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Grace Bible Church, NY
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Introduction to Thessalonians 1 Thessalonians 1:1

Introduction

This morning we begin our study of 1 Thessalonians. As I outlined the book to break it down into segments for preaching, I currently have 19 sermons scheduled which would take us into February 2021. As I study through the book in detail, I may add a few additional sermons since some of the topics that are brought up in this book could easily be expanded upon.

The timing for this study turns out to be very good since our nation - the world - is currently still in turmoil due to political maneuvering by anarchists and marxists and fear of SARS-CoV-2 generated by government overreaction and media hype. That is not to say that COVID-19 cannot be dangerous and deadly when contracted by those with co-morbidities, but it is to say that the PST (Pestilential Socialistic Totalitarian) government regulations imposed as a cure have been worse than the disease. Many of them required the direct opposite of what would save lives. That includes our governor's edicts that put COVID-19 positive patients into nursing homes with the most vulnerable in our population. Nearly half of all deaths attributed to COVID-19 have been to people who contracted it in nursing homes. Restrictions on medical care put off life prolonging treatments and surgeries and kept people from seeing their doctors for monitoring their medical conditions resulting in premature deaths and lives that will be shortened. Quarantining healthy people and forcing them to shelter in place instead of being outside has reduced overall immune health. That, combined with shutting down gyms and other avenues of exercise, have resulted in populations less healthy and therefore more vulnerable to SARS-CoV-2 and other diseases. Then there is the emotional trauma of having your business shutdown, losing your job and social isolation that has resulted in a sharp rise in anxiety, mental depression and suicide. Blocking treatment with medications that would alleviate the symptoms and increase survival rates has been unconscionable, yet standard practice by governors, including our own, that have found fear to be an ally for their political endeavors. Multiple studies around the world using HCQ plus Zinc have proven it to be an effective treatment - as it was with SARS-COV-1, and the safety of HCQ taken at the proper dosages has been demonstrated for over 6 decades. The studies claiming it is dangerous are so bad they do not even qualify as pseudo-science which is why they had to be discontinued and then papers published had to later be retracted.

Fear is a controlling emotion, and by generating fear, governments are finding it much easier to manipulate their populations. Fear goes beyond the government regulations to pressure society into compliance and change its character. There are churches that have shutdown and refuse to reopen saying that is their way of "loving their neighbor" as the pastor continues to hide in his home. Why are there so few that are like the men of the past who went out in the face real danger including real pandemics such as Bubonic plague and the Spanish flu to minister to the troubled, the sick and the dying? Those who are complacent about church shutdowns are hirelings that care about themselves and not the people they were called to shepherd.

The mainstream media hypes fear because 1) it gets people to watch or read their news service, and 2) it fits their own socialistic agenda of overthrowing our current government system in order to establish a different system they blindly, ignorantly and foolishly think will bring utopia. That is why they give very slanted reporting on the marxist Black Lives Matter and Antifa protests in which "mostly peaceful protestors" are looting, burning buildings, beating people up and murdering others. They present the criminal as the hero and the policeman who stopped him as the villain. It is designed to redefine what is good and what is evil. Its purpose is have fear manipulate you into doing what they want

- which is the purpose of terrorism. Put up the Black Lives Matter sign in your store or in front of your house in the hope they will not burn you out - but they will anyway. Some democrats are trying to get people to vote for them warning that if Biden is not elected the riots - sorry, mostly peaceful protests - will get worse. America is no longer land of the free and home of the brave - it is land of the oppressed and home of the afraid.

Now that I have had my rant, what does this have to do with today's message? A lot. While Paul commended the Bereans for being more noble than the Thessalonians because they both *received the word with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so* (Acts 17:11), the Thessalonian believers were no slouches. In fact, they were a model church of people who came to understand and believe the gospel as persecution began and remained faithful as persecution continued and escalated. They faced fear and overcame it with expanding ministry. That is a model that needs to be applied in every church in every state and every nation of the world. And though we do emulate them here at Grace Bible Church in many ways, we need to "*excel still more*" even as Paul urged the Thessalonians to do while commending them in 1 Thessalonians 4:1 & 10.

