



STAND FIRM

1 Thessalonians



Welcome to the MPC Growth Group Guide for Term 4

This term's study is the first of Paul's two letters to the fledgling church in Thessalonica, a prominent city in Roman-ruled Macedonia, and today, the bustling Greek port city of Thessaloniki.

The Gospel came to Thessalonica during Paul's second missionary journey, and with it came significant opposition. Paul separated from the church after only a short time, longing to be with them and desperate to establish them in the faith writes, encouraging and exhorting them to stand firm in the gospel in the face of opposition, affliction and suffering.

The apostolic letter speaks the same message some 2000 years later, encouraging and exhorting us to live to please God, and to do so more and more as we await the Lord's return.

How are we to navigate the storms that buffet us?

What should mark our thinking and lives together?

Enter 1 Thessalonians ... we stand firm in Jesus, the rock in the midst of uncertainty.

STUDY 1: THE GOSPEL COMES TO THESSALONICA

1 Thess 1:1 ... 'to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace'

With these words Paul opens his letter to the church in Thessalonica. A church he had planted only months previously.

READ Acts 15:36 – 16:10 and 17:1 – 15.

Follow Paul's 2nd missionary journey on the map below.



DEEP IN THE WORD

1. Who are the main characters and what is Paul's initial purpose?
2. 16:6 – 10 changes everything though. What happens and why is it so significant?

Immediately Paul and Silas are off to Macedonia; firstly, Ephesus (16:11 – 40), then Thessalonica (17:1 – 15).

3. Focusing on Thessalonica, discuss Paul's gospel tactics and message, 17:1 – 3.
4. Paul's work bears both immediate gospel fruit (v.4) and immediate gospel opposition (v.5 – 9). Should we be surprised by this? Why?

The opposition becomes so intense Paul and Silas are bundled off to neighbouring Berea. Trouble soon follows though and once again Paul is sent packing, this time by sea to Athens (17:10 – 15).

5. These events would have significantly affected not only Paul, but the fledgling Thessalonian believers as well. Discuss how Paul and the Thessalonians would have felt and what may have motivated Paul to write.

DEEP IN PRAYER

1. Pray for MPC, our gospel witness and mission.
2. Pray for our missionary partners –
 - a. Keith and Marion in PNG
 - b. Josh and Bethany in Slovenia
 - c. Vince in Budapest
 - d. Martin and Catherine in Turin
 - e. Mel and Ryan in southern Brisbane
 - f. Kim Jaeger in rural Tasmania
 - g. Hannah returning from London and considering her future