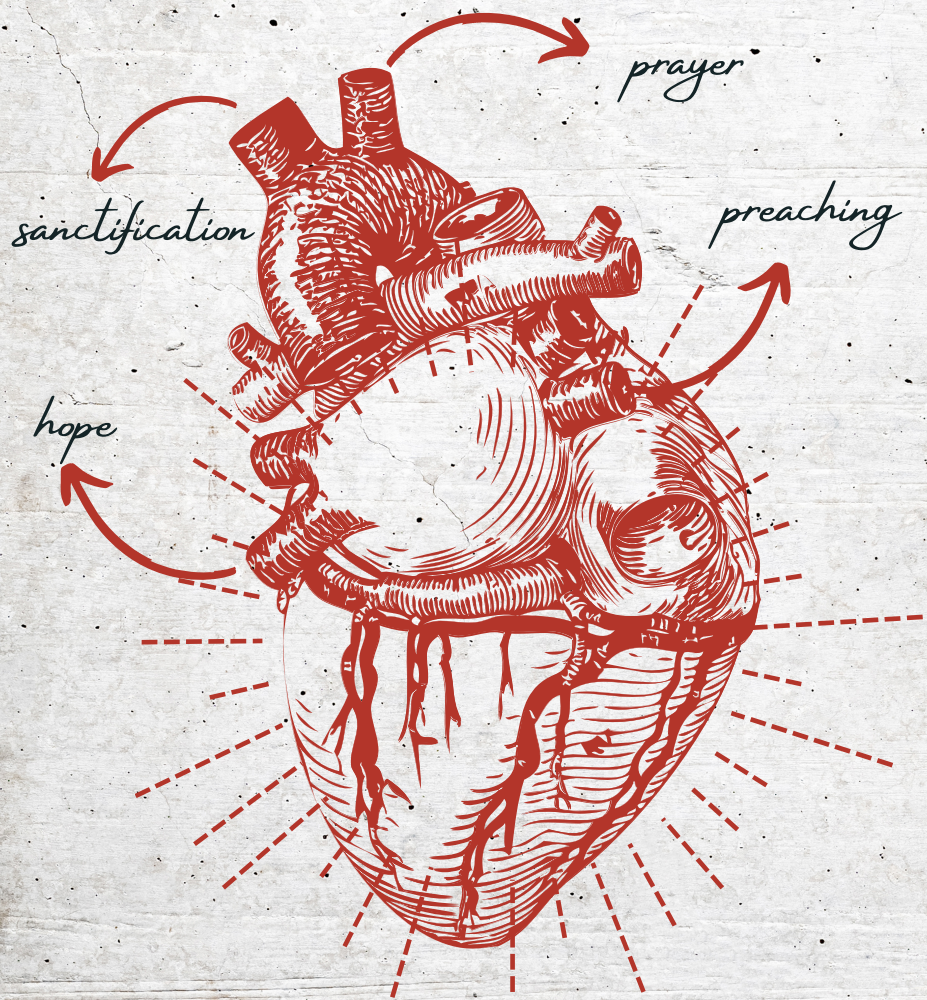
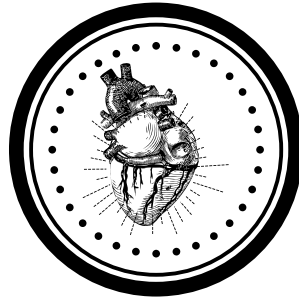


The *heart* of the GOSPEL



Oct 24 -
Dec 12

A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS



THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

A STUDY

1 Thessalonians

October 24 - December 12

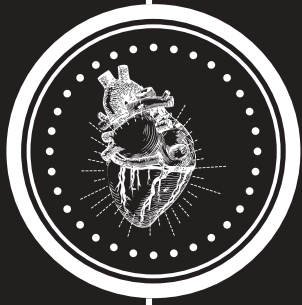
© 2021 City Church

Beijing, China

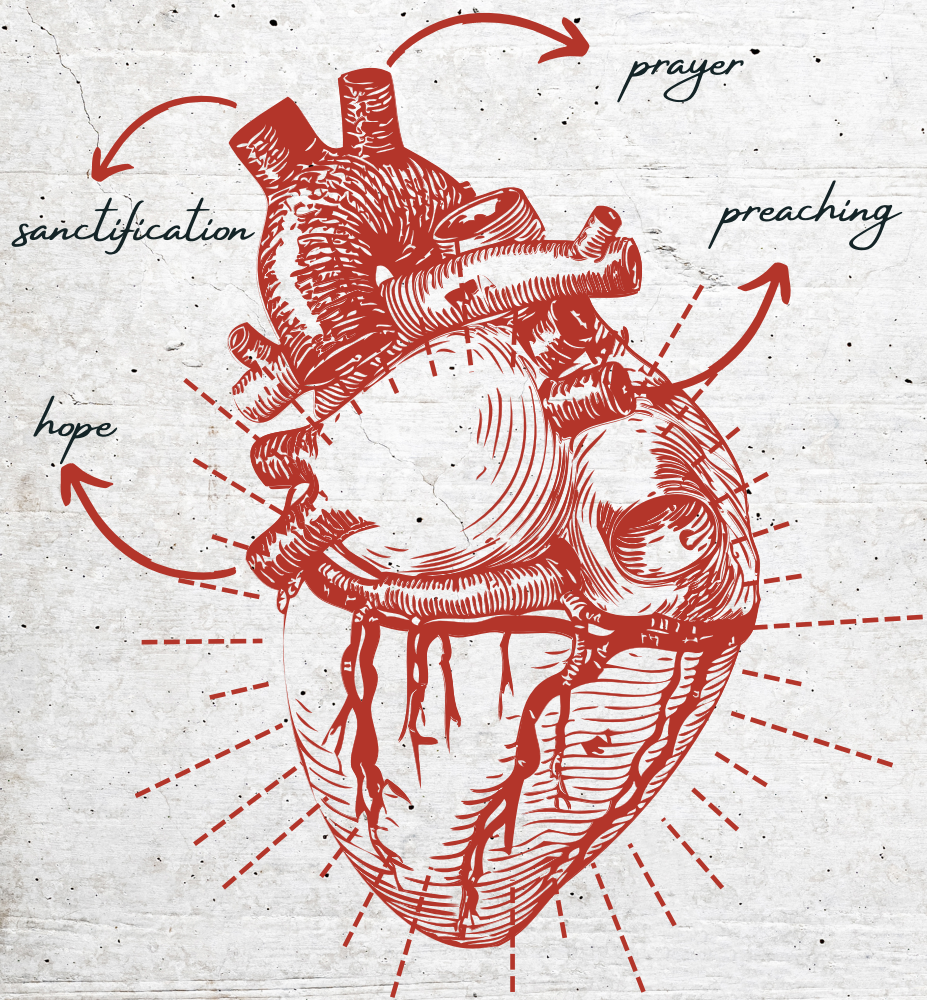
All rights reserved.

Written by TJ Johnson

Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



The *heart* of the GOSPEL



A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS

Power, Perseverance & Proclamation

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

Oct 24

Power, Perseverance & Proclamation

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

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.

