**I Thessalonians 1 – The Birth of a Church!**

**Nowadays, church planters spend hundreds of hours (and thousands of dollars) to determine where, when, and how to plant a church and figuring out who might attend it, why they’ll come back, and what music they will like best; This process can take years!**

**Well, Paul didn’t have the luxury of pollsters and researchers and marketers. Instead, he was compelled, emboldened, and guided by the Holy Spirit & armed with the sword of the Spirit/Word of God. And what some would say takes years to accomplish, Paul seemed to do in a month; He helped birth the church of Thessalonica…**

**Background to Thessalonica: During Paul’s second missionary journey, the Holy Spirit leads the team (Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke) to the southeastern edge of Europe to a Roman colony in Greece called Philippi without a synagogue. After seeing the Lord move mightily there (Lydia & her family receiving the gospel; a demon cast out of a young woman, a prison guard & his family born again) Paul and the team continue 100 miles south to Thessalonica, a colony with a synagogue. *And “as was his custom”, Paul went to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles, as he states in his letter to the Romans, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe, to the Jew first, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).* Paul preaches for 3 weeks and some Jewish men, Greek men, and women believe! Yet, no sooner had the church been birthed, that “some evil men from the market place stirred up a mob” (Acts 17:6) and drove them out of town (sound familiar?). From there, the team went to Berea, Athens, and on to Corinth. When Paul was in Corinth, his burden for the young believers in Thessalonica was so great, that he sent Timothy back there to establish the church and sent this letter a short time later. Most commentators believe the letter was written around AD 52.**

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**Read I Thessalonians chapter one**

**1. Choose one verse or phrase from the chapter that intrigues you, makes you uncomfortable, puzzles you, or resonates with you. Write it down here**

**2. At least 3 times in this letter (see 1:2, 2:13, and 3:9), Paul gave thanks for this church. What characteristics of this church made it so ideal and such a joy to Paul’s heart?**

**3. The doctrine of divine election confuses many, frightens some, and delights others (remember being chosen for a team?!). Our recent election can’t compare to God’s election! Here are a few distinctives about divine election and salvation**

**Salvation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with God (2 Thess. 2:13, John 15:16, Eph 1:4)**

**Salvation involves God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (I Thess I:1, 2:17, Romans 5:8)**

**Salvation involves \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 16: 30-32, I Thess 1:5, Eph 2:8)**

**Salvation involves the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)**

**Salvation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the life of the person (see question 2 above)**

**4. What kinds of persecution did the early church face? Why is faith tested? What are some of the ways the church is tested today? How ought we respond?**

**Memory verse: “For our gospel did not come to you in word only , but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit…” (1:5)**

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