

## Life Group Notes 4/14/2024

Pastor Mark Warren

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[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 4/14. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On Macedonia and Achaia, and the importance of New Testament geography.](#)
2. [On faith in the gardens of NH.](#)

\*\*\***Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. \*\*\*

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<sup>1</sup>Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:  
Grace and peace to you.

<sup>2</sup>We always thank God for all of you, remembering you in our prayers <sup>3</sup>and continually recalling before our God and Father your work of faith, your labor of love, and your enduring hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Look at Paul's opening remarks. To what degree does Paul recall to the Thessalonians his first trip there?
2. How well do the Thessalonians know Paul, Timothy and Silvanus? Why?
3. What form does Paul's prayer take here? How important is thanksgiving?
4. How much more effective is it when you can list everything the object of your prayers has done for which you are grateful? What does gratitude do to a heart?
5. Take a minute to read Acts 17:1-15 What do you notice?
6. What exactly does he remember of the people of Thessalonica? (What does he know of their "work of faith and their labor of love?" How did they help Paul?)
7. Pastor spoke of "starting to plant his garden (note: New Hampshire...in April)." [See footnote 2 below.](#)
8. Thessalonica was the second European city Paul visited after Philippi. Recall what happened to him in Philippi.

*4*Brothers who are beloved by God, we know that He has chosen you, *5*because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with great conviction—just as you know we lived among you for your sake. *6*And you became imitators of us and of the Lord when you welcomed the message with the joy of the Holy Spirit, in spite of your great suffering.

1. Before coming to Macedonia, Paul had been forbidden to travel to Asia (where Ephesus is located) and elsewhere in present-day Turkey. How did Paul know the Thessalonians were chosen?
2. What form did the display of that power take in Thessalonica? How could the Thessalonians know they were chosen?
3. How does Pastor Mark know that the seed he planted is actually changing the soil in which he planted it? What does he see each day? What proves that the seed has taken root?
4. Were there weeds in the soil of Thessalonica?
5. Look closely at verse 4. What part did the display of the power of God play in the confirmation of the gospel?
6. What part did Paul play (v. 6)?
7. How was Paul's behavior different from what the Thessalonians were used to? Why is it good to have an example to imitate? Do you have an example you can follow?
8. Would you want someone to imitate you?
9. What part does the display of the power of Holy Spirit play today? What do you think? Should we begin to expect more in the coming days? What does it mean if there is no notable display?

Look at what Paul tells the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 2: *1*When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. *2*For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. *3*I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. *4*My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, *5*so that your faith would not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

1. Compare what Paul tells the Corinthians to what Paul reminded the Thessalonians of. Why is it important to remember the signs and the miracles?
2. Have you ever witnessed a real miracle? How does actually witnessing a miracle help one's faith? One's own testimony?
3. Does your faith rest more on the wisdom of men? Or more on the power of God?

*7*As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. *8*For not only did the message of the Lord ring out from you to Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone out to every place, so that we have no need to say anything more. *9*For they themselves report what kind of welcome you gave us, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God *10*and to await His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead—Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath.

1. Who, besides Paul, has become an example to follow? How does that work?
2. From Macedonia to Achaia is from the far north to the extreme south of Greece. How effective is the power of a good reputation? How far can a reputation spread?
3. What has been the impact of the example set by the Thessalonians?
4. Why does that encourage Paul?
5. Why does that encourage the rest of the church, wherever the gospel is preached?

6. Have you ever said, "Do what I say and not what I do?" Why is this removed from the gospel? What is lacking?
7. Why is it better to say, "Let's do this...run with me?" What is the hope expressed in this?
8. How does faith go viral and become revival?
9. What is the importance of your example at work? With your children?
10. Look at what Paul told the Corinthians: 1 Cor 10: [31](#)*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. [32](#)Do not become a stumbling block, whether to Jews or Greeks or the church of God— [33](#)as I also try to please everyone in all I do. For I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, that they may be saved. 11: [1](#)You are to imitate me, just as I imitate Christ. [2](#)Now I commend you for remembering me in everything and for maintaining the traditions, just as I passed them on to you.* How does this compare to us? To you? How have we been taught?
11. If you have not had a good example to follow, how do you begin to be that example to follow? What is the first step?
12. Look at verse 33. What are the three categories of believers Paul mentions? How is the culture of each different?
13. Is it hypocrisy to behave differently in different cultures?
14. How does our behavior change with each culture? What is the goal?
15. Pastor Mark says, "Our world today does not need more fake. Our world today needs genuine followers of Jesus." Reconcile this principle with what Paul says above. How is first, the glory of God, and then secondly, the good of your neighbors key in everything we say and do?
16. Look at 11:2. What does this remind you of? Why is it helpful to ask, "What would Paul do?"
17. Why is it essential to remember the coming wrath? What is the impact of this imminent and real threat on our own timetable?
18. Look at Hebrews 12: [1](#)*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off every encumbrance and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with endurance the race set out for us. [2](#)Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. [3](#)Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.* How does keeping our eyes set on Jesus help maintain the focus we need to face each day? How does Jesus become "our strong fortress?"
19. What shame was in the cross? What shame have we scorned? Does it compare?
20. Pastor says, "Our focus is on our relationship with Jesus, and we are to live this out in a genuine way." How does this become the answer to our own struggles? What does maintaining this focus give our family, our neighbors, our church...and our work?