2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, 3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 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 proved to be among you for your sake. 6 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, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. 9 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 true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

~~~

# Power, Perseverance & Proclamation

Unless you have a degree in forestry or grew up in a farming environment, you would most likely have a hard time naming a tree by its leaves only. But if I were to point to the fruit, an apple, lemon, orange, or even an acorn, you would hopefully be able to tell what type of tree it is.

The same is true with people. Jesus once said, “You will know people by their fruit.” When the gospel takes root in a person’s life it WILL produce gospel fruit. As we read 1 Thessalonians 1, we find the type of fruit that the gospel produces. For example, faith, hope, love, good works, perseverance in suffering, conviction of sin, Holy Spirit power to turn from worldly living, and evangelistic witness.

1 Thessalonians 1 is a reminder for us to take a walk in our garden, look past the leaves, and inspect the fruit on our branches. Let’s not assume faith, but inspect it. Has the gospel truly come to us? If so, we will be producing gospel fruit.

Inspecting with you,

Pastor TJ



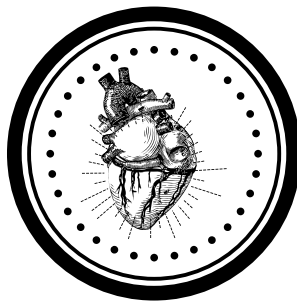
*You have become an example to all the believers*

## Discussion Questions

Please scan the QR code for some background information on 1 Thessalonians and its first chapter.



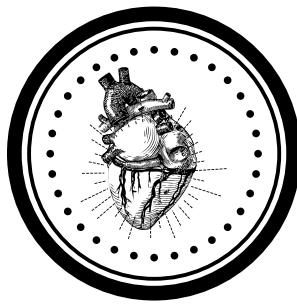
1. Why do you suppose the church in Thessalonica was dear to Paul?
2. Share with the group a church that is dear to your heart and why.
3. Read verse 2. Paul mentioned that he was constantly praying for the church in Thessalonica. Do you have anyone who you are constantly praying for who is not in the same location or same church as you?



*You have become an example to all the believers*

## Discussion Questions

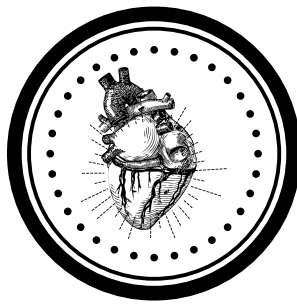
4. Read verse 3. List the three essential marks of the Christian life and give real life examples that you have seen of each. Feel free to read through those verses for further study: Rom. 5:1–5; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5–6; Col. 1:4–5; 1 Pet. 1:21–22; Heb. 10:22–24.
5. How is “work of faith” different from salvation by works? What does it look like for Christians to have “work of faith” in their life?
6. How would you describe “labor of love”? Have you ever received or given a “labor of love” to/from someone else?
7. What is “steadfastness of hope”? What is the source and result of this hope?
8. Read verses 4 & 5. What is the basis for God electing (chosen by God) these Thessalonian Christians and how can Paul be certain (we know) that they have truly been elected by God?
9. Read verse 5 again. What is the gospel, its power, and your personal experience with the gospel?
10. Read verses 6 to 8. According to Paul, what are the important characteristics of the believers in Thessalonica?



*You have become an example to all the believers*

## Discussion Questions

11. According to the answers in your group to question 9, what are some characteristics of your faith that you would like to grow personally?
12. Read verse 9. What lifestyles did the Thessalonians turn from in conversion? What lifestyles did you turn from in conversion?
13. Read verse 10. According to this verse, what is the biggest hope of the Church?
14. What about Jesus' return are you most looking forward to?
15. What should active waiting for the return of Jesus look like in our daily lives?
16. Read verse 10 again. What is the coming wrath that is described? How does knowing what it means change your daily life?



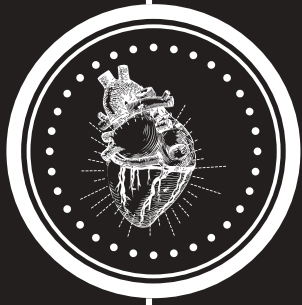
*You have become an example to all the believers*

## Prayer & Praise

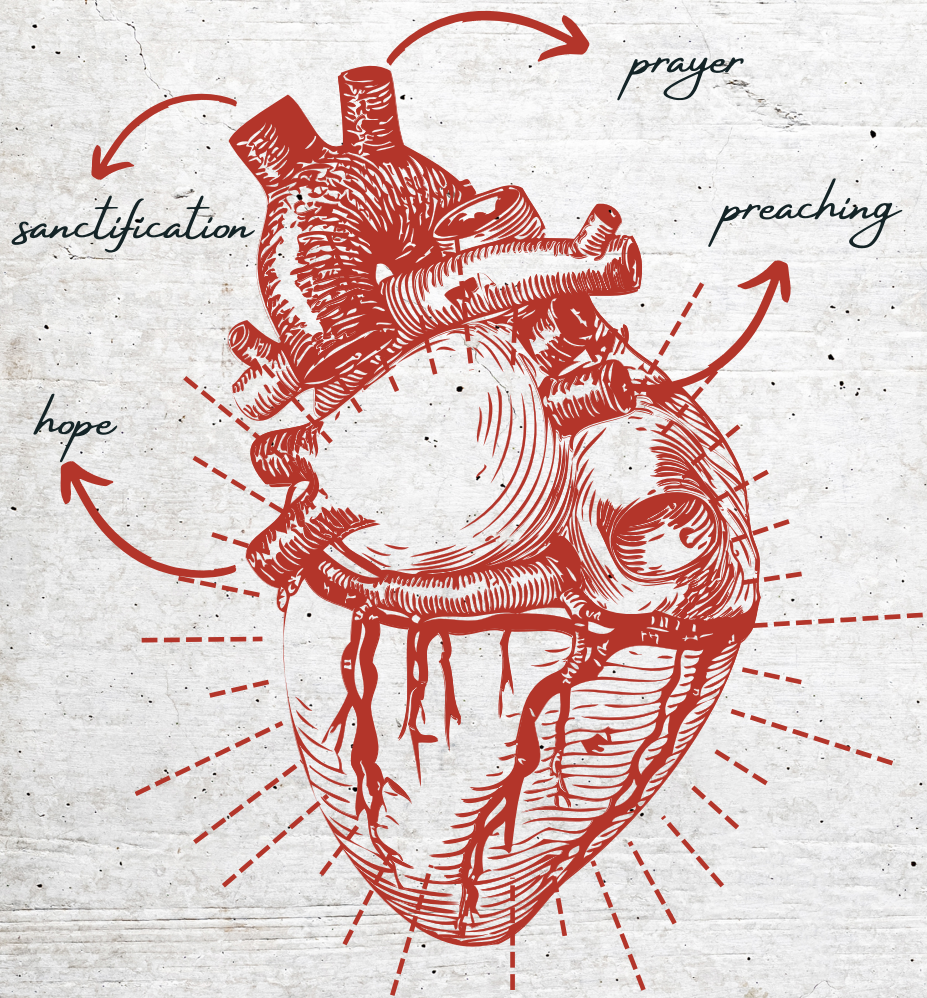
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# The *heart* of the GOSPEL



A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS

**Peddlers or Preachers?**

1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-6

Oct 31

# Peddlers or Preachers?

1 Thessalonians 2:1-6

1 For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. 3 For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. 5 For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

~~~

Peddlers or Preachers?

