

# 1 Thessalonians 1:1

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[ 0 : 00 ] This is a bad omen. There we go.

That'll work better. Well, glad you guys are here with us tonight. We are beginning a series in the book of 1 Thessalonians tonight. And this is something we're going to be studying all spring.

And a lot of what we're going to study tonight is what I would actually cover, call sort of introductory matters. Before we dive into the book more deeply in the coming weeks.

We're going to get to know some of the players in the story. We're going to get to know a little bit about the history and the context of Thessalonica. But most importantly, what we are going to see is how the story of God's work in the church of Thessalonica helps us understand God's purpose for us.

And I am personally really excited about studying the book of Thessalonians. Because, well, I need this book. I need it to speak to me. If you had asked me a couple of months ago, as the elders planned, I would have said, we need this book because it's going to be great for the church.

[ 1 : 21 ] But as I've been studying it for myself, as I've been preparing for this sermon series, I've realized I need this book as much as anybody in this church. I need this book because it is over and over again a picture of how the gospel is at work.

How the gospel is at work in them and through them, in their lives. And I realize deep in my heart, that's what I want. That's what I need. But when I evaluate my life, I think I don't have as much of the gospel in me as I want.

I don't see the truth of the gospel changing me. The joy of the gospel filling me. The hope of the gospel strengthening me. Or the priorities of the gospel shaping me the way that I want.

And so, I need this book. And I'm guessing that I'm not alone. We titled this series, if you look on your sermon card or in the bulletin, we titled this series based on chapter 1, verse 5 of 1 Thessalonians.

Where it says, because our gospel came to you. And this is what we're going to explore. What does it mean when the gospel comes to us? What impact does it make? How does it change us?

[ 2 : 38 ] John Stott, the British theologian and commentator, says this is what we should look for when we read the book of 1 Thessalonians. He says, what is of particular interest is the interaction which the apostle portrays between the church and the gospel.

He shows how the gospel creates the church and how the church spreads the gospel. How the gospel shapes the church and how the church seeks to live a life worthy of the gospel.

So, that's what I hope we're going to see. Is this interaction between what we're called to be as a church and the gospel. So, my desire this evening is twofold for us.

One is that we have a better understanding of God's calling on us as his church. And secondly, that we would live with more expectation that God really would work in us and through us.

And we're going to be looking at the very first verse of 1 Thessalonians. So, 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 1. And then we're going to move over to the book of Acts and spend some time there.

[ 3 : 44 ] Because that's where we actually get the story of the history of how this church came into being. So, that's where we're going. Let me pray for us before we continue. Lord, we thank you for your word.

Thank you that you have spoken, Lord, to us through it. Lord, thank you that you used men and women writing in different times. Lord, to speak to us.

God, I pray that you would tonight speak to us through this word. I pray, Lord, that we would see how much we need this book. Lord, how much we need you at work in our lives.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. So, if you want to turn with me, page 986 in the Pew Bibles. Or to 1 Thessalonians chapter 1.

As I said, we're actually going to be reading only verse 1 in terms of what I'm going to talk with you about tonight. But I'm going to read the whole chapter just to give you a little bit of context and a little bit of where we're going.

[ 4 : 48 ] So, 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians, in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace.

We give thanks to God always for all of you. Constantly mentioning you in our prayers. Remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For we know, brothers, loved by God, that he has chosen you. Because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

You know what kind of men we prove to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord. For you received the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

And so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia.

[ 5 : 52 ] But your faith in God has gone forth everywhere. So that we not need say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you.

And how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God. And to wait for his son Jesus from heaven whom he raised from the dead. Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

So the first question we want to look at tonight is. What is God's calling on his church?

As we look at the church in Thessalonica. What is God's calling on it? And what I want to put before you tonight is that. God's calling is that we would be a church centered on the gospel.

Now I've used that word probably 15 times already. And some of you may be going. What does he mean by that? What is he saying? Well let's look and see what Paul does with it.

[ 6 : 54 ] Look at 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. You see it in verse 5. Right? He says because our gospel came to you. And then he goes on. And he describes how it came to them.

And the effect that it had. Now if you kept looking. You would see that he uses the word gospel again. He uses it in 2. Chapter 2 verse 2. And in chapter 2 verse 4. Chapter 2 verse 8.

Chapter 2 verse 9. And chapter 3 verse 2. So throughout a huge swath of this book. Paul is using this word over and over again. But he uses it as shorthand.

He never actually defines it. In the whole book. He never actually says what he means by that. And so we need a definition don't we?

Well gospel simply means good news. You probably know that from the Greek. It just means good news. But what exactly. When Paul is using the good news. What is he saying about it?