Thessalonica

The letter begins, "*Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.*"

Our understanding of Paul's letter to the Thessalonians begins with some background on the city and the establishment of a church there during Paul's secondary missionary journey recorded in Acts. Thessalonica, modern Thessaloniki, was founded by Casander in about 315 B.C. who named the city after his wife who was Alexander the Great's half-sister. Casander was one of Alexander's four prominent generals who fought over the empire after Alexander's death in 323 B.C. After the death in 319 B.C. of his own father, Antipater, who had been regent over Macedonia, Casander defeated Polyperchon and became king of the region by 317 B.C. The area of Therma at the northern tip of the Thermaic gulf had been war torn, so Casander established a new port city nearby. The city remained in Grecian hands until 168 B.C. when it was conquered by Rome.

The city is located on the Egnatian Way which was the most important East-West route in the Roman empire connecting Dyrrachium on the Adriatic Sea with Thessalonica and Amphipolis on the Aegean Sea and eventually with Byzantium (Istanbul) on the Bosphorus strait. This was the route taken by military and commercial travel that could not use the sea routes further south. Thessalonica became the capital of its region and a major port and commercial center of trade. As a free city it also had some government and trade advantages including being exempt from certain taxes.

The Second Missionary Journey - Acts 16

Paul began his own travels along the Egnatian way after landing at Neapolis and traveling to Philippi. Acts 16 records the vision Paul had while in Troas in northwest Asia Minor (modern Turkey) and trying to determine where the Lord wanted him to go next. He had a vision one night of a "*certain many from Macedonia*" who was "*standing and appealing to him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'*" Paul then got on a ship and headed to Macedonia landing at Neapolis.

At least three other men were traveling with Paul for this journey. First there was Silas (a.k.a. Silvanus), who had been sent by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to accompany Paul back to Antioch with the letter they had composed. Timothy was a young man from Lystra that Paul had asked to join him (Act 16:1-3). Finally, there was Luke, who appears to have joined the team in Troas (change from "they" in vs. 8 to "we" in vs. 10).

Luke records in Acts 16 how they went to a riverside place of prayer and met God fearing women to whom they spoke and soon a church was established in the home of Lydia. Eventually Paul and Silas were arrested, beaten, and thrown in jail after a local man complained that "*These men are throwing our*

city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans” (Acts 16:20-21). What had actually happened was that Paul had cast a spirit of divination out of the man’s slave-girl that was making him money by her divinations. She had annoyed Paul by following him around proclaiming, “*These men are slaves of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation*” (Acts 16:17). While what she said was true, it is not helpful to have a demon possessed girl making the announcement. Paul turned and said to the spirit, “*I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her*” (Acts 16:18). The spirit came out leaving the girl in her right mind and the master without the income he had been making by her.

I will quickly summarize what happened next. Paul and Silas took being in prison in stride and were praying and singing hymns of praise to God about midnight when an earthquake opened all the jail doors, and God caused all the chains on the prisoners to fall off. The jailer was about to commit suicide fearing the prisoners had all escaped, but Paul and Silas had stayed. They proclaimed the gospel to the jailer and his household and they believed and were saved. The next morning the magistrates sent to have Paul and Silas quietly released from jail and sent away, but Paul pointed out that they had unlawfully beat Roman citizens. The magistrates then came themselves and begged Paul and Silas to leave the city. After they had returned to Lydia’s house and visited with the brethren of the new church, they departed and traveled west on the Egnatian way. Acts 17 picks up the narrative.

A Church Planted in Thessalonica - Acts 17:1-4

Acts 17:1-4, ¹ *Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.* ² *And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,* ³ *explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and [saying,] “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.”* ⁴ *And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.”*

Thessalonica is about 90 miles (144 km) Southwest from Philippi. It would take awhile to walk that distance, and the other two cities mentioned, *Amphipolis* and *Apollonia*, are probably places that they stayed along the way. Considering the nature of Paul, it is likely that they would have tried to proclaim the gospel in those places, but we are not told anything about it.

Paul thought strategically about the spread of the gospel, so Thessalonica would have been an important location to start a church since it was an important capital city with a large population, the major East-West highway passing through it, and having a busy port for sea travel south connecting it to the rest of the empire. A church started in Thessalonica could easily spread the gospel of Christ to other areas. Paul’s comments in 1 Thessalonians 1:8 proved that to be true, “*For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia (to the East and West) and Achaia (to the south), but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.*”

After they arrived in Thessalonica, Paul followed his normal practice and found the Synagogue and began to teach there. The custom of allowing Jews from other areas, especially ones like Paul that had received excellent training from a well known Rabbi like Gamaliel, served Paul well in opening doors of opportunity. Over a period of at least three weeks, Paul carefully explained from the Old Testament the necessity for the Messiah to suffer and be resurrected. This was particularly important for the Jews to understand in order to believe the gospel. What good would it do to proclaim Jesus’ resurrection unless they understood the Old Testament prophecies related to it? While it may be popular among some evangelicals to always try to reduce the gospel down to its core elements and just proclaim that in the effort to bring people to Christ, Paul’s practice was the opposite. He carefully laid out a foundation of Biblical truth upon which the message of the gospel could be built.