**For Extra Credit:**

Look up Acts 17: [5](#)*The Jews, however, became jealous. So they brought in some troublemakers from the marketplace, formed a mob, and sent the city into an uproar. They raided Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas, hoping to bring them out to the people. [6](#)But when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have now come*

here, [7](#) and Jason has welcomed them into his home. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, named Jesus!"

[8](#) On hearing this, the crowd and city officials were greatly disturbed. [9](#) And they collected bond from Jason and the others, and then released them.

[10](#) As soon as night had fallen, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went into the Jewish synagogue. [11](#) Now the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if these teachings were true. [12](#) As a result, many of them believed, along with quite a few prominent Greek women and men.

[13](#) But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that Paul was also proclaiming the word of God in Berea, they went there themselves to incite and agitate the crowds. [14](#) The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained in Berea.

1. How did the Jews start the unrest in Thessalonica? Why?
2. In your experience, what role has jealousy played in any unrest?
3. What is the fear that the bad guys are playing to?
4. Where did Paul go after Thessalonica?
5. What is the first place to which they go in Berea? Why? What distinguished the Berean Jews from the Thessalonian Jews?
6. From this narrative, what do you think is the best defense against a false doctrine?
7. Who followed him to Berea?
8. Distinguish between the "white hats" of Thessalonica and the "black hats." What do the "good guys" in Thessalonica do? What do the "bad guys" do?
9. Does Paul write anything to the "black hats?" Why not? Would they listen?
10. Have you ever seen anything similar happen? Who in Acts also went everywhere he could to destroy the budding church, even from Jerusalem to Damascus? What happened to him on the road to Damascus?
11. What hope is there for the black hats that transcends our own efforts? What can we do? For whom are you praying?
12. Explain the difference between "conviction" and "condemnation." If Paul says, "There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," which attitude is constructive?
13. How does repentance and humility become a part of the example you set?
14. Why is it better to sing, "I did it thy way," than to sing "I did it my way?" Whose way sets the standard?

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### **The Follow-up Application**

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Make a habit of re-reading Paul's opening in all his epistles. Ask these questions:
  - a. To whom is he writing?
  - b. How does he know these people? (How much time did he spend with them?)
  - c. Who are his traveling companions and how well and why do the recipients know them?

- d. What is he praying for them specifically?
3. Make a list of the unforgettable signs you have seen that confirm the gospel.
4. List what needs to change for you to become an example to imitate.
5. Mark listed three responses: Action. Influence. Perseverance. Decide to take a step.

**Take the time to pray.**

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**Scribe's Notes:**

1. **On Macedonia and Achaia, and the importance of New Testament Geography**—Paul is writing to people familiar with their own geography. Sometimes, we, as readers in North America, lack the familiarity that the names of territories and cities evoke. (My European friends, when told I hailed from the North Coast of Ohio, wondered if I were nearer to New York City, or San Francisco.) Paul's vision in Troas, on the western coast of present-day Turkey, was of a Macedonian urging to him to come there. Paul would know the significance of the call, because it was to leave the Asian sub-continent, and bring the church deliberately to Europe for the first time. Macedonia was the kingdom from which Alexander the Great conquered all the known world, and was still the heart of the world where koine Greek, biblical Greek, was spoken. The first European city to see the display of the gospel was Philippi, a Roman colony, whose citizens were born Roman. Thessalonica was the first "foreign" city to receive the gospel. Paul's contemporaries, and Luke's readers, would all understand this as a matter of course. Achaia was the province on the southern tip of Greece, west of Athens, whose capital city was Corinth. Thus when Luke mentions Apollos' desire to go to Achaia in Acts 18, his desire is to go and witness first-hand what Priscilla and Aquila had spoken to him of, one of the first truly Charismatic churches on the European continent, the Church of Corinth, where Paul, Priscilla and Aquila had already spent years establishing Christian ministry of disciples all filled with the Holy Spirit. Knowing these trivial points, rather than making one accomplished at Trivial Pursuit, serves to buttress our own understanding of the spread and deliberate establishment of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire and the known world. As Pastor Mark pointed out in his introduction, God is speaking to us today just as He spoke in times past to those whom He chose and to whom He sent His servants. As the Spirit spoke expressly to His friends in Thessalonica, He is speaking through His servants to His friends today. What signs have you seen to confirm this?
9. **On faith in the gardens of NH**—Pastor spoke of "starting to plant his garden (note: New Hampshire...in April)." How is that a work of faith and a labor of love?

What can Pastor expect? What does real faith produce? Is that a random result of faith? Or can the same result be expected every time? What is being planted? What is in the seed? What happens when faith is tried...say, a blizzard in May? Does that stop you from planting? Why not? How does the effort itself create its own value?

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**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Acts 17:1-7
Tuesday: Acts 17:10-14
Wednesday: 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6
Thursday: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
Friday: 1 Thessalonians 1:7-10
Saturday: 1 Corinthians 9:19-21
Sunday: 1 Cor 10:31-33 11:1-2

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.