[ 7 : 51 ] Well we as the elders at Trinity. Have actually been wrestling with. We've been talking about God's call on our church. To be a gospel centered church. And we've wrestled with the question. What is the gospel? Let me try to be as succinct and clear.

As I possibly can. We'll see how we do in this. But let me give you a definition of what Paul means by the gospel. The gospel is the message of the transforming grace of God in Jesus Christ.

That is the gospel is the good news. That in Jesus Christ. God has come to reconcile sinners. By his grace. And renew the whole world for his glory.

Okay. Let me unpack that a little bit. God so loved his people. That even after they had rejected them.

Even after they had refused to honor him. Acknowledge him as God. Or worship him as he deserved. He would not abandon them. To the judgment and the death.

[ 8 : 53 ] That they deserved. Because of that rebellion. Against their creator. But instead. God sent his son. Jesus Christ. To die in their place. So that God could forgive us of the sin of rebellion against him.

And call us into a renewed relationship with him. And he did this not only with individual people and souls. But that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Was calling.

Was the starting point of God renewing his whole creation. So that one day. He will make the whole creation. Renewed in its relationship. To him.

And this is the good news of the gospel. This is what God. Calls his church to make the center. Now. Some of you have been here.

For the last year. Some of you haven't. And if you haven't. You'll pick up a little history about our church. In the next two minutes. But if you've been here for the next. For the last year. Do you remember what we preached on?

[ 9 : 51 ] What were we preaching on last January? Anyone? Galatians. Galatians. Right. We are preaching through the book of Galatians. Why? Because the Galatians goes back to the mechanics.

Of the gospel. It says you cannot make yourself right with God. By how well you do your religious life. There is nothing you can do.

That is sufficient to make yourself pleasing to God on your own. It is only by abandoning that self-justifying effort. And throwing ourselves by faith.

On the mercy and grace of God. And particularly the work that Jesus Christ did what we could not do. He lived a perfect life. He died for our sins. And he rose from the dead.

So that we might then be brought into this relationship with God. That we were just talking about. That's why we preach through the book of Galatians. So that we would remember these basic mechanics of the gospel.

[ 10 : 45 ] And from there we moved on to what? The book of Deuteronomy. Do you remember? The book of Deuteronomy where God talks about. God's calling his people into a covenant with them.

He says I want you to come and be my people. And I will be your God. And I will give you my law to teach you how to live as my people. But what this book really showed us.

Is how fickle our hearts are. And how inconstant our faith is. And how easily we stumble and fall. How hard it is. In fact how impossible it is.

To actually keep the law that God gave us. And so it sets us up. It sets us up. To long for a redeemer. That then God sends in Jesus Christ.

And then. Do you remember what we preached on this past fall? We preached on Hosea. The prophet speaking for God. Talking about God's relentless love.

[ 11 : 42 ] For his wayward people. We saw that our hearts are like the hearts of the Israelites. We don't love God. The way we ought to.

He is not the object of our greatest affection. Instead. We go and run after all sorts of other lovers. We are spiritually prostituting ourselves.

And adulterating ourselves. By worshiping all sorts of other things. And trusting in all sorts of other things. And in the midst of it. The message.

God still loves you. God is coming for you. God will send a redeemer. To win back your heart. God will send a redeemer. God will send a redeemer. So we spent the whole last year.

Preaching about the gospel. So that we can not only know the mechanics of the gospel. But hopefully so we would see how much we need the gospel. And how beautiful. How.

[ 12 : 38 ] What the splendor. Of what God has done for us in Christ. Really is. This is the good news. And this is the thing that is meant to define.

Define. And direct. And drive. And sustain our church. This is what we want to center it on. And that's why we're studying 1st Thessalonians. If I give you an outline of the whole book of 1st Thessalonians.

Chapter 1 is about how the gospel came to the church. And the impact that it made. In their lives. Chapters 2 and 3 is Paul. Describing his own heart. His gospel centered heart.

In his ministry towards these people. He's describing what it looks like. To have a gospel heart for other people. And then verses 4 and 5. Paul is instructing them.

Out of this gospel life. That God has given you. How then should you live? And he addresses lots of particular. And specific and concrete things. That God wants to bring transforming.

[ 13 : 39 ] Energies into. So that we can actually live out. A life that's consistent with the gospel. That God has put. In us. This is what the book of 1st Thessalonians is all about.

And even in chapter 1. Verse 1. Look with me there. Because we're going to actually look at this verse now. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. To the church of the Thessalonians. In God the Father. In the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to you and peace. Most of this is really generic. Like what you would see on the outside. Of an envelope of a letter. It is from these guys. Paul and his compatriots.

