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THESSALONIANS

sermon series 2020

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

PARRAMATTA BAPTIST CHURCH

1 THESSALONIANS

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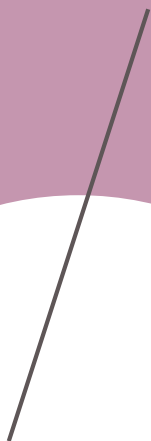
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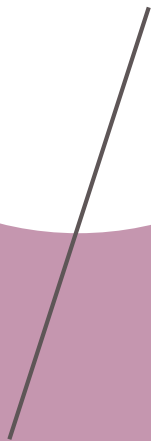
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CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: Walking with Others

01



C H A P T E R



01

We thank God for you



READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 1.

REFLECT:

"We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers"
(1:2)

Hearing about the flourishing faith of someone you passed your faith onto is a cause for deep and thankful rejoicing. Is there any nobler desire than for someone to know, experience and love our God for themselves?

Today, think back on those you have shared the Gospel with, prayed with, walked alongside, or were an example for. Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit as you do.

TAKE ACTION:

Spend time today thanking God for and praying by name for the people whose faith you have invested in.

Deeper action: reach out and let them know you were praying for them today.

56 by faith, love and hope



READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 1.

REFLECT:

"your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope" (1:3)

Faith, love and hope. For the believers in Thessalonica these were not mere sentiments, but life-changing influences that led to action. These *produced*, *prompted* and *inspired* how they lived.

As followers of Jesus we live a life that overflows. One that overflows from our faith in God, our experience of His love and our hope in His certain return.

TAKE ACTION:

If Christian faith, love and hope were the greatest influences in your life... how would you live today differently?

Deeper action: Is there a particular decision or action your faith is calling for that you need to step into?

56 loved & chosen by God



READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 1.

REFLECT:

"For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you" (1:4)

Central to the Gospel message is the truth that God has chosen to place his affection on us. He has purposed to lavish his love on us in calling us his children (see also 1 John 3:1).

We are secure in this love, in His love, and His love changes us.

TAKE ACTION:

Meditate on the transforming truth that you are eternally loved and chosen by God.

Deeper action: revisit and write a version of your testimony themed around what it means to you to be loved by God.

“you became a model to all”

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 1.

REFLECT:

"You became imitators of us and of the Lord...And so you became a model to all the believers." (1:6-7)

As we welcome the Gospel message into our lives, we begin the life-long process of learning to live and love like Jesus.

As personal and unseen this can feel at times, the reality is that our faith and its impact on the way we live *is* visible and observable to those around us.

TAKE ACTION:

Identify who is looking to you to learn what it means to be a person of faith.

Deeper action: If there are things you would not want them to learn from your life and faith currently, take steps today to start addressing those.

56 *the message rang out from you*”

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 1.

REFLECT:

"The Lord's message rang out from you... your faith in God has become known everywhere." (1:8)

Many of us owe our faith (in part) to one or two key people who shared their faith with us. It is rightly observed that the church is only ever one generation from dying out.

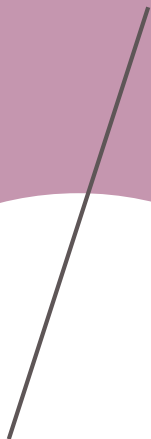
Each of us have the joyful responsibility to pass the Gospel message on through our life and words.

TAKE ACTION:

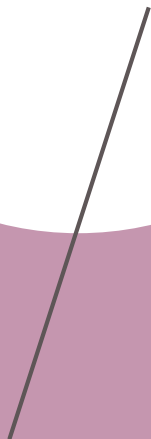
Pray Colossians 4:3-4 over yourself, and look for the conversational doors God will open in your week.

Deeper action: Ask God to open your eyes to the people of peace already in your life. Pray that God would bring other people of peace into your life.

02



C H A P T E R



02

we dared to tell you



READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2:1-16.

REFLECT:

"with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition." (2:2)

Boldness, courage, endurance. These gave a potency to the witness of the early church, even in the face of strong opposition. We could easily become intimidated by their example, but remember that (in their words) it was only '*with the help of our God*' (v2) that they were able to dare to tell of '*His Gospel*'.

TAKE ACTION:

Name any fears that keep you from sharing the Gospel. Now name some of the characteristics of our God, who is with us always. Pray as you feel led.

Deeper action: Is there someone that fear keeps you from sharing your faith with? Choose to act in faith not fear.

we speak as those approved

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2:1-16.