As was the case during his first missionary trip, some Jews responded to the news that Jesus was the promised Messiah and joined with Paul and Silas to learn more and be established in their new found

faith. And as wonderful as it was for that to happen, it was the God-fearing Greeks that had the greater response with a great multitude of them, including a number of the leading women, that believed. The term, “*God-fearing Greeks*” in verse 4 refers to those Gentiles that had interest in the God of Israel and would have followed some Jewish practices but they had not become Jewish proselytes. The “*leading women*” refer to those women who were either themselves or their husbands in positions of prominence in that society. We don’t know how long Paul and his team were there establishing this new church after the initial three weeks in the synagogue, but it was long enough that Paul was able to pick up work as a tentmaker in order to support himself (1 Thess. 2:9 and 2 Thess. 3:6-15). They were also there long enough to receive at least two gifts of support from Philippi (Philippians 4:16).

Persecution Arises - Acts 17:5-15

But also like had happened in other places, opposition also quickly arose as explained in Acts 17:5-9. ⁵ *But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and coming upon the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people.* ⁶ *And when they did not find them, they [began] dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have upset the world have come here also;”* ⁷ *and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.* ⁸ *And they stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things.* ⁹ *And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.*

The non-believing Jews become jealous of the gospel going to the Gentiles. This is the same response as in Antioch and Iconium on Paul’s first missionary journey. These Jews formed a mob which included men from the market place that were probably hired for the purpose. They went to the house of Jason because he was the one hosting Paul & Silas (vs. 7). At first they try to drag him out to “*the people*” in the effort to incite a riot that would allow them to carry out their intended evil. The idea was to get enough people involved so that the confusion of the riot would make it difficult to determine responsibility and justice afterward. That is what had happened in Lystra as recorded in Acts 14. It is still the strategy of forming a mob as we have seen in the rioting in our own nation over the last few months. However, they could not find enough people to form a large enough mob so they dragged Jason before the city authorities to make formal charges.

Their specific charges are that “*These men who have upset the world have come here also; 7 and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.*” The charges were a mixture of truth and falsehood, but evil people have never let truth block them from their goals. Jason had welcomed them. They would have been declaring that Jesus was king, but they would not have acted contrary to the decrees of Caesar since Paul taught Christians to generally subject themselves to the government (Romans 13). Disobedience is only justified when government requires something contrary to the principles and precepts of God’s laws. And though their ministry of the gospel in other places had resulted in turmoil, it was because those who rejected it sought to persecute them, but even that did not happen everywhere. And though they would have desired to preach the gospel to the world even if some would react in such a manner, they had only been able to preach in a small part of the Roman world. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if people would charge us, the people of this church, with upsetting the world because of our proclaiming the gospel? We hope to see that happen in other areas by supporting our missionaries, but our concentration is on accomplishing this in communities in which we live.

The city officials would have been bothered by the charge that they were acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, but not enough to do any more than get a pledge or bond of some sort from Jason and the others before releasing them. Presumably this was related to keeping the peace which is what the magistrates would be concerned about.

Acts 17:10 then adds, “*And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.*” The danger was apparent and real, so the brethren took Paul and his companions that very night and left for Berea, a small city about 40 miles (64km) to the west of Thessalonica. The Thessalonians would now face the dangers of the unbelieving Jews on their own.

How bad could it have been in Thessalonica? Well, consider that as Acts 17 continues it tells the story of Paul planting a church among the Bereans with verse 13 then adding, ¹³ “*But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there likewise, agitating and stirring up the crowds.*” ¹⁴ “*And then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there.*” ¹⁵ “*Now those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.*” While Paul was the focus of the hatred by these Thessalonian Jews, hatred will spill over to those things associated with the object of hatred and especially so if that object escapes.

Persecution arose soon after the Thessalonian church was born and it continued and escalated, yet they became a model for other churches in faithfulness and evangelism as we will see in our study of this letter.

