



St. Andrew Lutheran Church

1-2 Thessalonians | Written by Staff Minister for Nurture Mark Kjenstad

Introduction to 1st Thessalonians

- Paul is the author
- It was likely written from Corinth during his 2nd missionary journey
- Some think it was his first letter and the earliest of all NT books
- Paul stopped in Thessalonica during his 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys
- Thessalonica was a key Roman city in Macedonia (Greece)
- It still exists today as Thessaloniki (Salonica) and it is the 2nd largest city in Greece

Paul's first stop in Thessalonica was cut short by opposition to his Christ-centered message. The people were not allowed to worship any king/god other than Caesar and Paul taught that Jesus is the true king/Lord of all people. That forced Paul to leave sooner than he would have liked, which prevented him from giving the Thessalonians a more thorough teaching.

Paul was concerned for the Christians in Thessalonica who were facing much persecution so he sent Timothy to them. Timothy returned with encouraging news for Paul and that prompted this letter.

The Thessalonians were commended, challenged, and corrected by Paul in this letter. They were commended for their faith, challenged to live as Jesus taught (moral, loving, generous), and corrected of false teachings, particularly about the 2nd coming of Christ.

Read Acts 17:1-14

1. Look again at verse 3 where it says, "Jesus is the Christ." That means the Jesus of history is the one sent by God to be your Savior. What convinces you of that truth?
2. Satan is behind all of the activity in verse 5. He tried but failed to stop God's plan of salvation. What has he been up to ever since?

3. Verse 13 gives good reason for Paul's concern for the Christians in Thessalonica. What is that reason?

Chapter 1

1. Paul sends the Thessalonians both grace and peace. One is the cause of salvation and the other is the result. Explain.
2. In verse 2 Paul says that he thanks God for the Thessalonians. Write down the name of a family member or friend and what you want to thank God about them.
3. Verse 4 speaks of the doctrine of election. This Biblical teaching means that we came to faith because God chose us to come to faith. What false teaching does this rule out?
4. In verses 6-8 Paul praises the Thessalonians for the example they have given to others. It's not too strong to say that they were an inspiration to others. In what way?
5. As a follow-up to number 4, the Thessalonians stood firm in their faith while under pressure to turn from Christ. Think of stories of persecution from your life or from someone you know.
6. Verses 9-10 have been called Christianity 101: Christians turn, serve, and wait. Explain each part in your Christian life.

Chapter 2

1. Look at verse 2. Choose a word to fill in the blank. The boldness of Paul and his ministry companions is _____.
2. Paul writes that his ministry is not for money or glory. What drove his ministry?

3. In this chapter Paul compares his ministry to both a mother and a father. List ways why those are accurate comparisons to ministry.
4. In verse 12 Paul writes about living “worthy to God.” What does living worthy to God look like?
5. The Bible is the Word of God, not the word of man. List 3 differences between the two.
6. At the end of the chapter Paul blames Satan for opposing his desire to return to Thessalonica. Satan does nothing without God’s “consent.” Explain why God is not to blame, however.

Chapter 3

1. The beginning of verse 3 speaks about Christian stability. Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica to encourage them to stay stable in times of affliction. A similar term that Paul frequently uses is “stand firm.” What is the temptation when your faith causes you trouble?
2. Now, interpret the rest of verse 3 in view of Jesus' words in John 16:33.
3. In verse 7, Paul tells the Thessalonians that he was encouraged by the report Timothy brought back about their faith. Who has modeled his/her faith in a time of trouble that has encouraged your faith?
4. We are always in need of more from the Word. Verse 10 speaks to that. The Thessalonians had shown an unwavering faith, but Paul says it was still “lacking.” They needed to grow in their knowledge. Why is it that your faith always needs more from the Word?

5. Love is the most important attribute of a Christian. In verse 12, Paul prays that their love for others will increase. Write a three sentence prayer in your own style and with your own words asking for God to increase your love for others.