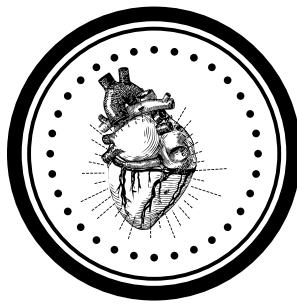
I wonder if you have ever gone to the park to fly a kite on a windless day. Or perhaps expected a day of sailing on the sea, only to find there was no wind. Kites don't fly without wind. Sailboats don't sail without wind. They need an external power. The same is true when it comes to a Christian's motivation to share the gospel. If the wind of the Holy Spirit does not fill your sail of evangelism, you will sit powerless in the water.

At City Church we have a goal to have 1,000 gospel conversations in Beijing within one year. The thought behind this is two-fold. Firstly, as Christians we **MUST** be having gospel conversations. The Gospel is **GOOD NEWS**, and who doesn't like sharing good news? Secondly, we want to keep a record of conversations and not just conversion because even when people do not make a decision for Christ we rejoice that the gospel has been preached. Some plant, others water, but God alone can make the gospel grow in the heart.

The only way we will reach our goal is by an external force propelling us forward. We need wind, Holy Spirit wind! 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6 is that wind. It is a reminder of the **POWER** of the Gospel for salvation.

Sailing to greater Gospel Conversations with you,

Pastor TJ



Declare His good news

Discussion Questions

Please scan the QR code for some background information on 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6.



1. Tell the group about your last Gospel conversation with someone. (Don't forget to scan the Gospel Conversations QR code and submit the form if you haven't done it yet!)
2. Have you ever had any negative experiences when sharing the Gospel? If so, share the experience and how it made you feel.



Declare His good news

Discussion Questions

3. Read verse 1. Define the term “in vain”. Why do you think Paul was confident that the proclamation of the Gospel to the Thessalonica church was not in vain?
4. What is the recent thing you felt you have been doing in vain for the Lord? How does verse 1 encourage you to keep going?
5. Read verse 2 and Acts 16:19-39. Describe the situation in Philippi. What was the conflict there? What was Paul and Silvanus’ attitude about the conflict in Philippi when they came to preach in Thessalonica?
6. Have you ever faced persecution or opposition while declaring the Gospel? Share the story with the group, and what did you do?
7. Read verses 3-5. What does it look like for Paul to communicate the Gospel clearly?
8. Read verse 4 again. According to Paul, who has the authority when we preach the Gospel?



Declare His good news

Discussion Questions

9. How does knowing where your authority comes from change the way you would share the Gospel?
10. Read verses 3 to 6 again. What is the right and wrong motivation to share the Gospel according to Paul?
11. What are the wrong reasons we as Christians could be sharing Gospel here in Beijing?
12. How can you share the Gospel this week?
13. Finish the study by practicing sharing the Gospel Conversation in groups of 2-3.



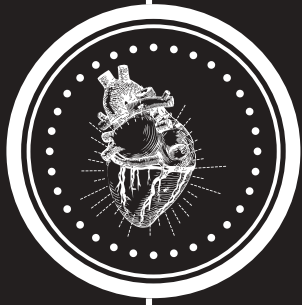
Declare His good news

Prayer & Praise

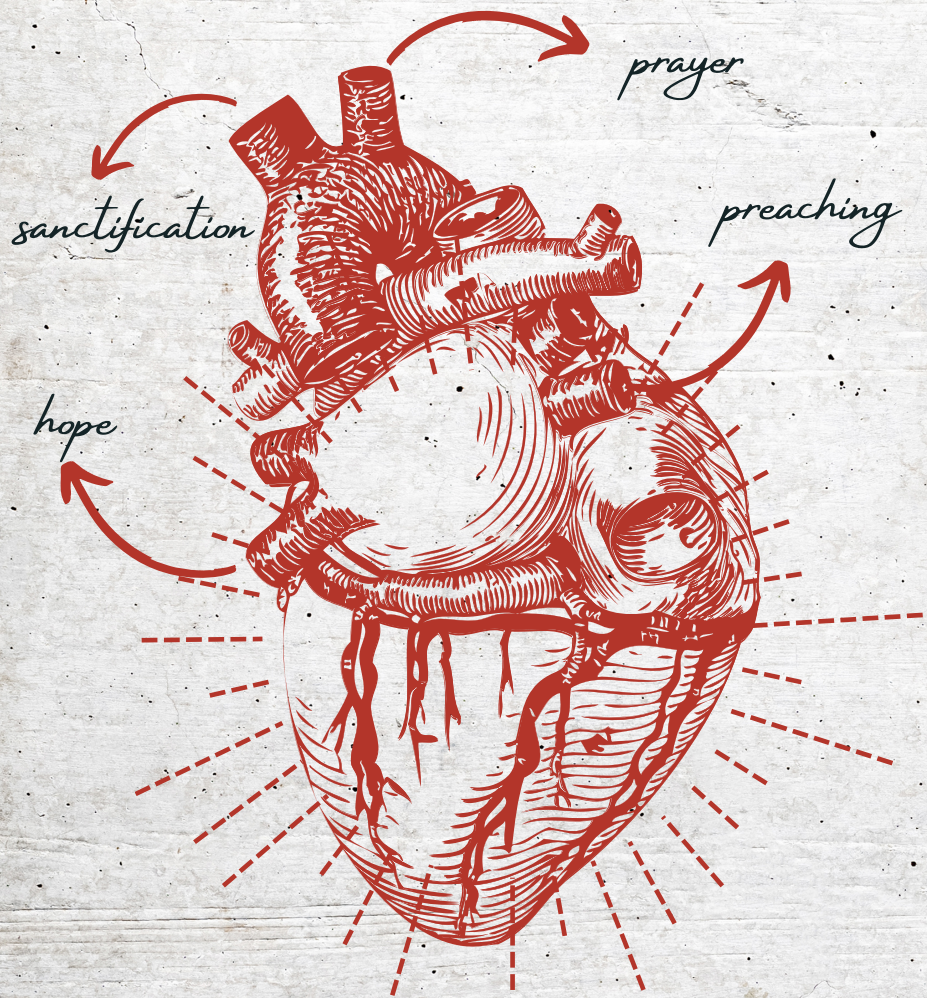
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



The *heart* of the GOSPEL



A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS

A Gentle Mother & Tough Father

1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-13

Nov 7

A Gentle Mother & Tough Father

1 Thessalonians 2:7-13

7 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. 8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

