

2 THESSALONIANS: THERE'S STILL HOPE



Week One: 2 Thessalonians 1

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

The first letter Paul wrote to the Thessalonians was to encourage new followers of Jesus in faith, hope, and love. Shortly after, Paul sent a second letter because he heard news that they desperately needed to be further encouraged in hope. Pray that these words can remind our kids of the hope we have in Christ in the brokenness of our current day.

- **Big Idea:** No matter what happens around us, we can have hope that Jesus will come to make it right!

Starter

- **Question:** What are some things you hope to happen today? Did you know that when the Bible talks about hope, it is not talking about wishing something will happen, but reminding ourselves of what we *know* will happen? True hope is not like saying, 'I hope I can go to Disneyland today' but more like saying, 'I'm hungry, but I know lunch is coming so I have hope I won't be hungry forever!'

Sing Together

My Hope Is In the Lord - <https://youtu.be/tJePCzTaQo4>

Story

Paul once visited a city called Thessalonica. It was a city in Greece, ruled by the Roman empire, where a lot of other gods were being worshipped. When Paul and his friends shared about Jesus being the Rescuer of the whole world, some people believed but many others got very angry. In fact, Paul was driven out of town. So, he sent Timothy to the believers later with a letter of encouragement. He wanted to celebrate the ways they had shown faith, love, and hope even when the city around them tried violently to stop it - and to encourage them to continue in faith, love, and hope.

A short time later, Paul sent Timothy again with a second letter. He heard they had continued showing faith and love, but because things were very difficult, they were struggling to hold onto hope.

Not only were people upset about the message of Jesus, but some people had pretended to be part of the church so they could spread lies and teach a different story. They would say things like, "Jesus has already come back and he didn't come to rescue us, because we're still left here in a broken world." Some of them pretended to get their message from Paul, so the community would believe them.

So, Paul wrote another letter and he signed it with his own hand so they would have proof it was from him. He sent his trusted friend Timothy to set the record straight. His message went something like this: "All of the church across the world is encouraged by your love and faith! Now hold onto hope, too. Christ is returning. And when he returns, he will rescue you. He will make all things right. And in order to do that, he will defeat all of his enemies - those who are lying about him and trying to stop people from following him and living in his kingdom. Jesus will win. So hold onto that hope and don't stop living in it. In fact, because of that hope, keep working harder to show people what the kingdom is like so they can enter it too!"

Paul wanted them to know that hope isn't just a wish things will get better, but the sure promise that we know it will because of Jesus.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- What does faith mean? What about love? Hope?
- What things made it hard for the Thessalonians to have hope? What things make it hard for us to have hope in Jesus and his kingdom?
- What is the hope that we have in King Jesus?

Breakout Time

- **Prayer:**

God, we confess that we sometimes put our hope in other things besides you. Fill us with your Spirit and help us to look to you and the hope we have that Jesus is coming to make all things right. Amen.

- **BLESS Activity:**

For kids to do during the week

Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask the Spirit to help us to *Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak*, and *Sabbath* (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God's Story.

This week, focus on the **Speak** rhythm. A lot of times we use our rhythm of speaking to complain or to talk about things that don't matter that much. How can you use your words to speak hope to people this week?