



devonport
church of christ

SEPT/OCT 2025



6 WEEKS OF Small Group Studies

Sermon based Small Group studies are designed to be explored with your Small Group after hearing the Sunday sermon. A time of prayer should accompany the session.

To access the sermon again, please head to the church website or YouTube channel www.devonportcoc.com.au

Name

1 THESSALONIANS: KINGDOM COME

Context

Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians around AD 50–51, making it one of his earliest letters. The church in Thessalonica was planted during Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 17:1–9). After only a few weeks of ministry, Paul and his companions were forced to leave the city due to persecution. Despite his short time with them, the Thessalonians embraced the gospel wholeheartedly and quickly became known for their faith. Paul, deeply concerned about their wellbeing, sent Timothy to check on them. Timothy's positive report prompted Paul to write this letter.

Thessalonica itself was a bustling, strategic city in Macedonia, known for its commerce, cultural diversity, and loyalty to Rome. Believers there faced pressure both from pagan society and from hostility stirred up by Jewish opponents.

Main Purpose

Paul's letter seeks to:

- Encourage the believers in their young but vibrant faith.
- Defend the integrity of his ministry against accusations.
- Strengthen their hope in the face of suffering and death by reminding them of Christ's return.
- Urge holy living—calling them to grow in love, purity, and readiness for the “Day of the Lord.”
- Above all, Paul wanted them to know that their faith was real, their endurance mattered, and their future was secure in Christ.

Major Themes

Faith, Love, and Hope – These three virtues run throughout the letter as hallmarks of authentic Christianity.

Integrity in Ministry – Paul models servant leadership marked by sincerity, care, and courage.

Suffering and Perseverance – The Thessalonians' trials are not signs of failure but evidence of their sharing in Christ's story.

Holiness and Love – Christian faith is displayed in sexual purity, love for one another, and daily work that honours God.

The Coming of the Lord – Paul reminds believers of the certain hope of resurrection and the call to live in readiness for Christ's return.

Encouragement and Community – Repeatedly Paul urges them to “encourage one another” and to build up the church as they wait for the kingdom in its fullness.

Week 1: Faith that makes an impact (1 Thess 1:1-10)

Big Idea: A genuine faith in Jesus, empowered by the Spirit, not only transforms our lives but also echoes out to influence others.

Icebreaker Question

- Think about someone who has had a great impact on your faith journey. What was it about them that impacted your spiritual growth?

In the Scriptures

Read 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10

1. How does Paul describe evidence of the Thessalonians' faith, love, and hope in this passage?
2. What evidence does Paul give that the gospel came to them "not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction" (v5)?

Describe a time when you felt a deep conviction from God that prompted change.

3. In what ways had the Thessalonians become an example to other believers? Why do you think new Christians sometimes display more joy about their faith than those who have been Christians for some time?

Life Application Questions

1. What would it look like for your faith to “ring out” in your community?
2. Paul talks about the Thessalonians receiving the gospel in word and in power (v5). How can you cultivate a deeper openness to the Spirit’s power in your daily life?
3. Who in your life might be watching your example of following Jesus, and how can you encourage them?

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:3

4. Paul was praying with thankfulness for the Thessalonian church (v2-3). If someone was praying for our church from afar, what might they be thankful for? What is a standout characteristic of our church that is inspired by our faith, hope or love for Jesus?

Prayer Focus

As you share prayer points among your group, remember the ministries of our church that ring out into the community.

Week 2: A Ministry of Integrity (1 Thess. 2:1–12)

Big Idea: Authentic ministry flows from integrity, gentleness, and devotion to God—not from seeking approval or personal gain.

Icebreaker Question

- Share a time when someone’s authenticity or integrity deeply influenced you.

In the Scriptures

Read 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-12

1. How does Paul contrast his ministry with those who seek to please people or pursue personal gain?

In what ways do these differences still ring true today?

2. What metaphors does Paul use to describe his relationship with the Thessalonians, and why are they significant?

3. What does Paul mean when he says he “encouraged, comforted and urged” them to live lives worthy of God (v11-12)?

Do you have a parent figure or more mature Christian who speaks into your life to encourage, comfort or urge you on in your faith?

Life Application Questions

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:4-5 again. How did Paul ensure that he maintained his integrity as a Christian?

What is an area of your life that you can ask God to “test” your heart, to ensure your motives remain pure?

2. How can you model integrity and authenticity in your workplace, family or community, as you “share the gospel of Jesus, and your lives as well” (v8)?
3. What would it look like for our church to embody both gentleness and guidance (like parents) in ministry? Can you think of examples where this is happening?
4. What steps can you take this week to live a life “worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory” (v12)?

Prayer Focus

Among your prayer and praise points, share a ministry you are involved with, where you aim to serve God with authenticity and integrity.

Week 3: Standing Firm in Suffering (1 Thess. 2:13–20)

Big Idea: When trials come, we stand firm by holding onto God's Word and encouraging one another with faith and hope.