9 For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

10 You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. 11 For you know how, like a father with his children, 12 we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

~~~

# A Gentle Mother & Tough Father

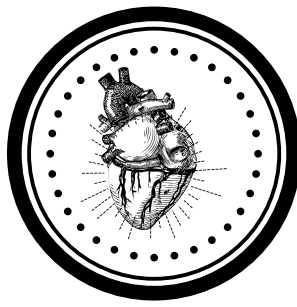
Jesus gave the church explicit instructions before His ascension: Go and MAKE DISCIPLES. This is the clear call of every Christian. And yet...many of us have never actually disciplined another person.

Perhaps we have never been properly disciplined and so we are a bit unsure what to do. Perhaps we have never been properly trained on what it means to make disciples and so feel unqualified to make disciples. Perhaps we fear we don't know enough, haven't been in the faith long enough, are not "spiritual" enough, etc. Whatever the reason, the end result is still the same...people are not being disciplined.

This is why 1 Thessalonians 1:7-13 is so important for the church today. In this section Paul lays out a clear, comprehensive strategy for how YOU can disciple another person. But let us not be under the illusion that discipleship is like a Ford factory, cranking out disciples assembly line quick. Rather, discipleship is more like an artisan preparing pottery for the kiln. It takes time and involves the whole of our emotions as we consider EACH person whom the Lord has entrusted to us.

Discipling with you,

Pastor TJ



*To walk in a manner worthy of God*

## Discussion Questions

Please scan the QR code for some background information on 1 Thessalonians 2:7-13.



1. What is discipleship?
2. Share with the group your experience of being disciplined by an individual or a group of people in the church.
3. Read verse 7. How did the Apostle Paul and his companions treat disciples in the church of Thessalonica? Please refer to the meaning of the keywords in that verse in the introduction to today's verses.
4. What are the different ways your small group (should) cares for one another?



*To walk in a manner worthy of God*

## Discussion Questions

5. Read verse 8 and Matthew 28:16-20. Why is sharing the Gospel only not enough in discipleship?
6. What are the things in your life that you can sacrifice/share to disciple others?
7. Read verses 9, 12, and 13. What do Paul, Timothy and Silvanus teach us about managing our time for discipleship?
8. If you look at your weekly schedule, can you find an hour or two during the week for an opportunity to disciple someone? Share with the group thoughts and challenges about your schedule.
9. Read verse 12 again. Who are the people who need discipling?
10. Reflection question. Think about someone in your small group or church, who seems like an outsider, or not in the group, or doesn't "click" with anyone else. Is there any way you can reach out to that person for discipleship purposes?
11. Read verse 12 again. What are the three characteristics of disciples Paul mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 2:12?
12. What are the main obstacles for you to disciple someone or be disciplined? What are the ways to overcome those?



*To walk in a manner worthy of God*

### Going Deeper

13. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:12, Ephesians 4:1, Philippians 1:27, Romans 6:12, Colossians 1:10, and 3 John 1:6. What does it mean to live a life worthy of God's calling?
14. Who are the examples from the Bible who lived lives "worthy of God's calling"? Name at least one and explain why you think so.
15. How does living a life worthy of God's calling look like for a believer in Beijing?
16. We would like to challenge you to pray next week as a group and individuals about taking the responsibility of discipleship seriously. Pray for God to show you one person with whom you can start reading the Bible one on one.



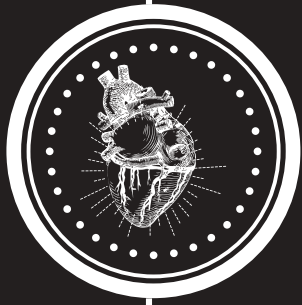
*To walk in a manner worthy of God*

## Prayer & Praise

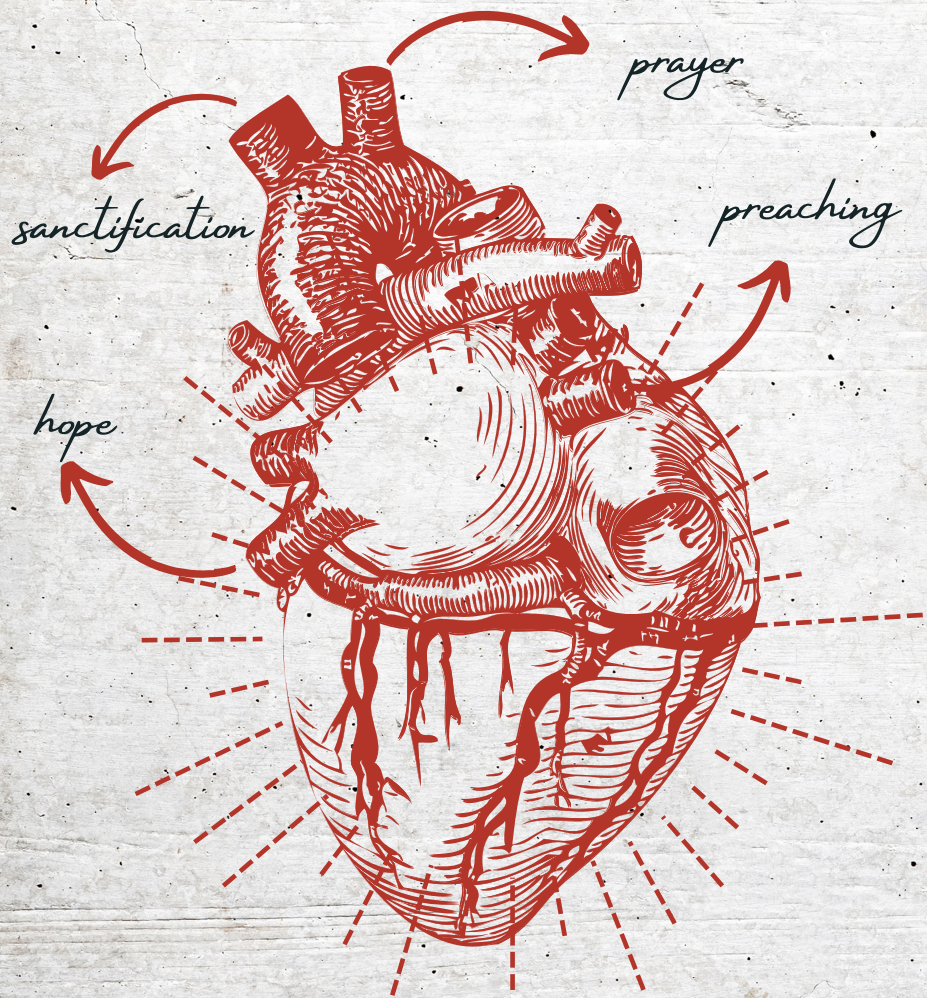
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# The *heart* of the GOSPEL



A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS

**Did You Think It Would Be Easy?**

Nov 14

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-3:5

# Did You Think It Would Be Easy?

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - 3:5

13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. 14 For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind 16 by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!

17 But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, 18 because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

3:1 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, 3 that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. 4 For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. 5 For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

# Did You Think It Would Be Easy?

If you think that being a Christian will solve all your problems, you will soon be seriously disappointed in that illusion. If you think that the Christian life is one of ease and comfort, that too will soon be proven to be a false understanding of life with Jesus. Being a Christian is HARD! As we prepare to study the next section in 1 Thessalonians, we find that the difficulties of the Christian life are not meant to be experienced alone.

It is here that we find the GREAT love that Paul has for the Christians in Thessalonica. It is here that we find the GREAT desire that Paul has for face to face fellowship. It is here that we find the great POWER of true friendship to encourage one another to continue in the faith.

This Sunday we will look at the PREVENTIONS of true Biblical friendship and then create a PLAN for us to be more intentional in our relationships with one another.

Committing to Community with you,

Pastor TJ



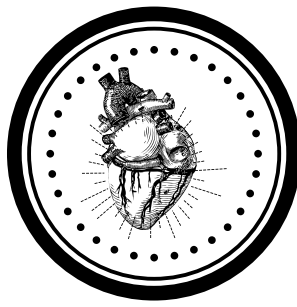
*We also thank God constantly for this*

## Discussion Questions

Please scan the QR code for some background information on 1 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5.



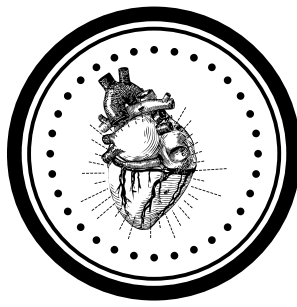
1. How would you describe a church community to a non-Christian?
2. What non-Church communities have you been a part of in Beijing? In what ways are those communities different from your church community?
3. What is the power of the Gospel that is described in 1 Thessalonians 2:13?
4. How has the power of the Gospel shown its work in your community of Christian friendships?



*We also thank God constantly for this*

## Discussion Questions

5. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:14-15, 3:7, Acts 17:5-9. How does being a part of a Christian community help us in our sufferings and hardships?
6. Share an example of you being comforted by the community of believers through the hard times of your life.
7. How do Christian friendships help your faith grow (See 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 3:2, 3:5)?
8. What are things you do to encourage believers in your community to grow in their faith?
9. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 2:15-16, 18, 3:1, 3:12. What are the most common things that keep us from developing and maintaining real relationships with other Christians?
10. Do you have any relationships that need restoring? If so, how can your small group help you “be reconciled to your brother”?
11. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14, James 4:11-12. What does it mean to see your fellow believer through the cross?
12. What are some practical steps to help your community be more Gospel-centered and help each other grow in Christ?



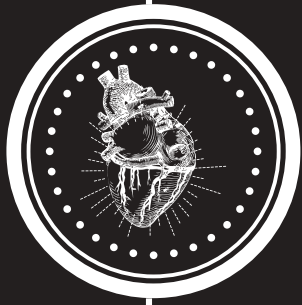
*We also thank God constantly for this*

## Prayer & Praise

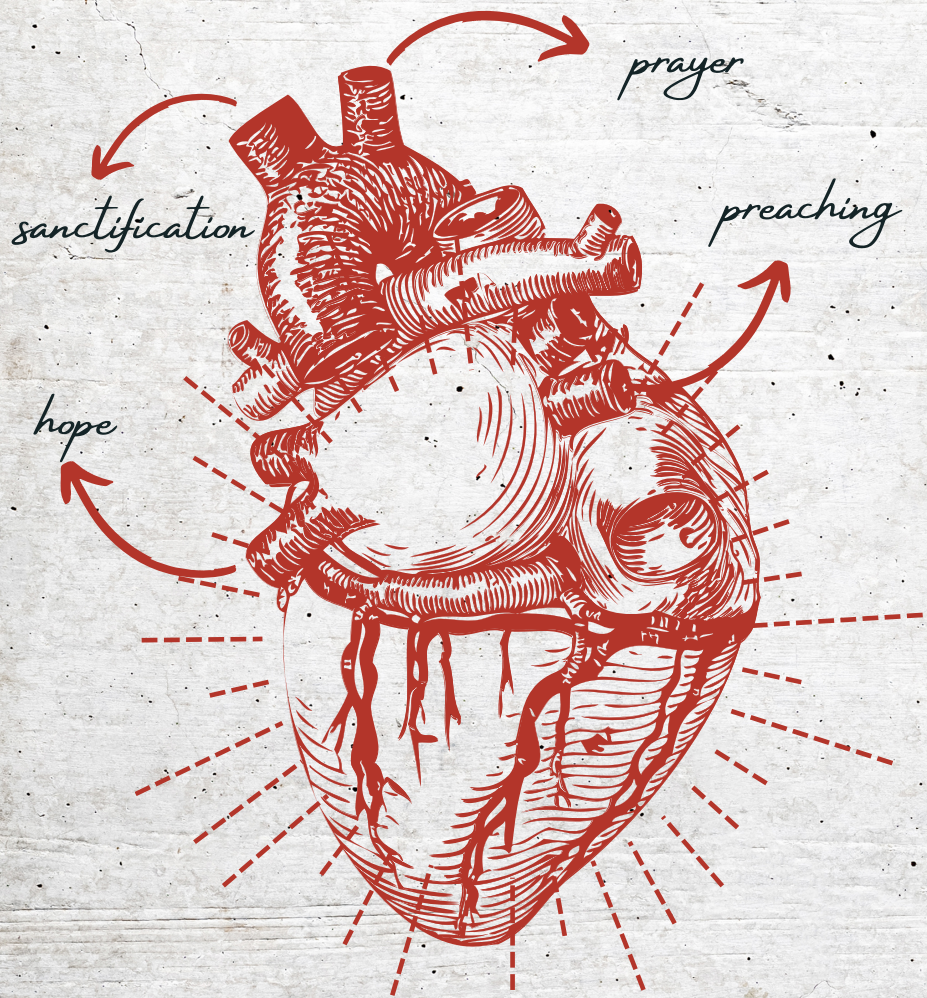
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# The *heart* of the GOSPEL



A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS

**On E in a 5G World**

**Nov 21**

1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-13

# On E in a 5G World

1 Thessalonians 3: 6-13

6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— 7 for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. 8 For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. 9 For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, 10 as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

11 Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, 12 and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