Chapter 4

1. Verse 1 gives us the reason for giving instructions on how to live: to please God. In one sentence write why you want to please God..
2. Look at verse 5. Unbelievers do not know God. That doesn't only mean they don't believe he exists. They don't know his will and his love and what it means to be his child. But you do. Think of 3 ways that knowledge impacts your daily life.
3. The world increasingly lives as if they can do whatever they want, especially sexually. Tell why that is foolish.
4. Using verse 13, explain the "hope difference" Paul refers to.
5. The loud command that will accompany Jesus' return will be to alert the whole world that it's time for judgment. Describe the extreme range of emotion there will be.
6. Verse 17 is used to teach the rapture. We see it differently. It refers to the resurrection of the dead at the coming of Christ in a very open and public way. Let's not let confusion over verse 17 rob the joy of verse 17. Locate the great joy.

Chapter 5

1. The end of verse 3 presents a real problem for the unbeliever. Why will some seek to escape?

2. Jesus says the end of the world will come like a “thief in the night.” Here Paul clarifies what Jesus means. For those who know Christ, his return will be expected. Finish this sentence: Knowing Jesus could return at any time, I...
3. Look at verse 6. Explain what it means to sleep on Jesus.
4. Re-read the final verse of chapter 4 and verse 11 of chapter 5. What encouragement have you shared or received?
5. Look at verses 12-15. If you had to choose one command in those verses that our world especially needs to hear, what would it be? Which do you especially need to hear today?
6. Verse 16 seems impossible. Defend it!
7. Verse 21 says, “test everything.” Paul means that the Word of God is our standard for right and wrong. Compare God’s Word as a standard to people’s standards.
8. Pick out your favorite word or phrase in the final 6 verses (23-28).

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

- **Written shortly after the first letter, probably while still in Corinth**
- **When the letter carrier returned from delivering the first letter, Paul received a report that led him to write a follow up letter**
- **Errors persisted about Judgment Day and they are again addressed**
- **Paul repeats his praise of their steadfast faith in Christ**
- **We get much of our antichrist teaching from this letter**

Chapter 1

1. In verse 3, the word “ought” signifies an obligation, a joyous obligation, to say thank you to God. List 3 reasons you feel that joyous obligation to say thank you to the Lord.

2. Paul commends the Thessalonians' faith and perseverance. Trials, persecution, suffering of any kind has been called one of God's "strange gifts." Do you agree?
3. A Biblical definition of hell comes to us in verse 9: to be away from the presence and power of the Lord. Compare that to so-called "hell on earth."
4. Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:17 with verse 11. What does that mean to you?
5. Review verses 11-12 and find as much evidence as you can that our salvation comes from God, not from ourselves.

Chapter 2

Go to wels.net (What We Believe) for further study on the antichrist.

1. There is a constant threat of deception. It's what Satan does and he's good at it. Decide where deception is a greater threat: outside the church or inside the church.
2. Look at verses 3-11 and identify characteristics of the "man of lawlessness."
3. The antichrist is a tool of Satan, the ultimate enemy of God and his people. Make a list of other tools Satan uses to tear people away from God.
4. God "chose you" (v 13) and "called you" (v 14). What impact does that have on you?
5. Look at the encouragement in verse 15. It is stated twice. What is a constant threat to Christians?
6. Contrast regular hope with Biblical hope (verse 16).

Chapter 3

1. Paul regularly asks for prayers. Why do you think that was so important to him?
2. Paul regularly uses the word “command.” Why is that not too strong of a word for him to use? See Galatians 1:1.
3. Read Psalm 119:32&35. Use those verses to finish this sentence: The commands God gives us...
4. Look at v 13-15. What is the best thing we can do for a hardened sinner? What is the worst thing?
5. “May the Lord of peace give you peace. What is the beauty of that phrase?
6. Reflect back on 1-2 Thessalonians and pick out a favorite verse or section.