Icebreaker Questions

- When life is tough, which practices or people help you stand strong in your faith?

In the Scriptures

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

1. How did the Thessalonians respond to Paul's message? What does Paul identify as the catalyst for the work of God in their lives (v13)?
2. What kinds of suffering did the Thessalonians experience, and how does Paul compare their experience to the churches in Judea?
3. How does Paul describe his longing to see the Thessalonians again, and what does this reveal about his heart for them?
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 again. Who are you investing into spiritually, that you hope will one day be your joy and crown, because of their faith?

Life Application Questions

1. What challenges to your faith do you face, and how can this passage help you endure?
2. How can the example of other believers—both local and global—encourage you to stand firm? Can you think of a testimony from someone you don't know personally that inspires your faith?
3. Who do you long to encourage in their faith, and what could you do this week to reach out? How will encouraging someone else, encourage you?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-3. In what ways are you ministering in your home, church, workplace or community, that is leaving an impression of God's Spirit on human hearts?

Prayer Focus

When you pray for each other, also pray for the person who is on your heart, who you are aiming to encourage this week.

Week 4: How Christians Should Love One Another (1 Thess. 3:11–13; 4:1–12)

Big Idea: The Christian life is marked by holiness and a love that grows deeper and wider, shaping every part of how we live.

Icebreaker Questions

- What's the most memorable example of Christian love that you have experienced personally?

In the Scriptures

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11–13; 4:1–12

1. What does Paul pray for in 3:11–13, and how does this set up his instructions in chapter 4?
2. What does it mean to “live in order to please God” in the context of this passage? (4:1)
3. How does Paul connect holiness, sexual purity, love, and daily work with the Christian witness?

“The word sanctification is related to the word saint; both words have to do with holiness. To “sanctify” something is to set it apart for special use; to “sanctify” a person is to make [them] holy.”

Accessed 3/9/25 at <https://www.gotquestions.org/sanctification.html>

Life Application Questions

1. How can you grow in loving others “more and more”? What is one practical way you can do this, this week?
2. What ‘family of origin’ or cultural pressures around sexuality or lifestyle do you face, and how can you live distinctly as a follower of Jesus?
3. Read v7-8 again. Think of a time when sinfulness (yours or someone else’s or perhaps even a terrible crime) clashed with God’s Holy Spirit inside you. How did you manage that clash?
4. How does working diligently and living quietly point people toward Christ today?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:12 again. Is there an inconsistency between your daily life and the faith you profess, that would cause an unbeliever *not* to respect you?

Prayer Focus

Close your prayer time with this benediction based on 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

May the Lord make our love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else... May he strengthen our hearts so that we will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Week 5: Encouragement in the Coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13–18)

Big Idea: The certain hope of Christ's return transforms our grief into encouragement and our waiting into hope.

Icebreaker Questions

- Share a story of a time when you found hope in the face of loss.

In the Scriptures

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

1. How does Paul address the Thessalonians' concerns about believers who have died?
2. What images does Paul use to describe the Lord's return, and what do they communicate?
3. Look again at verse 13. Why does Paul command the believers to "encourage one another with these words" (v18)?

How could giving or receiving encouragement transform your attitude toward other things you may be waiting for?

Life Application Questions

1. Paul explains a Biblical truth, then tells the church community to encourage each other with it. In what ways do you genuinely encourage other believers with gospel truth?
2. How does the hope of resurrection shape the way you handle grief and loss?
3. What difference does the promise of Christ's return make in your day-to-day life? Is this evident to unbelievers you regularly come into contact with?
4. Who in your life needs comfort or encouragement right now, and how could you bring them hope this week?

Prayer Focus

Share something God has been doing in your life or in our church, that has encouraged you recently.

Week 6: Living in Readiness (1 Thess. 5:1–11)

Big Idea: As children of the light, we live in watchful readiness for Christ's return—faithful, hopeful, and encouraging one another.

Icebreaker Questions

- What's something in life you always try to be prepared for?

In the Scriptures

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1. What does Paul mean when he says the “day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night”? What emotions does that phrase evoke in you?
2. How does Paul contrast the identity of believers as “children of light” with those in darkness?
3. What are the key instructions Paul gives for how to live in readiness?
4. Paul cycles back to the themes of faith, hope and love in verse 8, saying we should be “putting [them] on”. Which of these three do you need to be more intentional about in your life?

Life Application Questions

1. What would it look like for you to live with greater spiritual alertness and anticipation of Jesus' return?

2. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11 and Ephesians 4:15-16
How can you encourage and build others up in your church as you wait for the day of Jesus' return?

3. If Christ were to return tomorrow...
 - what would you want to have done differently today?

 - which areas of your Christian Walk would he encourage, saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

4. How does Christ's imminent return prompt you to pray for those you love?

Prayer Focus

As well as your own prayer requests, pray for someone in your life who doesn't know Jesus yet.

