

Dig Deeper @Home – “Return of the King”

Complement to sermon on December 18, 2016 – “An Upward Trend”

MEMORIZE – 1st Thessalonians 1:4

For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

READ 1st Thessalonians 4

Questions to ponder/discuss:

1. What is this passage revealing about God and what is it revealing about us as humans?
2. If the above is true, what needs to change in your life? What will that look like?
3. Look again at v7 specifically the prepositions. "For God has not called us *for* impurity but *in* holiness."
 - a. What would it mean if it said "for holiness" instead of "in holiness"?
 - b. What is significant about the word choice that Paul was inspired to use by the Holy Spirit?
 - c. Look at your own life. Where do you see holiness in your life? Where do you see impurity in your life?
 - d. According to v2-7, what is the reason God gave us his Holy Spirit? How can this help your answers the 3c?
4. It seems the church in Thessalonica was experiencing persecution, including death which greatly troubled them to the point where they seemed to be considering leaving the church and the Christian life.
 - a. How does Paul look to encourage them in this? (hint: v13-18)
 - b. Why does Paul say Christians can endure the death of other Christians with hope?

Experiential

Sometimes activities help us to understand and process biblical truths. The one below is a suggestion for how to experience the truths of 1st Thessalonians 2. Feel free to use one of these or any you might come up with.

Location, Location, Location

There is an old saying when it comes to a successful retail business: location, location, location. Location matters. It is important. Your location also matters. This is what Paul was reminding the Thessalonians when he said, "For God has not called us for impurity, but *in* holiness." Here's an activity to help us think about being called *in* holiness and not *for* holiness. Get yourself bundled up as if you were going outside to play in the snow and be sure to use all of the options. Wear long underwear, throw on several shirts, put on snow pants, heavy socks, snow boots, gloves, a scarf, your winter jacket and the hat. But here is the key: stay inside. Stay this way for 5-10 minutes. Now, look at the sentence again. What difference does it make knowing you were not called for holiness but that you were called in holiness?

SING (a suggested song to sing. Use this or any song you might want to sing)

Joy to the World - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8b0ihpaJMJU>

A great song praising Christ for his advent and longing for His return.

Hymn - Come, thou long Expected Jesus - #115 in Mennonite Hymnal

As you sing this song, remember that the Holy Spirit was given that you would experience all the promises this song claims

PRAY

This is a time to gather around for prayer requests and to share how you have seen God at work. A time to hear where God is showing up in our lives and where we need Him to help us in our lives.

Sending prayer based on the lesson: Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love, 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.