Author, Date & Occasion of Writing

There is little serious doubt that Paul is the author of this letter (1 Thess 2:18) though liberal theologians can always find doubts about anything. The style and purpose of the letter are Pauline including his inclusion of Silas and Timothy in the opening salutation. Paul commonly included those who had co-labored with him in a particular place in his greeting (2 Cor., Phil., Col., 1 & 2 Thess., Philemon).

Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians because he was concerned about their welfare and his abrupt departure had kept him from establishing them as he would have desired. After Timothy had rejoined Paul in Athens, Paul sent him back to Thessalonica to strengthen and encourage them and find out how they were doing (1 Thess. 3:1-2). Timothy caught up with Paul again in Corinth (Acts 18:5) and his report was the basis of Paul’s letter in which he expresses his joy and thanksgiving for how well they were doing as well as address particular issues. That would put the date of the letter in late 50 / early 51.

Major Themes in Thessalonians

As with all of Paul’s epistles, he addresses multiple subjects in this letter, but there are three major themes running through it. The first is an expression of his joy and thankfulness for what God had done and was doing among them even starting off in 1 Thessalonians 1:2, “*We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers.*” In 1 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul states, “*For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.*” He expresses his joy over and about them in 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, ¹⁹ “*For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?*” ²⁰ “*For you are our glory and joy.*” He combines expressions of joy and thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians 3:9, “*For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account.*” As we examine the book we will see more of the specific reasons for Paul’s joy and thanksgiving for them, but it is founded in their so quickly receiving and believing the gospel and that they continued to grow even after he left.

A second theme is Paul calling them to know and remember his love and concern for them while he was there ministering to them. His quick departure could have caused them to wonder about his motivations. Paul uses the phrase “*as you know*” or “*you yourselves know*” nine times in 1 Thessalonians and twice in 2 Thessalonians in pointing out what they saw Paul do or heard him teach. 1

Thess. 1:5, “for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.” 2:1-2, “For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, ² but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.” 2:5, “For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness—.” 2:11, “just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children.” 3:3-4, “so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this, ⁴ For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.” 4:2, “For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.” 5:2, “For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.” These reminders would assure them of his motivations and demonstration of his love and care for them.

The third theme in the book is the return of Jesus Christ and its implications which is referenced in every chapter. In 1 Thess. 1:9-10 they had “turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.” 1 Thessalonians 2:19, “For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?” 1 Thessalonians 3:11–13, ¹¹ “Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; ¹² and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is specifically about the hope and comfort found in the promise of Jesus’ return for the church in the rapture - ¹⁶ “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 gives extensive details concerning the day of the Lord which will come like a thief in the night (vs 2) and the destruction it will bring upon the ungodly (vs. 3), but that believers are destined for salvation and not wrath (vs. 9). Events related to the return of Christ and preparation make up the bulk of 2 Thessalonians.

Outline

A simple outline of the book would be as follows:

- I. Personal Reflections (Chapters 1-3)
 - A. Paul’s Commendation for Their Growth (1:1-10)
 - B. Paul’s Founding of the Church (2:1-16)
 - C. Timothy’s Strengthening of the Church (2:17-3:13)
- II. Practical Exhortation (4-5)
 - A. Concerning Christian Conduct (4:1-12)
 - B. Concerning the Coming of the Lord (4:13-5:11)
 - C. Concerning Holy Living (5:12-22)
 - D. Conclusion (15:23-28)

Salutation - 1 Thessalonians 1:1

The letter begins, “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.” I will make a few brief comments about this before we close for today.

Paul is the writer, but he not only includes Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy in the opening greeting, but he also uses the pronoun “we” 51 times in the letter. His co-laborers shared the same desires and concerns as Paul. That should be the heart and unity of those of any group of church leaders since church leadership is not about power and authority but about service to the Lord Jesus Christ as His slaves. There will be different positions and areas of responsibility among church leaders, but they are to work together and minister to the congregation in unanimity. Ed and Jim have nearly completed their work in becoming Elders in this church, but we have worked this way along with John as part of the Pastor’s Advisory Council for year. The same is true with our Deacons and the Women’s Servant Council. We share the same heart and desire in serving the Lord and you according to His direction.

The letter is written to the church, the ἐκκλησία /ekklāsia, the called out assembly, but not just any assembly, but the one that is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is specifically writing to those who have been reconciled to God through their faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ for that is the only way that relationship can be formed. No one can come to the Father except through Jesus (John 14:6), and no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). The church is not a social club, a political group, or a special interest association. It is the people of God who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ that are gathered together as an assembly of believers.