Silvanus and Timothy. And it is to the church in Thessalonica. And his message. His greeting is. Grace and peace to you. Which is a lot like saying. Hey, how's it going?

It might mean more than that. But I think a lot of it is just that. But do you see the peace that I didn't mention yet? That Paul puts in this unique phrase.

[ 14 : 39 ] It's not used anywhere else in his letters. And in his greeting. He says, you are the church. In God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Why does he say that?

Well first, just to clarify. When he uses the word church here. The Greek word. It's ecclesia. It's what we get ecclesiastical from. All it means is gathering.

Or assembly. You could use it in all sorts. It was used commonly in the day. For secular gatherings. People who watch a sports event. Or people who gather for a political lecture.

These would all be ecclesia. What Paul is doing. Is he is reminding these people. Right from the very start. You are a gathering. In God.

It is God. Who has gathered you. And not just God. Generically. But specifically. God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 15 : 37 ] What is he reminding us. When he says that? He's saying. That God has given them. An identity. And a purpose. Because he has saved them. Through his son. Jesus Christ. God the Father.

Has made them a new people. By the life. Death. And resurrection. Of Jesus. And then he goes on. And he says. Not is it just through Jesus. But it's through the one.

Who we call the Lord Jesus. Jesus. And therefore. He is meant to be the one. To whom we orient our whole life around. We make him. The one that we serve. We make him the one.

That we seek to please. In all. That we do. It is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Over all creation. That they are to proclaim. From the rooftops. With their mouths.

And with their lives. And so. Paul says. You are the church. In God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 16 : 33 ] You are to center. Your life. On this God. And the. The message. Of. About this God.

The gospel. That he has brought. To you. For Paul. The gospel is about God. And God. Has given us the gospel. There is no. Distinction between them.

But they are. A hole in his thought. The gospel is the message. That God has given us. About what he has done. So friends.

We need to ask ourselves. A question. Don't we? What is the center. Of our lives? You know. It is really easy for me. To make the center of my life.

The daily responsibilities. Of ministry. And family. It is easy for me. To make. Phone calls. And paying the bills. Preparing a bible study. Planning a meeting.

[ 17 : 27 ] Playing with my children. Mowing my lawn. These are the things. That fill my life. And it is so easy. For that to be. The center. Of my life.

And I do them. Without. The gospel. And without God. Maybe for some of you. It is. Working in a lab. The assignments.

The assignments. And tests. And papers. It might be. You're going to work. Every day. In the demands. Of your boss. Whatever it is.

Maybe you're like me. Because it's so easy. For my life. To become so. Horizontally focused. That I lose. My connection. With God. Who has called me. In the gospel.

And you know. What the result is. My life. Becomes burdensome. It becomes. Burdensome. Without the gospel. It's all about. Duty and self-effort.

[ 18 : 25 ] I become. Joyless. In my serving. I become. Lacking in love. In my ministry. I become. Frustrated. That I never. End.

Check off. The last box. On my to-do list. Any of you guys. Ever feel this way? When the gospel. Is the center. When the gospel.

Is right there. In the middle. Of my life. Life is not any easier. But there is a purpose. In it. My responsibilities. Are not less. But there is another power.

At work. Within me. And it frees me. From seeing them. As duty. And drudgery. It frees me. From the frustration. Of things that I can't do. My responsibilities. Can become joys.

Because I see. God. Is at work. In my life. And in everything. That I am doing. And it doesn't mean. That God makes everything. Just work. But what it does mean. Is that I know.

[ 19 : 19 ] That my life. Is about. Him. And serving him. Not simply. Getting these things. Done. And even in the worst.

Of suffering. With the gospel. Of the center. I can live with hope. And confidence. Of God's present. Love for me. And good purposes. For me. This is what I hope.

To be true. As I put the gospel. In the center of my life. And maybe I hope. For you. As well. So God has called us.

To be a gospel centered church. But I think there's more. In the story. Of the Thessalonian church. For us to learn. And this. The second thing. That I. I want to impress on you.

That I hope you'll take home tonight. Is this. That the story of Thessalonians. Is given. So that we would expect. God to work. More powerfully. Through the gospel. Now why do I say this.

[ 20 : 13 ] Well. In order to do this. We have to tell the story. Of Thessalonica. And in order to tell the story. We need to turn to the book of Acts. So. Grab your Bibles. Turn with me. To page. 926.

5. 4. Something like that. 924. Is actually where we'll start. Because we're going to look at the story. Of how the gospel. Got to Thessalonica. And what happened. When it got there.

In Acts 15. Starting in verse 40. This is the beginning. Of what is commonly called. Paul's. Second. Missionary journey. Paul. Was sent out.