~~~

Prayer is a virtual part of the church. It is important for every Christian to know how to pray. Join us this Sunday as we study 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 and discuss the power of prayer.

Praying with you,

Pastor TJ



We pray most earnestly

Discussion Questions

Please scan the QR code for some background information on 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13.



1. If you could ask God one question about prayer, what would it be and why?
2. In this section in what ways do you see Christians mutually praying for one another? What other examples in the Bible can you find Christians praying mutually for one another?
3. Read verse 10a and discuss the attributes of Paul's prayer life.
4. In what specific ways would you like to grow in your prayer and why?



We pray most earnestly

Discussion Questions

5. Who has been most influential in your prayer life and why?
6. Do a word search for “thank” and “remember” in 1 Thessalonians, and create a list of things Paul gives thanks to God for the Thessalonians?
7. How does this type of prayer increase our love and trust in God?
8. In verses 10-11 what does Paul pray for himself?
9. What are some ways you can apply this type of prayer to your own prayer life?
10. Read verse 11. Why does Paul use the phrase “God our Father Himself and the Lord Jesus Christ”? How should this influence how we pray?
11. Read verses 12-13 and make a list of things Paul prays for the Thessalonian Christians.
12. Compare the list you created from Paul’s prayer and one from your own prayer life. What are some changes you can make to your prayer life this week that would make your fears even more Biblical?