The greeting is simple, but profound. *Grace to you and peace.* Those elements are included in the opening greeting in all of Paul’s letters. Grace is the extension to you of a benefit that you do not deserve. In this context it is specifically the wish of God’s blessing which you do not deserve to be extended upon you. God’s grace is essential to Christian life for salvation from sin is by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9), we are to stand firm in God’s grace (1 Peter 5:12), and we are to extend that grace to others even in our speech (Ephesians 4:29).

Peace is not so much the absence of conflict but the tranquility that comes from two hearts and minds that are agreed. Such peace can only come from God our Father because He is the one that has extended His grace to us in Jesus Christ to pay the penalty of our sins so that we can be reconciled with Him and have peace. Because true Christians are justified by faith, they have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). We can have peace in the midst of any circumstance because we can bring our prayers and petitions to God and cast out anxieties upon Him because He cares for us (Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Peter 5:7).

That is a wonderful greeting for a church to receive that was already experiencing forms of persecution. It is still a wonderful greeting to extend to believers anywhere at anytime including our own, for it is the reminder of both what we have already received in Christ in salvation, and the state in which we can live regardless of our circumstances as we walk with Christ. As I pointed out last week, God is good, and because He is good, His grace and peace give us a hope we can extend to others as we proclaim the gospel to them. That is the example we will see in the Thessalonians. An example for us to follow and in which to excel still more.

Sermon Notes - 9/13/2020

INTRODUCTION TO THESSALONIANS - 1 Thessalonians 1:1

INTRODUCTION

Causes of turmoil and fear

Control by fear (terrorism)

The Thessalonian Church born in adversity

Thessalonica

Founding of the city

Location

The Second Missionary Journey - Acts 16

Macedonian Call

Planting a church in Philippi

Paul & Silas in prison

A Church Planted in Thessalonica - Acts 17:1-4

Strategic importance of Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:8)

Proclaiming the Messiah

Salvation of Jews & God-fearing Greeks

Persecution Arises - Acts 17:5-15

Attempt to start a riot (Acts 17:5-9)

Charges before the Magistrate (Acts 17:6-7)

Sent to Berea (Acts 17:10)

Pursued Paul to Persecute (Acts 17:13-15)

Author, Date & Occasion of Writing

Paul

Purpose

Place & Time

Major Themes in Thessalonians

Joy & Thankfulness (1 Thess. 1:2; 2:13; 2:19-20; 3:9)

Remember our Ministry & Teaching (1:5; 2:1-2; 2:5; 2:11; 2:3-4; 4:2; 5:2)

The Return of Christ & Implications 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:11-13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11)

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II. Practical Exhortation (4-5)

- A. Concerning Christian Conduct (4:1-12)
- B. Concerning the Coming of the Lord (4:13-5:11)
- C. Concerning Holy Living (5:12-22)
- D. Conclusion (5:23-28)

Salutation - 1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul, Silvanus & Timothy - unified co-laborers

The Church at Thessalonica in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Grace

Peace

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – Do one or more of the following: 1) Count how many times the Thessalonians are mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about what you learned about this church.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. How has the over reaction by government to COVID-19 been worse than the disease? How is fear being used to control society? Why does main stream media hype fear of COVID-19 and marxist "protestors"? Describe the founding of Thessalonica and its importance at the time of Paul. Why did Paul go to Macedonia on his second missionary journey? Who do we know was traveling with him at that time? Describe the planting of the church in Philippi. Why were Paul and Silas thrown into jail there? What was their reaction to it? What were the circumstances of the Philippian jailer and his household being saved? Under what circumstances did Paul leave Philippi? What did Paul do once he arrived at Thessalonica? Who responded? Why did this upset the Jews and what did they do in response? Why did the brethren send Paul to Berea? What happened in Berea? Why did they then send him to Athens? Who wrote 1 Thessalonians? Explain. From where was it written and what prompted its writing? Trace these themes in 1 Thessalonians: 1) Paul's joy and thankfulness for them. 2) Paul's call for them to remember his ministry and teaching among them. 3) The return of Jesus and its implications. Produce your own outline for the book. What is the significance of Paul including Silvanus and Timothy as co-authors? How does Paul distinguish the church there? What is the significance of Paul wish for grace and peace for them in his greeting? Why is that still an appropriate greeting and wish in our own time? Do you have God's grace & peace?