REFLECT:

"we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God" (2:4)

For Paul and his companions, every interaction and Gospel appeal came from a desire to please God. They did not witness in order to impress other Christians, to build their own sense of self-worth nor to win arguments.

May our motives always be pure in our relationships with those yet to believe.

TAKE ACTION:

Pray Colossians 4:3-4 over yourself, and look for the conversational doors God opens in your week.

Deeper action: Ask God to open your eyes to the people of peace already in your life. Pray that God would bring more people of peace into your life.

we loved you so much



READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2:1-16.

REFLECT:

"Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well" (2:8)

It was love that led Paul and his companions to share the Gospel, and it was love that led them to share their lives with the Thessalonians.

When we have genuine love for others, we don't hold them at arms length. Nor do we settle for the superficial with them.

TAKE ACTION:

Take a moment to check in on your own heart. How is your energy, passion and commitment for genuinely loving others going?

Deeper action: If you realize that your energy for loving others has become low, do something today that refills that tank.

56 holy, righteous and blameless

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2:1-16.

REFLECT:

"You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed." (2:10)

It is hard to overstate the importance of integrity, especially in the context of leadership and discipleship. Who we are often speaks louder than what we say.

TAKE ACTION:

Renew your commitment before the Lord to 'live lives worthy of God' (v12).

Deeper action: Read and reflect on verse 11-12. Consider how you might encourage, comfort and urge another believer this week to join you in living lives worthy of God.

56 you became imitators



READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2:1-16.

REFLECT:

"For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus" (2:14)

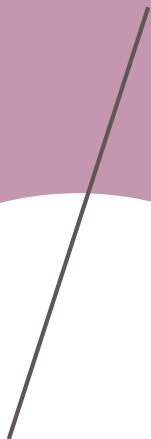
There is such power in having a good role model, someone who is worthy of imitation to learn from. Who our heroes are often reveal much about who we want to become.

TAKE ACTION:

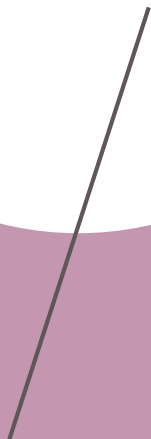
Thank God for those who've gone before you, that you were able to look up to and learn from.

Deeper action: Consider who in your life is the kind of believer you are seeking to increasingly become like. Be intentional in seeking to learn from them. Pray about whether asking them to be a mentor in your life might be a next step.

03



C H A P T E R



03

66 to strengthen and encourage

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 3:1-13.

REFLECT:

"We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith" (3:2)

There are many days where some extra faith strengthening and encouraging is very welcome! Paul and his companions didn't just hope that the Thessalonian believers were doing okay, they took action. Sending Timothy was a proactive choice meant to strengthen and encourage their faith.

TAKE ACTION:

Take time today and reach out to someone with the goal of helping to strengthen and encourage their faith.

Personal action: Consider what you could do today that would strengthen and encourage your own faith.

so no one would be unsettled

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 3:1-13.

REFLECT:

"so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them." (3:3)

Paul wrote (and sent Timothy) to assure the Thessalonians that the trials they experienced were to be expected, and to not allow their circumstances to unsettle them in their faith. Following Jesus does not make us immune to hardship. However, our faith in Him can make all the difference when we are in the midst of hardship.

TAKE ACTION:

Pray for someone you know who is having to count the cost of following Jesus at the moment.

Personal action: If you are feeling a little unsettled in your faith yourself right now, reach out to another believer who can help carry your burden.

we also long to see you”

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 3:1-13.

REFLECT:

"He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you" (3:6)

It has been 6 months now since we were able to physically gather together as a church community. One thing we have missed so much is the blessing of being together in person with each other.

For Paul and the Thessalonian believers, the very thought of each other brought up pleasant memories, and increased their desire to be together again.

TAKE ACTION:

Recall to mind the great people of our church family and thank God for each other. Then phone, send a text message, or organize a catch up with those you haven't seen for far too long.

56 encouraged about you

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 3:1-13.

REFLECT:

"Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith." (3:7)

Have you ever looked to the faith of another and drawn strength for your own faith and faithfulness?

For Paul and his companions, the vibrancy of the Thessalonians' faith brought them encouragement. It no doubt also served to strengthen their resolve to live for Jesus.

TAKE ACTION:

Take a moment today to simply thank those whose examples encourage your own faith in Christ.

