

1 THESSALONIANS: FAITH. LOVE. HOPE.



Week Two: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

To the Teachers

This letter to the Thessalonians is one of encouragement and thanksgiving for their faithfulness, but also a call to live even more as God's people. Let's be thankful as a church how God has worked in us, and also ask Him to draw us deeper into His Story. Pray for the kids to be filled with faith, love, and hope.

- **Big Idea:** The Good News of God's kingdom is not greedy for gain.

As Kids Enter (15 minutes - Classroom)

- **Question:** If you could heal a sick person by giving some of your health away, would you do it? What if you could help a poor person by giving some of your stuff? What if sharing the good news of Jesus meant you had to give something up too?

- **Starter:** *Breath of Life*

Use a balloon, a party horn, a straw, or anything you blow into to show how breath fills something. Ask the kids to take a few deep breaths. Tell them that breath that keeps them alive comes from God. The first human was only dust until God breathed into him. The Jewish people called the living, breathing part of a person their soul.

Sing Together (15 minutes)

STORY (30 minutes - Lead Teacher)

The people of God had a saying they would repeat to remind themselves of God's greatest command for them. It went, "*Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*" (Deut. 6:4-5)

In today's story, we'll hear about how some of God's people gave all their hearts, souls, and strength to love God and to love others.

After Paul and Silas were kicked out of Thessalonica, people started spreading bad rumors about them to discredit them. They wanted the Thessalonians who believed the good news of Jesus to turn away from Jesus and turn back to the false gods they worshipped in their city. They wanted things to go back to the way they were. They didn't feel comfortable with the way the Kingdom of God had turned things upside down!

So they said things about Paul and Silas that were not true. They made it seem like they only came to Thessalonica to get people to follow them, not Jesus; to give them glory, not glory to God. They said Paul and Silas were liars and only wanted something from the people, like their money or their praise. So in Paul's letter, after showing how thankful he was for how the believers remained faithful even after he was run out of town, started to remind them of why he and Silas came to their town in the first place.

He wrote, "Remember how we came to you? We didn't have flashy and showy words or actions, but we shared the good news of Jesus. We didn't ask you for anything, but we worked alongside you. We didn't want you to give us praise, but to praise Jesus as the true King. We didn't want to be a burden to you, but to care for you, like a mother cares for her child. We comforted, encouraged, and taught you like a father does for his child. We love you! We love you because Jesus loves all of us! We loved you so much we not only shared the words of the good news with you, but we shared our very souls with you. Remember, it is God who is calling you into His Kingdom and His glory. Live in it."

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- Why do you think people were so threatened by the good news of Jesus? Why did they want to discredit Paul and Silas?
- What made Paul and Silas love the Thessalonians so much? They barely knew them!

- What do you think it means that they shared their souls with them?
 - *Bible Geek note for the teacher to keep in the back of your mind as you ask this question:* The Greek word (psuche) and Hebrew word (nephesh) for soul meant not the immaterial part of a person that is unseen but the very living, breathing, being of a person
 - In other words, the very life of the person - it is very much attached to the physical nature of the person
 - Remember, man only became alive when God *breathed* His own *breath* into him!
- What does it look like to live in God's Kingdom and glory?

In Breakout Classes (30 minutes - Classroom)

- **Prayer:**

Father, Son, and Spirit - God, You are one. Help us to love You with all of our heart, with all of our mind, with all of our soul, and with all of our strength. Give us Your Spirit's power to do it! Amen.

- **Craft:**

The first attached page shows an example of what the final product will be. Use the following page for what the kids will actually create. They can cut out the person, heart, thought bubble for mind, bicep for strength, and the breath symbolizing the soul (*because of God's breath in us*). Have them then paste the parts onto the person and talk about how we are to love God and others with our whole being.

- **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 **Bless** rhythm. Paul and Silas shared their very lives (souls) with the people in Thessalonica. How can you share your life with others this week in a way that shows them the good news of Jesus?



