel despite opposition, no appeals from error, no impure

motives, no tricks, trying to please God and not men, don't use flattery, don't be

greedy, be gentle, love others, share your life with them, work hard, be holy/righteous,
blameless, encourage, comfort, urge to live worthy lives

What can we learn about parenting in ch. 2?

mothers should be gentle, sharing their lives with their children

fathers should be encouraging, comforting, and urging their children to live
lives worthy of God

What does it say about suffering for Christ?

Why can trials be so unsettling? Why shouldn't they be?

Some have derisively called the rapture "beam me up theology." What does Paul say about the return
of the Lord? How does it bring comfort to the believers?

In light of the teaching about Jesus' return, how should we live? 5:6-11

What should our attitude toward our pastors and elders be? 5:12-13

What are his final words of instruction? 5:14-22

I love the firm assurance of how these things are to be accomplished in our lives: 5:24

The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

2nd Thessalonians background

Timeline

50 Paul's 2nd missionary journey : Paul and Silas go thru Syria and Cilicia strengthening the
churches

Came to Derbe, then Lystra (Acts 16)

Took Timothy with them

Traveled thru region of Phrygia & Galatia. Passed Mysia, to Troas

Vision of man from Macedonia

Sailed to Samothrace then Neapolis

Traveled to Philippi (Roman colony & leading city of that district of Macedonia)

- 51 Stayed several days, on Sabbath met Lydia
- Slave girl released from evil spirit
- Paul and Silas dragged to marketplace, severely flogged
- Prison opened , jailor saved
- Passed thru Amphipolis & Apollonia, came to Thessalonica (Acts 17)
- Went to synagogue for 3 weeks, many saved, including prominent women
- Jealous Jews start riot
- At night, Paul and Silas sent to Berea (50 miles west)
- To synagogue, many believed, Jew and Greek
- Thessalonian Jews came to Berea, stir up crowds
- Paul sent to coast, Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea
- Paul escorted to Athens(200 miles south), Silas and Timothy to join him
- To synagogue, agora, Areopagus: preaches
- Paul leaves Athens, goes to Corinth (Acts 18)
- Emperor Claudius orders all Jews to leave Rome
- Silas and Timothy arrive from Macedonia; Timothy sent back to Thessalonica
- Paul leaves synagogue, goes to Gentiles, many Corinthians believe
- Lord gives Paul vision—keep on speaking
- Jews bring Paul to court—Gallio is proconsul of Achaia
- Jews ejected by Gallio
- Paul stays in Corinth some time (18 months); Timothy joins him there
- 51 1 Thessalonians
- 51 2 Thessalonians (written few weeks or months after 1 Thess.)

About the epistle

Word reached Paul in Corinth that there was some misunderstanding

about his teaching about the coming day of the Lord.

Some had stopped working, thinking the end of the world was at hand, and were being

supported by the wealthier brethren.

Apparently they were spending their time getting involved in other people's business.

Some thought the judgments had already begun, but had thought that they would be exempt

from those judgments.

There were also some writings circulating in the early church that contradicted the apostles'

teachings.

Some were claiming that the Lord had already come back, and the Day of the Lord

had already occurred

About the church

Remember that Thessalonica was a leading city of Macedonia, very wealthy

Church was mainly Gentile, had some (?many) members who were wealthy, but were

very generous with those in need

They were undergoing intense persecution from the pagans to go back to their

old way of life, or just add this new god to the other gods they worshipped.

Remember, everything in their world was religious: school, marketplace,

government, neighbors, sources of water and food and fire,

sources of healthcare

What effect had it had upon these new believers when their leader had to leave suddenly,

and was unable to return? I can understand why some would be tempted, under

intense pressure from family and friends and community, to return to their

previous way of life. Communities would be concerned that their worship of

only one god would anger the other gods and bring calamity upon the town.

Paul had been there only a short time, when he had to leave; he sent Timothy back to continue to instruct them.

Other info

Think about what you would say to encourage a brother or sister in Christ who was being persecuted for His sake. What might bring them comfort and help them persevere under such difficult circumstances?

Difficult passages

2:13 God called us from the beginning; but He also holds us accountable for choosing or not choosing Him, as you see in 2:10

2:11 God sends them a powerful delusion—this is a punishment and a consequence of their rejecting the truth.