

Life Group Notes 6/23/2024
Pastor Mark Warren 2 Thessalonians 3

[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. 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.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 6/23. 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 the Word of the Lord.](#)
2. [On Geography.](#)
3. [In contrast, on the character of the Bereans.](#)
4. [On where weeds come from.](#)

*****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. ***

Pastor Mark begins by describing how he likes growing things. He says he has a vineyard, an apple orchard...and a vegetable garden. This time of year is particularly enjoyable to him, because he gets to see the life he planted and husbanded in the cold months that are now growing strong in his garden. But, he says, "...there is other life growing up beside my vegetables. They're called weeds."

1. Where did Pastor's seeds come from?
2. Where did the weeds' seeds come from?
3. Who planted the weeds?

Pastor says, "I love gardening, except for the weeding part. Yet, I'll know how well I did the weeding last year by the kind of weeds I get this year."

1. Explain.
2. Why would last year's weeds come back to haunt the bed this year?
3. Pastor says, "Seeds produce life." How does the garden turn into a parable?
4. How are our words like seeds that will either produce life or death?
5. Look up Proverbs 18: *20*From the fruit of his mouth a man's belly is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. *21* Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. What does this say? What do you notice?
6. Who is responsible for what you say? Do you love your tongue?

7. Now look at the verse that precedes these: *19An offended brother is harder to win than a fortified city, and disputes are like the bars of a castle.* What caused the brother to be offended? Whose words? What brings disputes?
8. Pastor asks, "How many of you like to be right?" Answer him. Do you? At what cost?
9. Look up Matthew 12: *33Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. 34You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. 35The good man brings good things out of his good store of treasure, and the evil man brings evil things out of his evil store of treasure.* Where do our words come from, according to Jesus? How are they stored?
10. How are you doing?

Look at 2 Thessalonians 3: *1*Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, *2*and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. *3*But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. *4*And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. *5*May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

1. Read these verses carefully. What is the nature of the prayer that Paul is seeking from the Thessalonians? Why would their prayer be especially effective? What have they already seen?
2. Where does his request for prayer end, and the prophecy begin?
3. What exactly are the prayers? What does an answer to those prayers look like?
4. How is it that a prayer like this, that the word of the Lord "...be honored..." as it was in Thessalonica, be a prayer for Paul and his companions? What is Paul's task? How was the Word received in Thessalonica? (See Acts 17 below.)
5. What is the prophecy? How are we established by this word?
6. How is the evil one defeated by a single promise? Where does hope come from?
7. Pastor points out, "What we need to know is how to appropriate the love of God, and to know how we 'stand steadfast' as Jesus Christ did." What steps do we take?
8. Take a moment to pray these prayers over you and your group. What do you expect will come from your prayer?

Pastor Mark says, "We want our words to be God's words, and that they will be honoring to Jesus." Review how this worked with Paul when he first encountered the Thessalonians in Acts 17: *1*When they had [left Philippi and] passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. *2*As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, *3*explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he declared. *4*Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few leading women. *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.

1. What do you see? How many weeks did it take for the Word to have an impact?
2. Look again at verse 1. What happened among the Thessalonians?
3. How were Paul and his companions protected from wicked and evil men?
4. How long did that protection last? Who benefitted most from that protection?
5. Who received the Word with honor? Were they all Jews? Were some Jews?
6. Who didn't receive it with honor? Do you have a guess as to why they rejected the Word?
7. What was the fruit from those who did not receive the Word?
8. Where had Paul ever "...turned the world upside down?" What decree ever come from Caesar concerning them? Were the accusers making things up?
9. Why is Paul's prayer, and yours today, then, so important?
10. Will the enemy always come? Where do weeds come from? (Take a moment. [See footnote 4 below.](#))
11. Can his work be delayed by prayer? Explain.
12. Have you ever seen a church split like what happened in Thessalonica, or as Jesus describes it [in footnote 4 below](#)? Can you describe what you saw, without resurrecting the feelings that the situation might have evoked? What wisdom came from the events you witnessed?
13. Who is to blame? How can you thwart the enemy?
14. What benefit came to the Thessalonians, because of the enemy's uprising?
15. What benefit came to the Bereans because bad Jews in Thessalonica behaved badly? To the Athenians? To the Corinthians? To Europe and ultimately to us all, partly due to the uprising in Thessalonica?
16. What impact will the Thessalonians' prayer have ultimately on Paul's work in Berea? In Corinth?
17. How do your prayers impact the spread of the gospel?
18. As their enemies rose up from their own ranks, how will the memories of their experience with Paul enhance their prayers?

Pastor Mark continues with 2 Thessalonians 3:[6](#)*Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. [7](#)For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, [8](#)nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. [9](#)It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. [10](#)For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. [11](#)For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. [12](#)Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. [13](#)As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. [14](#)If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. [15](#)Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.*

1. Take a moment to read this again.
2. What do you see?

3. What means did Paul use to teach the Thessalonians?
4. What did they hear?
5. What did they see?
6. Are you one to be imitated? Or avoided?
7. What happens when you hang out with disorderly people?
8. Look at what Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15: [33](#)*Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good character."* [34](#)*Sober up as you ought, and stop sinning; for some of you are ignorant of God. I say this to your shame....* How does this fit into what Paul is telling the Thessalonians?
9. How does the evil seed that Jesus described, planted by the enemy, work?
10. What is the fruit of his lips?