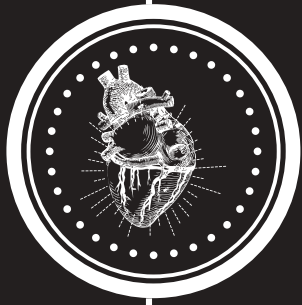
We pray most earnestly

Prayer & Praise

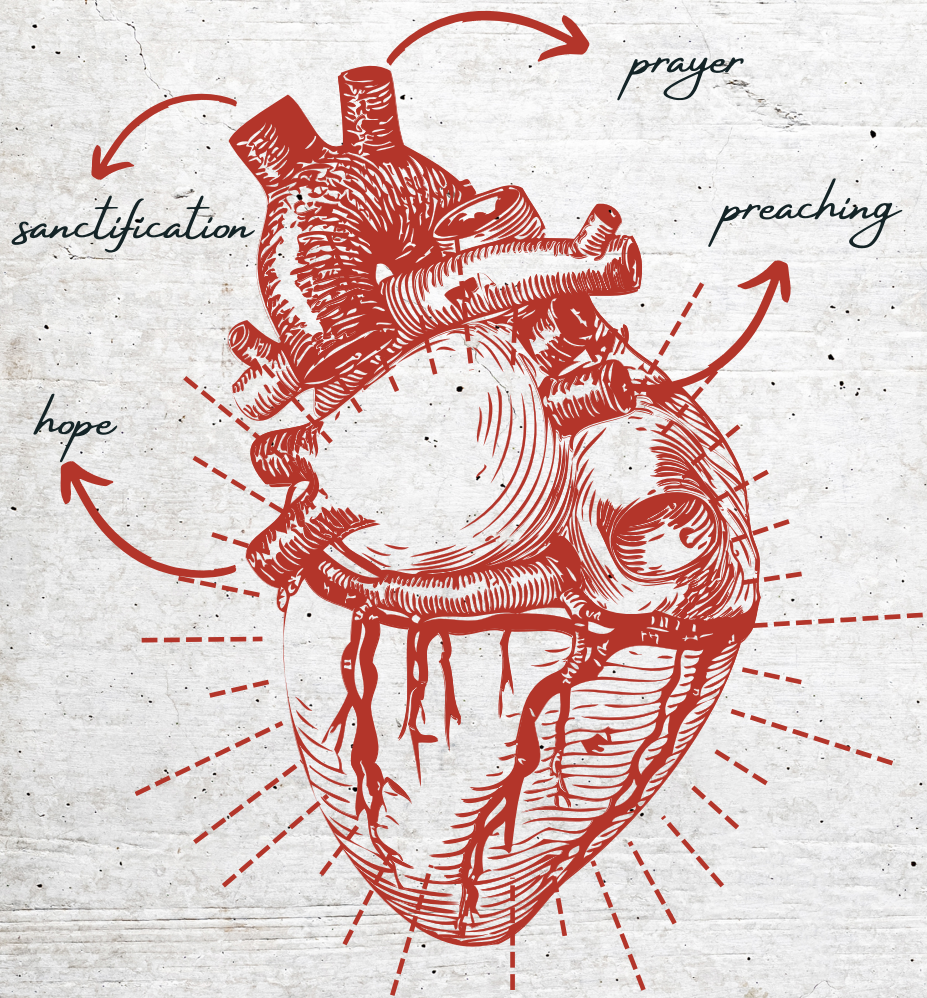
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



