

Celebrate! Love

February 11, 2018



Show your love by sharing yourself.

Connect

Take some time to connect and see how the last week was. This would also be a good time to follow up on last weeks challenge or any commitments anyone made.

Bible Study

We are in week 2 of 4 in our study over 1st Thessalonians. Our key verse is 1st Thessalonians 1:3 “We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor promoted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” NIV. We desire to be a church like this that outflows in generosity.

The book of 1st Thessalonians is written to the church of Thessalonica by the Apostle Paul accompanied by Silas, and Timothy. They had previously spent a month in Thessalonica preaching, and started a church. Acts 17 tells the story of them successfully starting a church, but they were eventually forced to leave because of persecution from the people. They claimed Jesus as their King. This was seen as rebellion against the Government and the Culture. They are writing to people that they see as family, and that they desperately did not want to leave.

1. Read 1st Thessalonians 2:17-20

Paul and Silas were forced to leave Thessalonica by the crowds and persecution. They had claimed Jesus as their King which upset the people. Rome took insurrection very seriously. Almost anything was permissible in Rome except if you threaten the Peace of Rome. Rome would routinely go far beyond necessary when dealing with rebels just to send a message to the rest of Rome they wouldn't soon forget. The early Christians were constantly mistreated even though they were model citizens. Their rulers were caught in tension constantly. A letter we have from a Roman Governor Pliny the Younger writing to Emperor Trajan asking for advice on how to deal with the Christians talks about the problem. Pliny claims about the Christians that their words speak of a different kingdom, rebellion, Jesus as King, and they refuse to worship our gods and the emperor. But in deeds these Christians are model citizens and deserving of all kinds of praise. Pliny the Younger caught and tortured the Christians to interrogate them, but found nothing worthy of punishment except their allegiance to Jesus. This same tension was present in Acts 17 when Paul was in Thessalonica and was forced to leave.

- How did Paul view his separation from the church?
- What is Paul's view of the people he was forced to leave in Thessalonica?

2. Read 1st Thessalonians 3:1-5
 - Paul expected trials for them so he acted. How can Christians support each other?
 - What were Paul's fears about the Thessalonians?

3. Read 1st Thessalonians 3: 6-11
 - What was Paul's response once Timothy returned and gave his report about the Thessalonians?
 - Paul was excited about their Faith and Love. What is the significance of mentioning both of these?

4. Read 1st Thessalonians 3:11-13

Paul's response to the news about their faith and love is great joy and praise. Paul then immediately goes into prayer for verses 11-13. Paul in this section also sets up themes that he will talk about through the rest of the book. He talks about Love, Holiness, and Hope. He call his people to look forward to the day that Jesus returns with all those that have fallen asleep. Jesus is coming back some day to judge the world and to make all things new. We can place our hope in that future resurrection and face the world.

 - What does Paul's Prayer tell us about his priorities and the importance for prayer?
 - How is your prayer life?
 - What roles does prayer and encouragement play in the Church?

Sharing

1. Was there anything in this that stuck out to you?
2. The message this week was on Celebrate! Love. How did Paul celebrate the love of the Thessalonians? How can we Love and also Celebrate the Love of fellow SouthPointers?
3. The BigIdea this week was to "Share your love by sharing yourself". Paul also showed how this with the church he wrote to and cared for. When people share their lives with you how does it impact you? Do you have friends/coworkers that care about you and become almost like a brother or a sister?
4. Paul sent Timothy to check on their faith because he was fearful that his labor was in vain. Have you ever stepped out in faith and served in some way, but you aren't sure what the results are?

Challenge

The BigIdea from the message this week is to "Show your love by sharing yourself". Take the time this week to listen and share with someone that might be an outcast. Sharing your time will show people love.

PRAYER

Take time to pray for people in the group. Encourage their faith and love where it is weak. If needed break into smaller groups for people to pray in those groups.