

THESSALONIANS*Life Group Study Guide | Holy Cross Church***WEEK OF SEPT 9 - 13****INTRODUCTION TO SERIES**

This week we begin our church-wide Life Groups as we walk through the books of First and Second Thessalonians, written by the Apostle Paul to the church in the city of Thessalonica around A.D. 50. Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia, a Roman province in Northern Greece and had a population of more than 100,000 (as one of the few biblical cities still in existence today, the city's population is about 1 million).

Paul proclaims the gospel in Thessalonica and a church is born. Possibly only after a month in the city, Paul experiences extreme persecution and is forced to flee for his life. Narrowly escaping by night, Paul, Timothy, and Silas journeyed west.

Paul is devastated because he loves these new Christians and he feels his ministry there was cut short and he is dying to know how they are doing. So, he sends Timothy, his young apprentice to the Christians to encourage them and see how they are doing in their faith and new life with Jesus. Timothy returns to Paul with his report.

These two letters (1 and 2 Thessalonians) are a response to that report.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Imagine you've only been a Christian for a month and the person who taught you everything you know about Jesus has gone away. Perhaps imagine when you personally were a brand new Christian. What was it like? What new challenges did you face in life due to your newfound faith in Jesus? Where did you feel most vulnerable in your faith? **Discuss any of these together as a group.**

READ

Read through the complete passage for our opening questions: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

STUDY & APPLY

1. In verses 3-5 Paul recalls the signs of life he observed among the Thessalonian church, even in the short time he spent with them. He observed and thanked God for their *works of faith, labor of love, and steadfastness of hope*.

Consider and discuss together what it would look to faithfully exhibit these three signs of gospel life in your Life Group this year:

- a) Work of faith
- b) Labor of love
- c) Steadfastness of hope

2. What does it mean for the gospel to come not only in word, but in power? Discuss what it would look like to prioritize a study of Scripture in our Life Groups aimed at transformation versus mere transfer of information. (see vs. 9-10)

3. The Thessalonian church leaves a remarkable impression not only on Paul but on the surrounding areas in Greece and neighboring countries. Close your time together discussing what it would like to have others in neighborhood, workplace, school or church telling the story of your faith.

PRAY

Spend a few minutes praying for the fulfillment of the picture from question 3 above. Pray for the increase of your faith, love, and hope in the midst of all situations—and the gospel to transform our hearts and lives through the power of the living God.