

# 1 THESSALONIANS: FAITH. LOVE. HOPE.



## Week Three: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

### 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:** Be imitators of Christ, not of the world.

### As Kids Enter (15 minutes - Classroom)

- **Starter:**

*Simon Says*

Play a game of Simon Says to get the kids warmed up. You can use this to lead into how today's Scripture shows us we are to imitate Christ and do what He says, not what the world says.

*Overflowing (another option for older kids)*

Fill a cup with water to the brim. Have it in a bowl or pan to catch overflowing water. Pour more in so it overflows in front of the students. Then pour water with red dye or Kool-Aid (something visibly different) into the cup until that is what overflows.

Tell them today's lesson will talk about how we can be filled with God's anger and judgement because of our rebellion, but that it can be replaced with an overflowing of God's love because of Jesus' righteousness.

### **Sing Together (15 minutes)**

### **STORY (30 minutes - Lead Teacher)**

First, Paul's letter to the Thessalonians church expressed how thankful he was that they showed faith, love, and hope, in a culture that made it difficult to follow Jesus. Then, he reminded them about how he and Silas originally came to them with the Good News of Jesus because they cared about them and not because they wanted anything from them.

Paul continued in his letter by saying, "We constantly thank God, because when you received the message of God that we spoke, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the word of God. And we see it working effectively in you as you believe! For you, brothers and sisters, have become imitators of God's churches in Judea who follow Christ Jesus, because you have also suffered the same things from people of your own country, just as they did. In Judea, the same Jews who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets also persecuted us. They sadden God and are hostile to everyone by trying to keep us from speaking the Good News to people, so that they may be saved. Since they are working against God's Good News, they are filling up their sins to the limit, and wrath will overtake them in the end."

Paul wrote these words to both warn those who would come against God's Word, and to encourage those who were being mistreated for following Jesus. He wanted to remind them that in the end, Jesus will win. His message and his Kingdom will last. Anyone who trusts in Jesus and follows him with their life will live with him in the Kingdom. That's the good news! But, anyone who fights against God's Word will not live in the Kingdom and will instead face God's wrath. Either you are a friend of God or an enemy of God. But He wants us to be His friends, so Jesus makes it possible for us to come to Him and be saved. Good News!

*[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]*

- What did Paul mean by the Thessalonians '*had become imitators*'?
- In Ephesians 5:1-2, Paul also wrote to "*Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us...*"
  - Are there ways you are like your parents?
  - How can you imitate God, and be more like Him as your true Father?

### In Breakout Classes (30 minutes - Classroom)

- **Prayer:**  
Father, help us to be more like Your perfect Son, Jesus. Give us Your Spirit to live like Your children and not like the rest of the world. In Jesus' name, amen.
- **Craft:**  
*Use the attached pages for a coloring page where you find 8 differences between the images, and a maze for the older kids. You can use these to talk about imitating/copying or following Jesus.*
- **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 **Listen** rhythm. Take time to go outside or in a quiet part of your house this week. Ask God to speak to you. Then, just listen. What is God saying to you? Maybe you won't hear anything at that moment, but maybe God will speak to you later as you are listening to a person speak, or as you read the Bible, or as you are playing.

One of these pictures is imitating the other, but there are still differences.

**Find 8 differences** between these pictures and circle them all.

*Can you spot the differences in your life from Jesus' as you try to imitate him?*



Follow Jesus by living in his True Story!