Further action: Follow the link to read the following blog from Open Doors - <https://tinyurl.com/yy4bxx9n>

56 may your love increase

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 3:1-13.

REFLECT:

"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you." (3:12)

What a beautiful desire and prayer to bless the Thessalonian believers with! A community characterized by love. A community where each person's actions and interactions overflow from love.

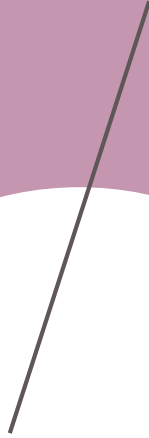
This is Jesus' vision for his church: that we would be known as his disciples by the love we have for each other.

TAKE ACTION:

Pray that God would increase your love for his people (there's a prayer God loves to answer!).

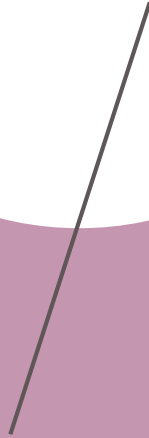
Deeper action: Act on any promptings the Holy Spirit leads you to in response.

04



C H A P T E R

verse 1-12



04

live in order to please God

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:1-12.

REFLECT:

"we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more."
(4:1)

When our hearts are captivated by the love of God, it overflows into an ever building desire to live to please Him.

Far from that being a one time past motivation, this desire to please God is to only grow over time.

TAKE ACTION:

Reflect and do a heart check: is your desire to live to please God as strong as it has been in the past?

Responsive action: If not, ask for the Holy Spirit's help in renewing that desire and commitment to live for God.

56 learn to control your body

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:1-12.

REFLECT:

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable" (4:3-4)

Our desire to live to please God must flow to every area of our lives. One area that Paul singled out here was the Thessalonian's sexual expression. That too must be honouring to God. What they did with their bodies mattered.

TAKE ACTION:

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 and reflect on what it means to be a temple of the Holy Spirit in the expression of your sexuality.

Deeper action: If you currently struggle with or experience strong temptation in this area, invite a Christian friend to help hold you accountable.

God did not call us to be impure

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:1-12.

REFLECT:

"For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life." (4:7)

Holy living is not set of standards we must measure up to in order to earn God's favour nor to keep being in His love. Holy living is a natural and appropriate response to the love and grace of God we have experienced.

God also calls and equips us to live this new life of holiness through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is both what we want and what God wants for us.

TAKE ACTION:

Thank God for His great grace, and commit your way afresh to live for Him.

Deeper action: Ask the Holy Spirit to highlight any area of your life that is not pleasing to God. Respond in faith.

56 taught by God to love 99

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:1-12.

REFLECT:

"Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other." (4:9)

Taught by God to love each other! What a beautiful concept, and powerful truth.

When we allow God to teach us to love, then we no longer depend on finding another 'loveable' or feeling that they are worthy of our love. Why? Because our love flows from God. God becomes the initiator, motivator and example to imitate in the way we love others.

TAKE ACTION:

Ask God to teach you to love others like he loves this day. Look for opportunities to put love into action.

56 may win their respect”

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:1-12.

REFLECT:

"You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders." (4:12)

If someone doesn't respect you, they often will ignore or dismiss what you have to say. Paul encouraged the Thessalonian believers to think about the way they lived - did it win the respect of those outside the faith?

Our life is on display to those around us. It speaks to the God whose name we bear, and the nature of His Kingdom. Understandably then, we want to live in a way that is winsome to others.

TAKE ACTION:

Paul had in mind some very practical advice: work hard and don't be a busybody. Consider those two things in your own life and make any adjustments accordingly.

04

C H A P T E R

4:13 - 5:11

05

56 the dead will rise”

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:13-18.

REFLECT:

"For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him." (4:14)

The great Christian hope of eternal life changes the way we view life, death, meaning and purpose. Jesus has risen, conquering death and making a way for those who believe in Him to be with Him eternally.

Because of Jesus, we do not grieve like the rest of mankind when other believers pass away. Nor are we without hope for our own future (v13).

TAKE ACTION:

Take stock of your own perspective:
How often do you consider the reality of your future with Christ in eternity?

Personal Response: What hope can this bring you in whatever you face today?

encourage one another

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:13-18.

REFLECT:

"And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words." (4:17b-18)

As Christians, our lives are headed towards that glorious moment where we get to see Jesus face to face and then continue in His presence for all eternity.