Pastor describes the impact of the words that you yourselves "...spoke this morning that have been released into the atmosphere." They have potential for life and death, as proverbs makes clear.

1. What impact does a harsh word have on you?
2. What impact does a soft word have on you?
3. What is the power behind affirmation? Why?
4. Do you have a testimony?

Look up 2 Corinthians 10: [1](#)*I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!—* [2](#)*I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.* [3](#)*For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.* [4](#)*For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.* [5](#)*We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,* [6](#)*being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.*

1. What do you see?
2. What are the "weapons of this world?" What are Paul's weapons?
3. What are the targets of the "weapons of this world?"
4. Does Paul target people? What are Paul's targets?
5. What role do words play in Paul's warfare?
6. What strongholds dominate our lives? How do you destroy them?
7. How are "arguments and lofty opinions raised against the knowledge of God and our thoughts..." a stronghold to be demolished?
8. How does a word fitly spoken in season change everything? Can thoughts become constructive?
9. Look at verse 6, and explain why disobedience is not always punished right away.
10. When is disobedience punished?
11. Why does Paul tell the Philippians in 4: [8](#)*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* [9](#)*What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.* How is this warfare?
12. What do you think? How does Paul's warfare involve "taking thoughts captive?"

Pastor Mark says, "Our minds need to create 'reason' for things. So, if we don't have 'reason' or understanding, we then talk about them to try to create that reason or understanding, but we're creating a narrative that is probably not true. We're talking about things without having all the information...and our talk is probably gossip. Then we try to make reason out of the circumstance, and in our effort to understand, we end up creating a narrative that may not be true. The result is a judgment that ends up bringing judgment back on us.

1. Do you have a testimony? Do the "reasons" we create tend toward the positive, not suspecting evil? Or the negative side?
2. Paul calls the idle Thessalonians "busybodies." How does this false narrative Pastor describes make busybodies of those who are not careful?
3. Why is it essential to take our own thoughts captive? Who benefits when we do?
4. How does the list from Philippians above become a filter for our own thoughts?
5. Can it become a filter for our words as well? How?

Look at the description of Jesus in Revelation 1:¹²*Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,*¹³*and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.*

1. Pastor asks, "Why is there a two-edged sword coming from His mouth?" What do you think?
2. What is the power in God's words?
3. What has His Word done?
4. Hebrews 1:3 says, "*He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*" Is there a limit to this power? How do we know?
5. Pastor asks, thinking of our words again as seeds, "What are we planting?" Answer him.
6. Look at Hebrews 4: ¹²*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it pierces even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* How powerful are our words?
7. How do words fitly spoken in season demolish strongholds.
8. Have you ever lost an argument because a word was fitly spoken in season and your argument was demolished? Do you have a testimony?
9. How can a word "...produce a harvest for Jesus and His kingdom," as Pastor suggests that they should? Have you seen this happen?

Pastor offers these questions for an inventory:

1. What are you allowing to come into your mind?
 - a. Should we be concerned? What happens if we think on *those things* and not **these things** Paul suggests we think on? What fruit do *those things* tend to bear?
 - b. Where do weeds come from?
 - c. With whom are you hanging out? Is your good character being corrupted?
2. Do you talk more with people? Or do you talk about people?

- a. Remember: What does a “busybody” do?
 - b. How does a conversation about people tend to stray?
 - c. Can you redeem such a conversation? How?
 - d. If your words are going in someone’s ear, someone’s heart and mind, what are your words producing?
 - e. What happens when every thought has been “taken captive unto obedience?”
3. What are you doing with your time?
- a. Look back at 1 Thess 3: [6](#) *Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.* What does it look like to “walk in idleness?” Does one have to be “walking?” (Fill in the blank: (“Couch –”)
 - b. Looking again at the sins of Sodom from Ezekiel 16:49 *“Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”* In Sodom’s case, what did their abundance of idleness lead to?
 - c. Is it possible that we’re entertaining ourselves to death, as Leonard Ravenhill suggested in the early sixties? What is the solution?
 - d. Where does Jesus say that our words come from? What fills the heart?
4. Do your words bring people to Jesus? Does the Word of the Lord “speed ahead” in your conversation, as Paul described his wish in the beginning of this chapter?
- a. Are your words honoring to Jesus?
 - b. Are you aware of what your words are doing? Are you mindful?
 - c. Do your words direct people to the love of God, and the steadfastness of Jesus Christ? Is that possible?
 - d. What is your response to the troubles so magnified ahead by today’s media? Do people see the “steadfastness of Christ” in your words and your patience?
 - e. Do people know your faith and the love of God?
 - f. Do you plant weeds or “amazing vegetables that produce life for people?”
 - g. Proverbs 25: [11](#) *says A word fitly spoken in season is like apples of gold in settings of silver.* How do your words compare?
 - h. How badly does our world need a word fitly spoken today?