From Antioch. Here's your. You might want to look up. For a minute. Your mental map. Here's Antioch. Here's Jerusalem. Over here. Here's the Mediterranean Sea. Right. Antioch.

Into Turkey. Am I doing this right. Or am I backwards. Okay. So I thought. Into Asia Minor. Which is now modern Turkey. Okay. And Paul was going up there. To preach.

[ 21 : 10 ] And to encourage. The churches. That he'd already started. The last time. On his first missionary journey. So he's going back through. Wanting to. Encourage them. And then hopefully. Spread the gospel more.

In Asia Minor. And this was his purpose. And by. Acts 16. Verse 3. Paul has assembled a team. To go with them. He's got a guy named.

Silas. Or Silvanus. As it's said. In the beginning of 1st Thessalonians. It's the same name. It's just a Greek. Hebrew thing. But. So Silvanus. And. Or Silas.

Is his partner. In this ministry. And along the way. They pick up a third guy. Timothy. Who's a younger man. Probably. A convert. Who. Who joins up with them.

In the middle of this. And they're traveling around. Wanting to encourage these churches. And Paul says. I want to go where the gospel isn't. And he starts to go in these places. And God has another plan for him.

[ 22 : 03 ] God said. God redirects them. He starts closing some doors. And saying. No. You can't go here. And he says. He says. No. Don't go to this city. And don't stay in this place. Keep moving.

And then. God comes to Paul. In a vision. And he has a vision. Of a man from Macedonia. Now where the heck is Macedonia? Well. Okay. So here's Asia Minor. Turkey.

Right. So the next thing. Over the Bosphorus. Into Europe. Above the Aegean Sea. Which is here. This is where Macedonia is. And underneath Macedonia.

Down here. Is the Greek Peninsula. So Athens. And Corinth. And Old Sparta. Which isn't anymore. At this point. Is down here. So. So there's your map. Mental map. One day we'll get it up.

On the overheads. But. You know. For now. There it is. Hopefully it's stuck in your brain. So. So. So he has a vision. Of a man from Macedonia.

[ 22 : 59 ] And the man says. Come over. And help us. So Paul. And his companions. They respond to this. And they get on a boat. And they sail. Up into.

They sail to a city called Neapolis. They get off. They go to the. Philippi. Which is the capital city of Macedonia. And they preach the gospel. And when you read. The rest of Acts 16.

It's this great story. Of what God does. It's really cool. They get into jail. There's an earthquake. And anyway. It's really fun. But. But God does amazing things there. And then.

When they're done there. They leave. And the next city. They go to. Is Thessalonica. Thessalonica. So now we come to Acts 17. Verses 1 through 9. Where. Which is the story.

Of how the gospel came there. But. Before we dive into that. And I know some of you are like. Come on. When are we going to get there. We're going to get to the story. But. But I have to tell you. A little bit more. About Thessalonica. As a history major.

[ 23 : 54 ] I love this stuff. When you. When you study things. You want to dig into the context. Tell me the history. For the last 500 years. So you can get a sense of. What is this city like. And what is it about. So if you're not like that.

Bear with me. If you're like that. Let's go for a ride. And hopefully you'll be. A little more interested in history. By the time we're done with this. Paul came to Thessalonica. When it was a city.

It was a little over 400 years old. Which is. Incidentally. Older than almost every city. In the United States. With the exception. Maybe of St. Augustine. Its location.

Was perfect. It was located. On a major east west route. Called the Via Ignatia. That connected. The eastern Roman Empire.

All the way over to the west. So Byzantium. All the way over to a port. Where it'd be easy to sail to Rome. And so there's this major. East west trade route. And it was right smack.

[ 24 : 51 ] In the. Not only that. But you could go north. From Thessalonica. An easy road. Over the mountains. Into. A valley that would connect you. With the Danube River. And if you know anything.

About European. Geography. The Danube River. Is huge. It's the longest river. In Europe. And it goes snakes. All the way through. And you have access. To all of this trade. And all of this culture.

By going north. From Thessalonica. And south. It's the Aegean Sea. It was actually. On the sea. It had a naturally. Deep. Harbor. Which if you know anything. About ships.

Is really good. Because it means. You can bring boats in. And out. You don't have to worry about them. Running aground. At low tide. And those sorts of things. It was a protected harbor. And it meant that they could connect.

By ship. To all the major cities. Of the ancient. Eastern. Of the ancient world. So they could connect. To Rome. And to. To Egypt. And to Carthage. And to places. That don't even exist today.

[ 25 : 47 ] And. And so. This city. Was incredibly. Well positioned. Imagine. It's. It's kind of like. Well. Now. We'll tell. We'll get there.