That changes how we live, how we experience life, and the hope and priorities that we have day to day. This should permeate our conversations with and our encouragements to other believers.

TAKE ACTION:

Give an encouragement to another believer this week in light of eternity.

Deeper reflection: does this permeate your conversations as much as it should? Consider why or why not.

children of the light



READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:1-11.

REFLECT:

"You are all children of the light and children of the day." (5:5)

Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to be prepared, and to live in light of that day when Jesus will return. Our posture in this world is one of hopeful expectation and confident waiting.

By God's grace, we are already those who belong with Him in His eternal Kingdom. We are children of the light. As such, we live in a way consistent with our hope. To put another way, we live this day in light of that day.

TAKE ACTION:

Reflect on the images of belonging to the dark verse belonging to the light. Listen to what God is saying to you.

Extra reading: Read John 1:1-13 and reflect on Jesus being the True Light that shines in the darkness.

56 putting on faith and love 99

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:1-11.

REFLECT:

"But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet." (5:8)

Once again the combination of faith, love and hope appear in the writings of Paul. These three are such powerful present influences in the life of a believer. This time, they are used alongside the imagery of battle armour.

TAKE ACTION:

Consider how faith and love function as a breastplate in your life (protecting your heart and emotions).

Consider how the hope of salvation functions as a helmet in your life (protecting your head, thoughts, and attitudes).

Consciously choose to put these on today.

to receive salvation

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:1-11.

REFLECT:

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." (5:9)

How incredible the love and grace of God is that he would appoint us to be intended recipients of His salvation!!

As Christians we don't always get it right - we stumble and stuff up in small ways and big ways. That doesn't change our standing before God. Each day we receive afresh and continue to walk in the salvation won for us by Jesus.

TAKE ACTION:

Celebrate and give thanks for your redemption, your salvation, and the new life that Jesus has won for you.

Commit your way afresh to walk in that today and every day.

05

C H A P T E R

verse 12-28

05

56 encourage the disheartened

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:12-28.

REFLECT:

"And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone." (5:14)

To end his letter, Paul gets really practical with some short, punchy directives... that might be extra timely for us today! After half a year of dealing with coronavirus, many are disheartened and experiencing their patience levels wearing thin.

Paul reminds the Thessalonians (and us!) that part of our ministry to one another is encouragement and patience.

TAKE ACTION:

Think of someone who is disheartened by this current season and circumstances. Pray for them and then find a way to bring encouragement to them this week.

56 strive to do what is good

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:12-28.

REFLECT:

"Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else." (5:15)

We each know what it is to strive for something we value - be that an achievement, mastering a skill or building a healthy relationship.

For the Christian, the good of each other is something precious and valuable to us; something we strive for.

While constantly striving to do good can become wearying at times, the reminder here is that it is so worth it.

TAKE ACTION:

How can you go above and beyond this week to 'do what is good' for another?

Choose something and commit to doing it for them.

rejoice and pray continually

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:12-28.

REFLECT:

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
(5:16-18)

Rejoicing, praying and giving thanks are all activities that are not dependent upon our circumstances. When we choose to engage in these though, they can powerfully shape and change how we view our circumstances.

The Thessalonian believers were having a rough time, experiencing an increase in persecution. Paul's advice was to double down on rejoicing, praying and giving thanks. He reminds them that these activities are God's will for them.

TAKE ACTION:

Put these verses into practice straight away: rejoice before God, pray to him, and give thanks for his many blessings.

do not quench the Spirit

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:12-28.

REFLECT:

"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil." (5:19-21)

We live in a spiritual environment, feeling the push and pull of both good and bad. For the believer, the indwelling Holy Spirit of God guides, empowers, influences and protects.

God's Holy Spirit is a gift given to us for our good. As we learn to increasingly discern his voice we must likewise learn to increasingly respond by keeping in step with the his leadings.

TAKE ACTION:

Slow down to spend time listening to God and the indwelling Holy Spirit today. What is he prompting? Where is he convicting? How is he empowering?

56 may God himself sanctify you”

READ:

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:12-28.

REFLECT:

"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it." (5:23-24)

God is at work in us: forming, shaping, redeeming and transforming. Each day allows further and deeper work in us. Each day's work compounding and growing until we see Him face to face.

We participate with what God is doing in us, as we also trust in His process and goodness within us. God is faithful, he will carry onto completion the work that he has begun in us.

TAKE ACTION:

Pray to God, opening yourself up to and inviting afresh His transforming work in your life.