Look back again at verse 2 Thess 3:6 and 7 above.

1. What do you think? Are you one who is “OK” to be around? Or are you one to avoid? Why?
2. What is the “tradition” they received from Paul? Is it ancient...or fresh and new?
3. What do you think when you read verse 13? Have you ever grown tired of “doing good?” Do you have a testimony?

End with this prayer:

[16](#) *Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.* What does an answer to this prayer look like? How is your life changed?

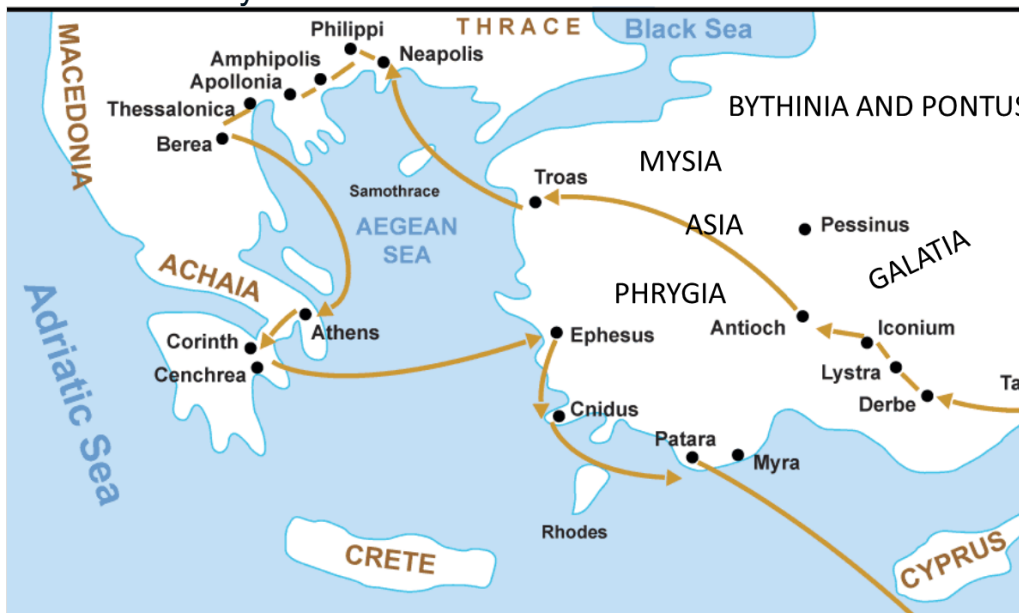
The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Decide to imitate Paul. What needs to change? Make a list.
3. Listen to your own words this week. Life? Or Death? How will you know?
4. Begin to take every thought captive. Write down what makes this difficult.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On the word of the Lord**—It is not by accident that the universe was created by the Word. Take a moment to review Genesis 1, and see how the spoken Word created everything, and see that nothing was made without a word spoken. Then review John 1, and try to see how your words can have the same impact on the world around you.
2. **On Geography**—Luke's precision in tracing geographical routes is one of the chief pieces of evidence that establish credence in his work. Luke's writing has been used to recover lost historical sites. Here we see that Paul received a vision in Troas after being denied access to Asia (and the city of Ephesus), where the gospel was sent for the first time into Europe. Luke traces Paul's and his companions' route from where they landed to Philippi, and then the process from Philippi through Amphipolis and Apollonia to come eventually to Thessalonica and Berea.



Paul's Second Missionary Journey

AD 49-52

3. **In Contrast, on the character of the Bereans**—The narrative in Acts continues from Paul's impact in Thessalonica, and leads to one of the most instructive contrasts in Luke's account. Acts 17:¹⁰*As soon as night had fallen, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went into the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹Now 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.^a¹²As a result, many of them believed, along with quite a few prominent Greek women and men. ¹³But 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. ¹⁴The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained in Berea.*
- What eventually drove Paul from Thessalonica?
 - Contrast the reception of the Word in Thessalonica with His reception in Berea? What happened in Berea? What did not happen in Berea?
 - Who came to Berea to disrupt their reception of the Word? (Did weeds still come to the field?)
 - How could Silas and Timothy remain in Berea? Why were they safe there?
4. **On where weeds come from**—Look up Matthew 13: ²⁴*Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while everyone was asleep, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and slipped away.²⁶When the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' ²⁸'An enemy did this,' he replied.*
- What do you see?
 - Where do weeds come from?
- Now look at Jesus' explanation of this parable: ³⁷He replied, "The One who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, and the good seed represents the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ⁴⁰As the weeds are collected and burned in the fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will weed out of His kingdom every cause of sin and all who practice lawlessness.⁴²And they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.
- Explain what happened in Thessalonica.
 - Did anything unusual happen in Thessalonica? Or is this to be expected when we sow? Is anything unusual happening in Pastor Mark's garden?
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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: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5
Tuesday: Hebrews 4:11-13
Wednesday: Proverbs 18:19-21
Thursday: Luke 6:44-46
Friday: Matthew 12:33-37
Saturday: Matthew 13:24-30
Sunday: Matthew 13:37-43

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.