In a minute. So. Here's a little bit. About the history. The history. The city. Was founded. By the Macedonians. Now. Macedonians. Like. They do exist today. But for a long time.

In history. They haven't been. A major player. Right. But there. The Macedonian people. Were sort of. Squeezed. Between the Roman Empire. And the Greek powers. For most of their existence.

Particularly in the ancient world. Right. But. This city. Was a Macedonian city. From about. 400. To about. 168. B.C. And 168. B.C. The Romans came along.

And they said. Enough. You are joining. Our empire. And they did it violently. And they did it viciously. The Thessalonians fought. For their independence. And they lost. And the Roman sanctions.

[ 26 : 41 ] Were harsh. They were so harsh. That the economy crumbled. And there was great suffering. And the Thessalonians.

Were chastened. By this. And as they rebuilt. Their city. In the years to follow. They were committed. To being faithful. Roman. Loyalists.

And they did this. So successfully. That by 42. B.C. So. 120 years later. They were actually declared. A free city. Within the Roman Empire. Which was. Sort of like getting.

Most favored status. In the world trade organization. It meant that. They didn't have to house. Roman soldiers. It meant that they could. Use their own. Their own. Currency.

And run their own. Local economy. It was a big deal. And it meant that you. Were an honored city. In the Roman Empire. And for the Thessalonians.

[ 27 : 35 ] This allowed the city. To flourish. And their loyalty. To Rome. Was incredibly precious. To them. In this flourishing.

This city became. A remarkable. A remarkably. Cosmopolitan city. One commentator. Describes it this way. As the apostles. Arrived. They found themselves.

Alongside Roman soldiers. And officials. People involved in trade. Roman colonists. Religious heralds. Philosophers. Pilgrims. And other travelers. All members of a society.

That had become. Extremely mobile. The great success. Of Thessalonica. Was due. In grand part. To the union. Of land. And sea. Road. And port. Which facilitated.

Commerce. Between Macedonia. And the entire. Roman empire. No other place. In all of Macedonia. Offered the strategic. Advantages. Of Thessalonica. Now here's a question.

[ 28 : 30 ] For you. This is what I'm going to say. Earlier. But I didn't want to. Ruse and surprise. Can you think of a city. That's on a major. East west. Trade route. That has a major. Road.

Going north. From it. That's on a harbor. Do you guys know. Any cities like that. Well. Some of you. May not even know this. New Haven. New Haven. Is very much.

Like that. We are on one of the. Busiest highways. In this. In the country. In I-95. And I-91. Is the backbone.

Of all of New England. And if you go up far enough. You could actually get the St. Lawrence Seaway. But that might be a stretch. Now.

The reality is. Shipping is not as much. Of a big deal here. There. And. There are dissimilarities. As well as similarities. But part of what I want you to see. Is that.

[ 29 : 23 ] New Haven. Is. In many ways. An incredibly. Cosmopolitan city. That sits at a crossroads. A crossroads of the world. Just like Thessalonica did.

Just this week. I sat down with two different people. Who work with organizations. In this city. Who work with people. Who come. From literally. All over the world. And not only literally all of the world.



But particularly. They work with people. That Americans tend to never go visit. And have very little contact with. People from. Well Iraq is sort of an.

But people. They work with Iraqis. They work with people from Myanmar. From Bhutan. From Cuba. From Indonesia. From Pakistan. And many others.

The particular. The particular. Convergence. Of the universities. That bring people from all over the world. And the status of New Haven. As a refugee.

[ 30 : 20 ] Resettlement city. Means that we live. In an incredibly. Diverse. Crossroads community. We don't have to go to the world. The world actually comes here.

Some of you. Likely. Have come from other parts of the world. To come and be. A part of the life. Of the city of New Haven. Willingly or unwillingly.

You're here. And God has brought you here. And you know. Not only is it. That kind of crossroads. For the world. But it's a crossroads. In lots of other ways too. If you walk 10 blocks.

North. South. Right. North. South. East and west. Out of this building. You would find yourself. In an incredibly. In four very different neighborhoods. You would find.

The diversity. To be. Racial. You will find. African American communities. And Hispanic communities. And old Italian communities. And the.

[ 31 : 18 ] The mixed. University community. That tends to be. Significantly. Both Asian and Caucasian. In its makeup. If you go in four different directions. That's probably what you would find.

You would find incredible. Diversities. Of socioeconomic. Uh. Status. You would find incredible. Diversity. Of education levels. You'd find. Incredible diversity.

In all these different ways. And our church. Actually sits. In the middle of this. Have you ever thought about this? Our church doesn't have a neighborhood. That we're a part of. And.

And for whatever reason. God has brought us here. Where. Our neighbors are a parking lot. So that we could be. A crossroads place. Where we can reach out. And see a gospel impact.

Where people could come. From all this diversity. To be a part of it. Think about this. Faithful preaching. In this. Medium sized city. In the country.

[ 32 : 15 ] Could have an impact. Far outstripping. Its size. We'd have the potential. To reach the whole world. And so. As we think about.

What God has called our church to be. We want to be intentional. About this. We want to be sure. That when we gather together. We don't gather. Because we are like. One another.

But we gather together. Because the gospel. Is something that we think. Is worth. Gathering around. We want to bring. Together. A church.

That says. That is so striking. That an outsider. Might come in and say. What brings these people together? And the answer would be. Nothing. Nothing brings these people together. Except they worship.

Jesus. Except. The message. Of the gospel. This is a part of the stewardship. And the purpose. Of our church. This is how I think it would.

[ 33 : 11 ] Look for us. To live out being. A gospel centered church. In our context. Which is like what we see. In Thessalonica. So.

Going back to Thessalonica. This is very much a city. Like that. That Paul and Silas. And Timothy came to. Probably they came in about. 48 or 49. A.D. And let's look.

And actually read the story. In Acts 17. Briefly. Now. When they passed through. Amphipolis. And Apollonia. There are two other cities.

Between Philippi. And Thessalonica. They passed through those two. Probably just stayed there. On the nights. On the hundred mile journey. From one to the other. Then they came to a synagogue. This was Paul's practice.

Is that he would start. By going to the place. Where God's word. Was already being read. And when you look through. You see. I'm not going to read. The whole thing. I'm just going to walk us through it.

[ 34 : 05 ] But what you see. Is Paul comes. And he. He says. I want a reason from you. I want to explain to you. That the Old Testament. Says. That there is a Christ. Which is just the Greek version. Of Messiah.

That there is one. That God is going to anoint. And send. To be a savior. Of his people. But the. But Paul's argument is. That this Christ. Must suffer. And die.

This was not. A commonly held view. In the Jewish world. At that time. So Paul is saying. This is what must happen. And then he's coming. Alongside that. And he's saying. And this Jesus.

Jesus of Nazareth. This man. Who walked the earth. He did that. He suffered. And he died. And he rose again. And so his message is. This Jesus.

Is the Christ. The promised one. Of the Old Testament. This is what God. Has now done. The one that. The Jewish world. Has been waiting for. Has now arrived. So believe.

[ 35 : 04 ] Align yourself. With him. Make him. The one that you worship. And. This gospel message. Had an incredible impact.

Had an incredible impact. In the diversity of people. Even. Even here. We see the diversity. In Thessalonica. Being played out. Because not only did. Some Jews. Were persuaded. And believed. But then some others.

The ESV. Calls them. Devout Greeks. Other Bible. Translations. Would call them. God fearers. These are people. Who are not. Ethnically Jewish. But who would go. To the synagogue.

Because they were. Interested in the God. Of Abraham. Isaac and Jacob. Who hadn't been. Circumcised. And converted. To Judaism. But who wanted. To know more. And so these.

Greeks. And maybe Macedonians. God fearers. Were also persuaded. And believed. And not only that. But shockingly. In the first century.

[ 35 : 58 ] Although it wouldn't be shocking. To us today. Many. Or several. Prominent women. In the city. That they were included. In this. Right from the start. That this message.

Of the gospel. Came to everybody. And was for all people. And so the gospel. Comes in. And has this. Incredible. Incredible impact.

Where it starts to. And these people. Then. Join up with Paul. It says they joined up with him. And then joined up with him. Not only by hosting him. And sitting under his teaching.

But they even. Participated with him. In their ministry. Well. That was. The positive impact. There was a negative impact. As well.

Wasn't there. If you look with me. In verse. Six. Five. But the Jews. Were jealous. The Jewish authorities. Didn't feel.

[ 36 : 52 ] Like this was a good thing. Going on there. And so. What did they do? Well. What they did. Is they. Went down to the local.

Marketplace. And they found the. Rent a mob. Kiosk. And they paid their money. And no. I'm kidding. But. So. It's fascinating. Translations. Just throw out. Great words.

For the. These are. These are layabouts. They're. Louts. They're. Dishonorable men. They're. Basically. These men. Would gather. In. In.

In. In the marketplace. Every day. And. If you needed a mob. You could just go down. And say. Hey. You know. If I pay you a shekel. Will you come. You know. Throw a riot for me. And that's basically. What they did. They.

They hired a mob. And. And. Then went after Paul. And his companions. And when they couldn't find. Paul and his companions. You know who they found. They found the new converts.

[ 37 : 46 ] Jason. And his friends. The new believers. And they dragged these new believers. Out. Of their houses. And in front of the magistrates.

And laid this incredible accusation. Before them. Look with me. In verse 8. This is what it says. These men.

Who have turned the world. Upside down. Have come here also. He's talking about Paul. And Silas. And Timothy. And Jason.

Has received them. And they're all acting. Against the decrees of Caesar. Saying that there is. Another king. Jesus. Now these are striking. Accusations.

Remember. How important. Fidelity to Rome. Was. For the Thessalonian. Culture. And they are saying. These men.

[ 38 : 41 ] Are preaching. Another king. And now here's the tricky thing. Right. At one level. This wasn't true at all. You know. From the. That the apostle Paul. From his writings.

To the. To the church in Rome. Advocated submission. To your governmental authorities. Regardless of how godly. Or ungodly. They were. Paul was not. A political activist.

Seeking to overturn. A societal structure. He. He expressly said. Don't do that. And yet. And yet.

This gospel. That Paul was proclaiming. Made. An ultimate claim. On the allegiance. And priority. Of those. Who followed it.

His call. The gospel. Belief. Demanded. Just as Jesus did. When he walked on earth. A transfer. From whatever. Other thing. Your ethnic group.

[ 39 : 38 ] Your family. Your workplace. Whatever. Other thing. Transferred. Your ultimate loyalty. Your ultimate allegiance. Your. Even your very identity.

From those things. Now. To be around Jesus. Paul said. Jesus. Is your king. And use the word. The Greek word. Basileus.

Which would have been used. In formal. Roman. Declarations. About the emperor. For the emperor. Paul said. No. Jesus. Is your king. And so.

It's. It's not surprising. That there would be open. To this kind of attack. Because. The gospel. That Paul was proclaiming. Was not intentionally.

Politically subversive. And yet. By its very nature. It undermined. Any human authorities. Ultimate claim. To loyalty. For the gospel.

[ 40 : 33 ] Called. Them to give that. Only. To Jesus. Another commentator.

Talked about. This transfer of loyalty. In this way. Accepting. The loyalty. The lordship of Christ. Would mean. New priorities. And loyalties. For those who became. Disciples. It would lead. To transformation.

Of personal relationships. Business. And personal ethics. Social structures. And ambitions. New attitudes. Towards other religions. And it changes. Ways of relating. To Caesar.

And his representatives. The Holy Spirit. Would progressively. Bring about. These changes. As Christians. Reflected together. On the implications. Of their new life. In Christ. But even.

The preaching. Of the gospel itself. Is disturbing. To the social. And political status quo. Wherever. It is taken. Seriously. So even though.

[ 41 : 27 ] Paul. Was not an activist. His gospel. Had incredible. Impact. On those. Who received it. And believed it.

Reminds me. Of. One of. One of my heroes. Of the faith. Jim Elliot. He and his wife. Went to. South America. In the 1950s.

To be missionaries. He was martyred. He was killed. By a head hunting tribe. Who were unreached. With the gospel. As they sought. As he and his. Coworkers. Sought to reach.

Out to him. A few years. Before he died. He wrote. In his journal. A perspective. That continues. To challenge me. As I think about.

The impact. Of the gospel. In my life. Father. Make me a crisis man. He wrote. Bring those. I contact. To decision. Let me not.

[ 42 : 25 ] Be a mile post. On a single road. Make me a fork. That men must turn. One way. Or another. On facing Christ. In me.

I know. I'm not like that. The way I hope. The way I want to be. But Jim Elliot. Was saying. Let me be so full. Of the gospel. Let me be so full.

Of Jesus. The king. That people will accuse me. Of being one of those. Who turned. The world. Upside down. That everyone.

Who encounters me. Faces. This decision. And it's not. Because I'm trying. To be.

Aggressive. Or offensive. Or pushy. But it's because. The gospel. Is at the center. Of my life. And God. When he takes.

[ 43 : 25 ] The gospel. And he brings it. Into people's lives. Lives. It does. An incredible. Transforming. Powerful. Work. It does. Turn. Our world. Upside down.

When the gospel. Really goes. Deep. This is. It seems. To me. Is what. What. The whole account. Of. Of. The story. Of the church. In. Thessalonica.

Is all about. Paul. And Silas. And Timothy. Came. And they brought. The gospel. And. And it changed. People's lives. People were. Persuaded. People were. Moved. And they were. Changed.

In fact. As we read. Earlier. It says. In verses. Eight. Through. Ten. Of chapter. One. The gospel. Came to you. In. With such.

Power. With such. Transforming. Power. That. We don't have to. Talk about. Because. Everyone knows. What happened. Among you. The word of the Lord. Has gone forth.

[ 44 : 19 ] All throughout. Macedonia. Remember. Up here. And Achaia. Down into the Greek peninsula. Everyone has heard. How you receive. The gospel. And how you turn.

From idols. To serve. The living. And the true. God. And to wait. For Jesus. Whom God raised. From the dead. Who will come.

And save us. This is what we should expect. Is that when the gospel comes.

God is at work. And God is going to do. Things that turn our worlds. Upside down. And we should expect that. In our own lives. And we should expect it.

In the lives of those. Who encounter us. As a community. Whether it's inside these walls. Or outside these walls. As we. Spend our daily lives. Out wherever we're doing.

- [ 45 : 15 ] At school. At work. At home. We should have an expectation. That God. Will be at work. Powerfully. Through. The gospel.
- We don't want to seek. To unsettle things. Just to be unsettling. We don't want to change. The status quo. Because we're bored with it. We don't want to seek. To. Transform things.
- Simply for the sake of transformation. But the gospel. The gospel. When it be. Is the center of our lives. God will use it. To do all of these things.
- Now. I don't know. All of what this. Is supposed to mean. For my life. I don't know. All of what it's supposed to mean. For our church. I don't know.
- All of what it means. For New Haven. But I am challenged. To ask this question. Do I. Expect God. To be working.
- [ 46 : 16 ] Or have I lost. Faith. That God will work. Through the gospel. In ways that turn. The world. Upside down. Upside down. Just to wrap up the story.
- Paul and Silas. And Timothy. No doubt. Out of love. For their. These new converts. Left the city. These new converts. Paid a. Guarantee. That these men.
- Wouldn't come back. So Paul and Silas. Left. But they were so. Desirous to know. How is this young church. Without much teaching. Without much leadership. How is it doing.
- In the face of. Hostile mobs. And. And. And. And. Authorities. That stood against it. Paul writes later. In the letter. We wanted so much.
- We tried again. And again. To get back to you. But we couldn't do it. And finally. We sent Timothy. And Timothy. Went back. To the Thessalonians. And he visited with them. And then he came back. Paul said. Now we live.
- [ 47 : 16 ] Because we've heard. That you are standing firm. And it's in that context. That Paul wrote the letter. Of first Thessalonians. To encourage them. To remind them.
- Of the work of the gospel. That had already been. Done. In their lives. And to call them. To yet still more. To take hold of the gospel.
- Still more. As they went ahead. Paul is reminding them. Be a gospel centered people. Be a gospel centered church. And that is his message.
- I believe for us. And as we are seeking. To be those things. We are to expect. That God. Will do things. That will turn the world.
- Upside down. So two. Practical ways. To engage. Two practical ways. To follow through. I want to invite you.
- [ 48 : 08 ] To join us on this journey. With first Thessalonians. In the upcoming weeks. And months. So two things. One. I want to invite you. To join me.
- In reading. The book of first Thessalonians. Every day. For the next 30 days. It's not that long. It's five chapters. Wouldn't take you that long. Some of you may have.
- Other Bible reading plans. And if you. You know. If you want to do that. You know. Maybe do it once a week. But. But read this book. Steep yourself in this book. So you get to see. What God is doing.
- In the gospel. In this church. Read this book. If you don't have a plan. Do. Join me. For the next 30 days. Read it. Every day. And then secondly.
- Pray. Pray that God. Would do a work. That would turn. Our lives. Our church. And our city. Upside down. Through this gospel.
- [ 49 : 05 ] Together. Let's pray. God. We thank you. We thank you. That you have been. Merciful and gracious. To give us this gospel. Lord.
- This good news. That you have done. Oh. What a marvelous work. In Christ. God. I pray. That you would help us. Help us. Lord. To take hold of this.

Lord. We want. We want. To see you at work. In our lives. In powerful ways. We pray.  
That you would do this. For Jesus sake. Amen. Amen.

As the music team. Comes up. We're going to. Respond. We're going to sing. A church.  
Called. A church. Arise. And put your armor on. It's. It's a. The church. The song is  
actually.

A call. A call. And so I want you to think about singing this. Not just to God. But to a certain  
extent. Singing it to one another. As we sing it together. As a call for us.

[ 50 : 01 ] To pursue. As it talks about. Christ. Our captain. Pursue. God. Work. And his plans. For  
us. If you want to sit.

And just sing. And meditate. You can do that. If you want to stand. You can do that as  
well. So let's sing. This song together. Let's sing.