The *heart* of the GOSPEL



A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS

The Greedy Gospel

Nov 28

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

The Greedy Gospel

1 Thessalonians 4: 1-12

1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

9 Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, 10 for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, 11 and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, 12 so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

~~~

# The Greedy Gospel

The great thing about preaching through books of the Bible is that the church is forced to face topics they would typically rather avoid. This Sunday is one such topic: Sexual Purity.

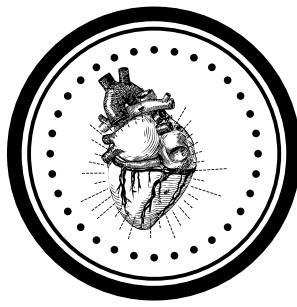
The church at Thessalonica lived in a day and age when the culture had an “anything goes” mindset toward sexuality. Prostitution was legal and widespread. Slaves were treated as property not only for economic gain but also sexual gratification. Adultery was not considered as something to be avoided or even kept hidden from a spouse, unless you were a woman. The legal penalty for a woman caught in adultery is so repulsive I can’t even write about it. Even children, as long as they were not Roman citizens, were seen as objects of another’s sexual desire. The poets wrote of this relationship as an idealized form of love.

According to Matthew Rueger, “Our early Christian ancestors did not confess biblical chastity in a safe culture that naturally agreed with them...Christian sexual ethics that limited intercourse to the marriage of a man and a woman were not merely different from Roman ethics; they were utterly against Roman ideals of virtue and love.”

Sound familiar? In a day and age where we might be tempted to lay low and keep our mouths shut regarding God’s command toward sexuality we would be wise to remember that the early church took a different path. They not only lived counter-cultural sexual lives, they openly opposed the Roman way of living. As Rueger notes, “The first Christians were men and women of great courage.”

Join us this Sunday as we seek God’s courage to live sexually pure lives in a world obsessed with sex.

Pastor TJ



*Abstain from sexual immorality*

## Discussion Questions

Please scan the QR code for some background information on 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12.



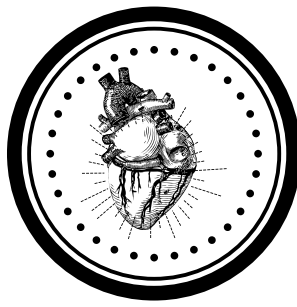
1. Compare and contrast the sexual temptations Christians experienced in first century Thessalonica vs modern day Beijing.
2. Define sexual immorality in your own words. What does the Bible say about it?
3. Read verse 3. Why do you think God is asking Christians to abstain from sexual immorality?



*Abstain from sexual immorality*

## Discussion Questions

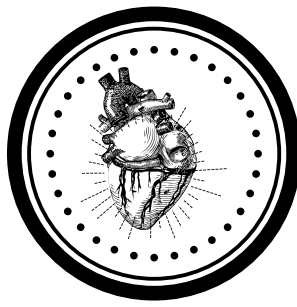
4. Without giving details, what are the examples of sexual immorality you see around you at your workplace, community, or our city? Is there anything you can do to help stop that?
5. Read verse 3. What is sanctification? What role does sanctification play in keeping yourself sexually pure?
6. Read verse 4 and Romans 1:24. What does honor and dishonor of the person's body mean? What do we need to do in order to honor our or other believers' bodies?
7. Read verse 5. What are the reasons you can think of that people would refuse to keep themselves sexually pure?
8. What challenges do Christians face today in keeping themselves sexually pure?
9. Are there any challenges today you see that people did not face 30 years ago in the area of sexual immorality?
10. Read verse 6. How does sexual immorality impact our community?



*Abstain from sexual immorality*

## Discussion Questions

11. Read verse 6 again. Who is the ultimate judge of sexual immorality in the church?
12. Read verse 7. How does it impact your decision about being sexually pure and the pursuit of holiness?
13. What are some practical things you can do to grow in holiness and sexual purity?



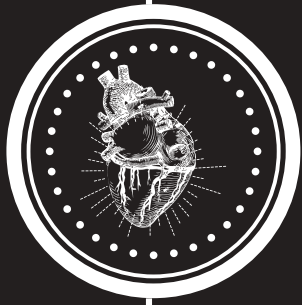
*Abstain from sexual immorality*

## Prayer & Praise

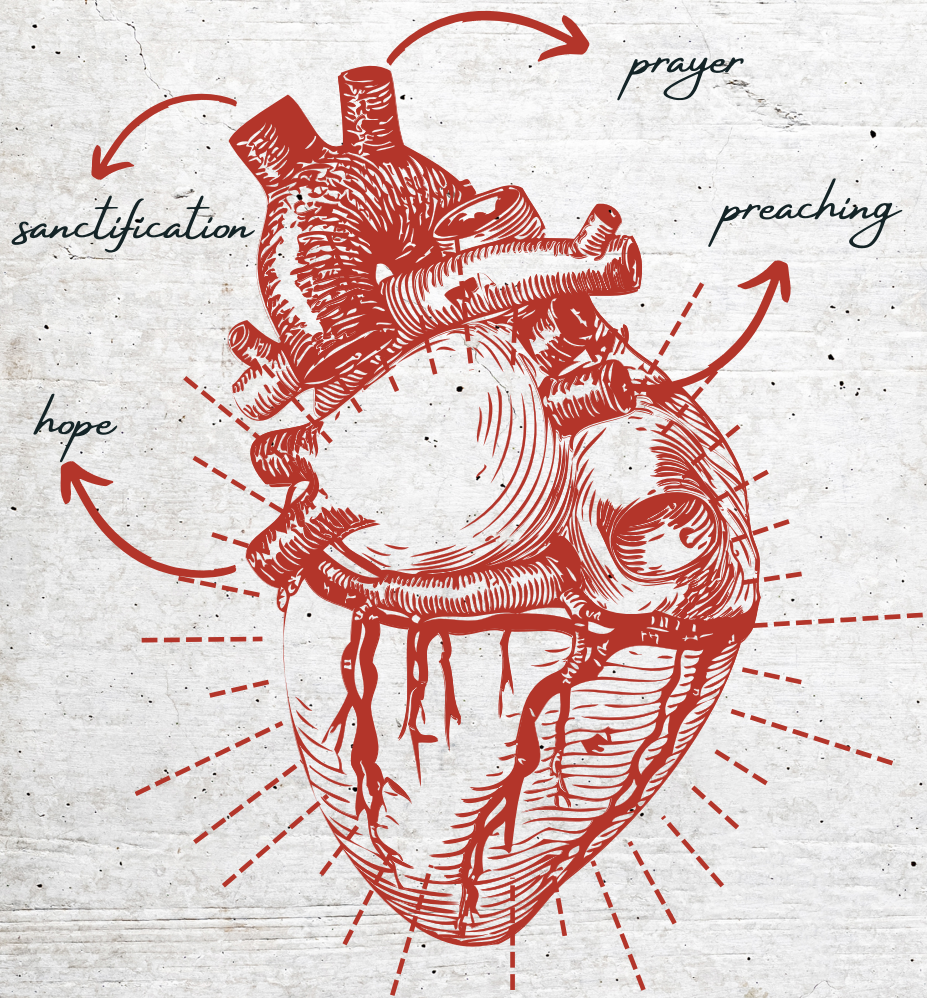
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# The *heart* of the GOSPEL



A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS

**Good Grief!**

Dec 5

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-5:11

# Good Grief!

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

5:1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

~~~

Good Grief!

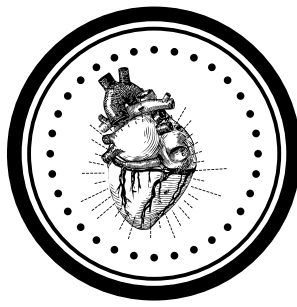
Thanksgiving is officially behind us, which means one thing; we can officially start listening to Christmas music. Perhaps you even noticed the Christmas song secretly inserted at the end of the first song this past Sunday, "O Come Let Us Adore Him." Christmas is a celebration of Jesus' first coming. It commemorates the humble beginnings of the suffering servant who was born to die that we might live. Over the next few weeks, we will sing A LOT about this coming. And all of that singing, hopefully, will cause us to think about His coming.

But there is another coming of Jesus that is mentioned in the Bible. Believe it or not it is referenced even MORE than His first. This Second Coming can be found in over 300 verses, in almost every New Testament book. Nearly every moral command in the New Testament is directly linked to Jesus' second coming. For something of such staggering importance in the New Testament (1 out of every 13 verses), it seems strange we don't sing more about it, preach more about it, talk more about it, pray more about it, and long more for it.

Perhaps because it seems so very far off and distant. Perhaps because there was an unhealthy fixation on it in the past generation. Perhaps because we don't think a future event has much impact on my living now. What does the Second Coming have to do with my work or family or leisure time? How does it help me be a better employee, parent, spouse, or friend? According to our text this week (1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11), the FUTURE coming of Jesus has a tremendous impact on our PRESENT life. In fact, we are commanded twice in this section to regularly encourage one another by reminding each other of the fact that Jesus is coming again. So as we begin the Christmas season by celebrating Jesus' first coming, let us be reminded that as surely as He came the first time, He WILL come again. This time He will not come as a suffering servant, but as the conquering King...and we who are IN Christ will be with Him FOREVER!

Looking and Anticipating with you,

Pastor TJ



Encourage one another

Discussion Questions

Please scan the QR code for some background information on 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11.



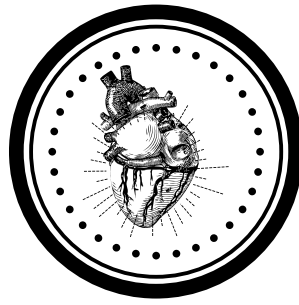
1. If you could lift the COVID-19 travel restrictions for one person to come and visit you in Beijing, who would it be and why?
2. Read 4:13-18. How is the second coming of Christ different from the first?
3. What does the death and resurrection of Jesus (found in 4:14) teach us about the second coming? Compare 4:16 to 5:2-3. How will this one event be experienced differently by people?



Encourage one another

Discussion Questions

4. Read 4:13-18 again. How does the second coming impact how we grieve the loss of our loved ones?
5. How does the second coming speak about how we prepare for our own death?
6. How does the second coming of Christ encourage us in our suffering?
7. Read 1 The 5:1-11. How does the second coming speak about how we live right here right now on earth? How do you live in such a way that you are ready for the second coming?
8. Read 1 The 5:1. Why do you think Paul argues against the obsession with the end's times?
9. What things in your current life keep you away from living daily as if Jesus is returning today?
10. Read 1 The 4:18 and 1 The 5:11. What is the main purpose of teaching the second coming of Christ in the church?



