

How to Use Sermon Resources

- **READ AHEAD TOGETHER** - MCG's should use the Devotional at the end of this resource as a reading plan for the week leading up to your meeting.
- **SIT UNDER THE WORD** - This resource is filled with scripture references. Read them aloud, together before you answer any questions.
- **APPLY TRUTH** - The goal is deep discussion and application, not necessarily to complete this resource. Don't squash a good discussion. If you get into something important along the way that's fine.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer [2 mins]

Use the Overview [5 mins]

- Cover any key points for people who missed parts or all of the sermon

Scripture Deep Dive [30-40 mins]

- Opening Question
- Read the scripture for each question then ask the question. Some have multiple scriptures.

Close in Prayer

- In this extended prayer time, ask others to pray as they feel led, pray in a circle, pray over one another, pray to your left, or pray for someone specific. Whatever seems best.

Split Time (if applicable)

- Men with men, women with women
- Share in a circle. "What's one thing you want to celebrate? What do you need prayer and accountability for?"
- After everyone shares, pray in a circle for the person to your left/right.

SERMON OVERVIEW

Walk Worthy: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

Sermon Summary:

Drawing from 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10, this sermon explores how the early church at Thessalonica moved from receiving the gospel to actively multiplying it throughout Greece and beyond. Pastor Matt uses the natural human tendency toward imitation, observed even in infants, as a lens through which to examine how believers are called to imitate Christ and his messengers. Four distinguishing marks characterized the Thessalonian church's gospel multiplication: faithful endurance in suffering, evangelistic boldness in conversation, consistency between proclaimed message and lived lifestyle, and an eternal perspective rooted in the hope of Christ's return.

Key Points:

- Human beings are natural imitators from infancy, and the behaviors modeled for children often resurface in adulthood under pressure, making the example set by believers profoundly consequential
- The evangelized became the evangelists, spreading the word of the Lord throughout Macedonia and Achaia so thoroughly that Paul and his companions found the message had already arrived before them
- A proclaimed gospel message is undermined when the one proclaiming it lives in contradiction to it; believers must put off the old self and put on the new, avoiding hypocrisy that confuses those who hear the message
- Living with an eternal perspective means actively anticipating the return of Christ and allowing that hope to shape daily behavior and priorities
- The resurrection of Jesus is the proof and receipt that the debt of sin has been paid in full for all who place their faith in him

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

Stories:

- Pastor Matt describes the universal experience of parents discovering that young children repeat and imitate everything they hear and do.
- Ligon Duncan is quoted comparing the suffering of a Christian to a neon sign, arguing that the darker the surrounding circumstances, the more brilliantly the light of Christ shines through faithful endurance
- Wearing an expired contact lens for months past its replacement date, then accidentally inserting a new contact over the old one rather than replacing it, illustrating what happens spiritually when believers try to layer new life in Christ over an unchanged old self rather than genuinely putting off the old and putting on the new
- Someone imprisoned for an unpaid debt who is later seen walking free on the street provides evidence that the debt was paid, used to explain how the resurrection of Jesus serves as proof that the penalty for sin was fully satisfied
- Pastor Matt describes the Costco receipt-checking process at the exit as an illustration of how the resurrection functions as a marked receipt proving that the debt of sin has been paid in full, regardless of who the observer is or how the payment was made

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening Question

1. *Name one person whose faith has been worth imitating in your life, and identify one specific behavior you saw in them.*

Faithful Suffering

2. **Read 1 Thess 1:6, Acts 17:5–9; 1 Peter 4:12–16 —**

What evidence from these passages shows that the Thessalonians' suffering was connected to their allegiance to Jesus rather than ordinary life hardship?

3. **Read James 1:2–4; Romans 5:3–5 —**

According to these verses, what does joyful endurance in suffering produce in believers, and why would that kind of suffering become a witness to others?

Evangelistic Conversations:

4. **Read 1 Thessalonians 1:8 and Romans 10:14–17— Paul says “the word of the Lord rang out” from the Thessalonians.**

What role do spoken words play in gospel multiplication, and why is silent example alone not enough?

Consistent in Lifestyle

5. **1 Thessalonians 1:9; Colossians 3:5–14; Ephesians 4:22–32 —**

The Thessalonians “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”

From Colossians and Ephesians, identify two things believers must “put off” and two things they must “put on” so their lives match their gospel message.

Eternal in Perspective:

6. **Read 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Titus 2:11–14; 1 Corinthians 15:17–20 —**

According to these verses, what truths about Jesus' resurrection, return, and rescue from wrath should shape the way Christians live while they wait?