Encourage one another

Discussion Questions

11. What are some practical ways we as a church can be obedient to 4:18 and 5:11?
12. In what ways does the return of Christ motivate us to share our faith with others?
13. Read v. 9-10. Take some time to explain how one can be certain they have obtained salvation rather than wrath.
14. Read 1 The 2:19. What Kingdom ministry (hope or joy or crown of boasting) do you have to lay before Jesus at His coming?
15. Spend some time sharing your current difficulties and finish the study by praying and encouraging one another.



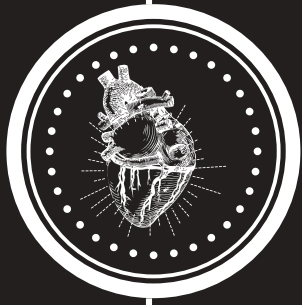
Encourage one another

Prayer & Praise

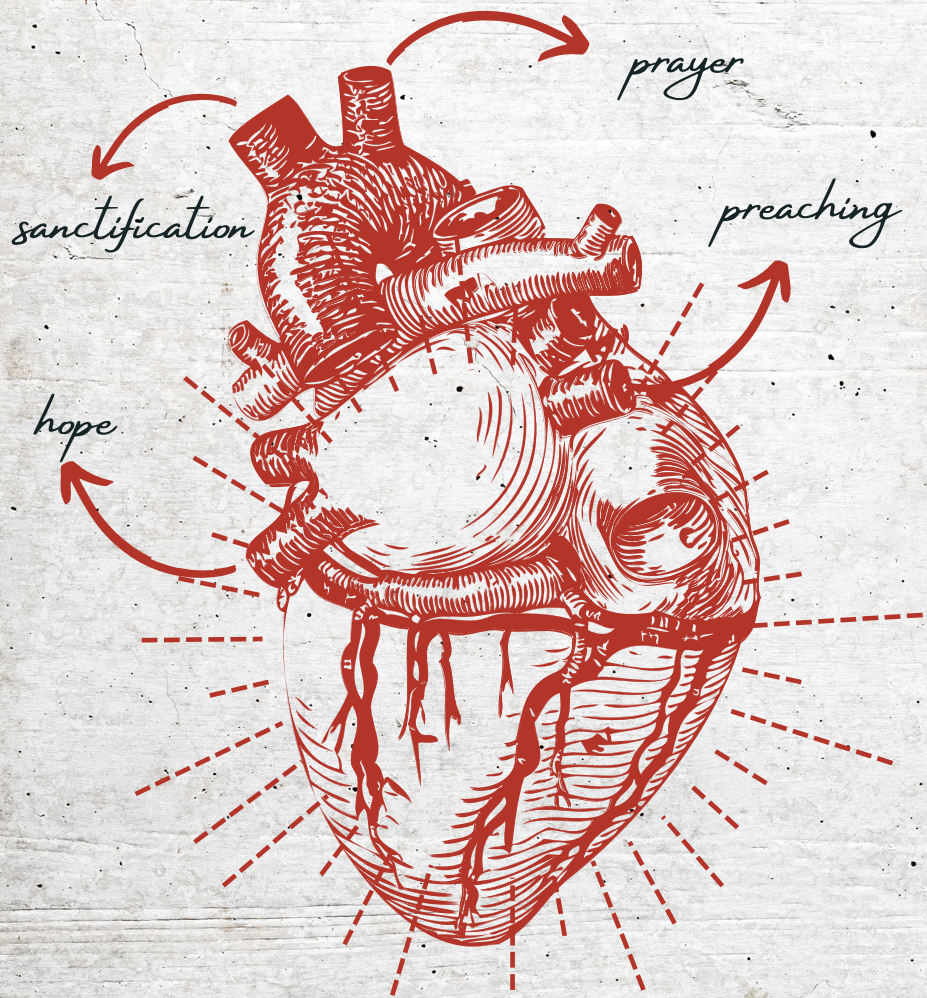
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



The *heart* of the GOSPEL



A STUDY THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS

What Difference Does It Make?

Dec 12

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28

What Difference Does It Make?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

12 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. 15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.

23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

25 Brothers, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

27 I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

~~~

# What Difference Does It Make?

As we come to the end of 1 Thessalonians it feels as if Paul has run out of time or perhaps space on his parchment and sort of haphazardly jots down a list of "oh, and before I forget." The book ends with a list of sixteen commands that at first glance might not feel too connected. But make no mistake; the Holy Spirit has not left anything to chance. This last section in 1 Thessalonians is really a litmus test for a healthy Christian community. What does a healthy church look like? What are the things a healthy church does week after week?

Join us this Sunday as we finish our study in 1 Thessalonians.

In Him,

Pastor TJ



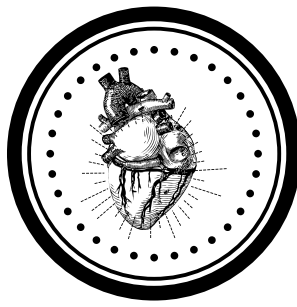
*He who calls you is faithful*

## Discussion Questions

Please scan the QR code for some background information on 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28.



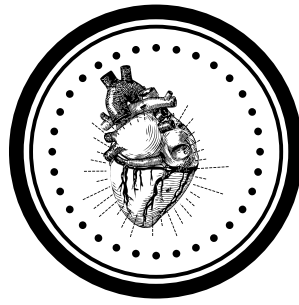
1. Share the examples of godly church leadership in your life. What are their qualities that stand out to you?
2. Read verses 12 and 13. What are the godly leadership characteristics according to Paul?
3. As a leader in your sphere, what areas can you grow in godliness?



*He who calls you is faithful*

## Discussion Questions

4. What does being an active member of the church mean for you? What difference does it make for you to be officially a church member?
5. Read verse 14. According to the apostle Paul, what should active members in the church be doing?
6. If you look at the above characteristics of membership in a healthy church, what do you think City Church is doing well in, and in which areas members as a body can improve?
7. Read verse 14 and verse 12 again. What are the two different groups Paul is addressing here and why?
8. Read verses 15 to 18. What Christ-like attitudes should members exhibit in order to form a healthy church community? Look for the verses in the Gospels where Jesus teaches about it.
9. What practical ways can you incorporate these Christ-like attitudes daily into your life?



*He who calls you is faithful*

## Discussion Questions

10. In which areas do you need to grow the most and how can you go about doing it?
11. Read verses 15 and 16 to 18 again. Discuss the importance of both our horizontal (to one another) and vertical (to God) relationships?
12. Read verses 19 to 22. How is the work of the Holy Spirit displayed in these passages and what are the warnings Paul gives the church in relation to the Holy Spirit?
13. Read verses 23 and 24. How does knowing who is in charge of our sanctification change your daily attitude towards being a part of a healthy church community?
14. Finish today's study by praying for City Church to be a godly community in respect of the leadership and church members. Pray for the leaders by name and pray for your members to grow in holiness.



*He who calls you is faithful*

## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports