

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

Good morning everyone! I want to welcome you here this morning to Lake Chelan Bible Church. My name is Pastor Nick Longmire.

Kicked off our series ☐ 1 Thess ☐ Go to Easter

We kicked off our series in 1 Thessalonians last week as Pastor Steve gave the message and shared the setting and backdrop of this book. We will continue on through 1 Thessalonians up until Easter.

If you missed last week ☐ App ☐ Youtube

If you weren't here last week you can always catch the message again on our Lake Chelan Bible Church app or you can subscribe to our youtube channel and review past sermons there.

3 takeaways from last week

Pastor Steve gave us three main takeaways last week after giving us the background of Paul's interactions with the Thessalonica church.

Main theme ☐ Encourage a young believing church ☐ Persevere through trials

Paul's overarching theme throughout this book is to encourage a young believing church giving them instructions in hope and perseverance as they will face difficult times ahead.

3 ingredients from 1 Thess. 1:2-3

Pastor Steve left us with these three ingredients extracted out of verses 2 and 3 in which the Apostle Paul was encouraging the Thessalonica church with:

1. Work produced by their faith – We are not saved by works – we don't work to be saved – we work because we are saved. This is a byproduct of our faith in Christ.

James 1:22

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

2. Their labor prompted by love – The perseverance of serving the Lord – This is prompted by love – a genuine compassion – relying on the strength of the Lord rather than the strength of our own fleshy motivation.

Someone going through the motions ☐ Don't seem to care

Have you ever been around someone who is simply going through the motions of a job or a task? They don't really seem passionate about it or motivated to do it?

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

Someone who loves what they do

Maybe you have also experienced the other side of this as well. You can tell that the person working in their craft no matter what it is loves what they do.

School employee

I used to teach at a high school on the westside and there was an employee there who was a coach of mine when I was in high school. I still look up to him as a man who instilled leadership qualities into me as an athlete in which have taught me foundational skills that are still relevant for me today. He is a great man, great with students and athletes. He represented the Tahoma Bears as a coach who developed many players before me and many after. He spent a lot of time focusing on character development with his athletes. As he was getting closer to retirement the demands of the job were wearing on him. When I started teaching at the high school, I would see him in the hall in the morning before school started and as I passed him I would say "hey coach! How are you?" His response was "It's a great day to be a bear." As I passed by I would think to myself..."Is it?" I mean his words said it but it was hard to tell by his lack of vocal enthusiasm. He was a man of who was very vocal on the field with his words but at 7 am on a Monday he was very monotone and soft spoken.

Gas station attendant

On the other hand, you have probably been around the opposite where you experience some of the most amazing customer service from an establishment that you may not even expected it from. I know these days that can be far and few between but there is this gas station that we would stop into from time to time and one of their employees is over the top excited that we are there to purchase goods from their store. The vocal strains in her voice of excitement, her immediate attention to any customer who would approach the counter no matter how rude they were, the compliments of what a great choice I made as she rang up my bottle of water is astounding, the care, the diligence, the love for her customers makes you want to drive all the way out to this inconvenient, convenient store to over pay for a loaf of bread is all we want to do because she truly cares about her job. You would think that this lady never has a bad day the way that she tends to her customers.

As believers in Christ do people know by our interactions that this is the greatest hope ever in the history of mankind or is their take away...

"It's a great day to be a Christian."

Don't fake it ☑ Labor in sharing Gospel ☑ words, actions out of a deep love for Savior and People

Now I am not suggesting that we fake it but our labor in sharing the Gospel whether it is through our words, or our actions should be done out of a deep love for our Savior and a deep love for those who are far from their Savior.

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

The 3rd ingredient from last week's message is...

3. Their endurance inspired by hope – Not a wishful thinking but an assurance of the salvation in Christ that spurs on pure joy – This gives a believer in Christ the endurance when persecution is at hand.

Hope ☞ Christmas eve

We talked about this word 'hope' back on Christmas Eve.

Hope in Christ is the confidence that what God had done for us in the past guarantees our participation in what God will do in the future.

Lords work on the cross ☞ Blessed assurance of salvation

In other words, the Lord's work on the cross has given us the blessed assurance that once we have been saved by Christ, we are assured eternal life with Him in heaven.

Endurance ☞ Persecution

This should give us the endurance and perseverance when persecution comes our way as a follower of Christ.

This morning we are picking up in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹ for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Let us pray!

Dog story ☞ Newspapers ☞ Treat ☞ 8 newspapers

One morning a man opened the door to get the newspaper and was surprised to see a strange little dog with his newspaper in his mouth. Delighted with this unexpected "delivery service," he fed him some treats. The following morning the man was

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

horrified to see the same dog sitting in front of his door, wagging his tail, surrounded by eight newspapers.

Food encouragement for a dog goes a long way!

When people are encouraged ☐ Faith, Hope, Love

It's amazing what people will do when they feel encouraged, when they are spurred on by faith, hope and love!

These three Christian virtues occupy a large place in early analyses of Christian responsibility. We see these three qualities mentioned specifically throughout Paul's writings and we see the themes of these words used in the fabrics of 1 Thessalonians as he encourages the Thessalonica church.

If we look ahead at

1 Thessalonians 5:8

⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

Young church ☐ Paul knew of coming persecution ☐ Encouragement

As a young believing church, Paul knew that they were going to take on some serious persecution that was going to attempt to knock them off their spiritual feet. His words to them were not only to encourage them but give them confidence and protection.

Power of Faith ☐ Love for one another ☐ Love for the Lord ☐ Lords love for them

Paul knew the power of their faith, their love for one another, their love for the Lord but mostly the love that the father has for them was as protective spiritually as putting on a breastplate to protect all of man's vital organs in physical battle.

The hope of salvation in Christ was as defensive as putting on a war helmet before facing the enemy seeking to kill and destroy.

Paul also brings up these virtues later in

Colossians 1:3-6

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— ⁵the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel ⁶that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

Written to church at Colosse □ Also meant for all believers

Though this letter by Paul was written to the church at Colosse, a church in Asia Minor, it is also meant for ALL believers in Christ Jesus.

Young Thess. Church □ 2-3 years before letter □ Lots of growth ahead

Because the Thessalonica church was so young, only established 2-3 years prior to Paul's letter to them, there was still a lot of growth they needed to fully understand the faith in which they clung to.

Misunderstandings □ 2nd coming □ Paul assures them of faith, love, hope □ Eternal salvation

Even so, the young church experienced some misunderstandings concerning the second coming of Christ. Some of the young believers thought Christ's return would be much quicker, within their lifetime. When they experienced their loved ones perishing and persecution pressing in on them, Paul's letter of encouragement was to remind them of the faith, love and hope that assures them beyond their life on earth.

Kickball selection

We can all probably remember those days on the elementary playground when the two best kick ballers in the entire class were nominated to make their alternating selections of who was to be on their team. As the line of students anxiously waited for the two captains to call on their name, hoping for the number 1 overall draft pick and worried for the last...or maybe not being picked at all gave no assurance that they would be chosen until their name was called.

Vivid memories

Many of us today probably still have some vivid memories of not being assured a spot on the team many years ago.

Fear of the young church □ wondering if they were really chosen

So you can only imagine the fear that may of struck the young believing church in Thessalonica that left them wondering if they were really chosen by Christ or not.

We don't have to wonder □ Beauty of Gospel □ Blessed assurance

The beauty of the Gospel is that we don't have to be left with a wondering if we have been secured in eternity as a follower of Christ. When our last physical breath is taken on earth, the eternal breath of life sustained by Christ in us is what keeps us alive beyond our earthly being.

Thess. Church no longer needed to worry

Because of this assurance we no longer need to be afraid of death. The Thessalonica church no longer needed to worry about their chosen loved ones because they were securely preserved beyond their physical death.

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

Paul again records in

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Interestingly enough, we can reference vs 55 back to Hosea in vs. 13:14 where the prophet explains sin and death the same way.

Paul begins vs 4 with assurance of election

Paul begins vs 4 in 1 Thessalonians assuring the young church that God loves them because he has chosen them.

Refers to as brothers ☐ 21 times in two letters to Thess. ☐ Brotherhood

He refers to them as brothers which occurs 21 times in the two letters to the Thessalonians. This term denotes the spiritual brotherhood into which all disciples of the Lord Jesus have been inducted. We see Jesus himself make this clear in Matthew 12:46-50

Matthew 12:46-50

⁴⁶ While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷ Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

⁴⁸ He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

What did Thess do to deserve?

So what did the congregants of Thessalonians do to deserve their installment into this brotherhood?

The answer is nothing

Nothing to merit selection by Christ ☐ Christ chose them

There was nothing that the congregants did to merit their selection by Christ. It was He who made the selection.

Hard to understand as humans ☐ Save some and not save others

This doctrine is debated and honestly hard to swallow at times. Many people have trouble understanding how a loving God could choose to save some but yet not save others.

Some don't get a chance to prove allegiance

It can be even harder to understand and agree with the fact that God chose us even before WE had a chance to prove our allegiance to Him and be saved.

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

Question posed in past sermons

This goes back to this question I have posed several times in past sermons.

Do you believe that God is in control of everything?

Many verses Chosen

As we read through the scriptures, we see many, many verses that make it clear that we do not choose Christ, but he chooses us.

Let's look at...

Ephesians 1:4-5

⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

The term “loved by God” is suitable assurance that he also chooses, since his love and election are inextricably bound together.

More verses on this topic One we have dove into in the past at LCBC

There are many more verses on this topic, and this has been one that we have dove into in past sermons here at Lake Chelan Bible Church.

Paul spends time in his letters on this topic

Paul actually spends a lot of time in his letters on the topic of election and there are many verses in Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, Colossians, 2 Timothy, Titus and 1 Peter.

If you have the Lake Chelan Bible Church app you can pull up my notes and dig into the verses I have listed on the topic of election (Rom. 8:33; 9:11; 11:5, 7, 23, 29; 16:13; 1 Cor. 1:27, 28; Eph. 1:4-6; 2 Thess. 2:13, 16; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:10, 19; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:10; 2:5, 9-10).

1 Thessalonians 1:5

⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

Verse 5 explains the power of the Gospel and how it came to his chosen people. Paul speaks of this in...

2 Thessalonians 2:14

¹⁴He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Encouragement Changes Everything

Imitators of the Lord

February 11, 2024

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

Sermon 2

2 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. **2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. **3** And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, **4** and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Opportunity in youth ministry

When I first learned that I would have the opportunity to work in youth ministry 24 years ago, I envisioned working on a church staff that would be so fulfilling spiritually because I would be working with Christians who always got along, were never rude, rarely sinned and if they did it was an accident that they quickly realized and apologized for and that I would experience the loftiest of holy relationships.

Naïve ☐ All Christian churches were perfect

I was very naïve walking into the doors of a church as a staff member for the first time. I wasn't looking for the perfect Christian church, I really thought that all Christian churches were perfect. Little did I know that as soon as I walked through the church doors that first time, that perfect church was no longer perfect.

Staff members who imitated Christ like lifestyles

As I began to develop relationships with staff members, I recognized that there were certain staff members that I wanted to model my life after. I really thought that those staff members were living the best Christian lives and had strong Christ believing families.

Told people close to me

I even told people who were close to me that I want my family to live exactly like this staff members family.

Staff member resigned ☐ Continued volunteering and attending

I was devastated when this staff member had resigned their position to move onto other things after 18 months of my time on staff but was still elated that this person was going to be attending our church and volunteering.

I had placed this person on a lofty pedestal as an untouchable believer in Christ. I took mental notes on how they lived their life and was developing my own internal family human resource handbook for how to run a good godly family.

Hard news of moral failure

About a year after this staff member had resigned, I was hit with some of the hardest news that I could have imagined. I found out that this staff member had an ongoing marital affair with someone in their homegroup at our church, another godly person that I also looked up to.

Kids in youth group ☐ Spiraled out of control

Encouragement Changes Everything

Imitators of the Lord

February 11, 2024

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

Sermon 2

The kids of both families were in our youth group and over the next 10 years I watched as their families spiraled out of control. I couldn't believe what I had seen.

Shook my young faith

It really shook my young faith at the time, and it brought up questions about God, who he was and my own faith.

People will let us down ☐ God puts them in our life ☐ Not to make them an idol

I learned that though God brings people into our lives to shape and mold us, people will let us down. Even the person we hold in the highest regards, lift to the loftiest of pedestals can be affected by sin and we must be careful not to hold another thing or human to that standard. By doing this we are essentially making that person an idol.

Impacted by the imitators of Christ followers not through wisdom of men

Paul is encouraging the Thessalonian church to be impacted by the power and the conviction of the word generated through the Holy Spirit NOT through the wisdom of men.

Sean and Josh McDowell

I was recently watching a video interview that a friend sent me between Dr. Sean McDowell and his dad Josh McDowell. Sean McDowell is an author, professor at Biola University and speaks all over the country. His dad Josh McDowell is an evangelical Christian apologist and author of over 150 books.

Discussion of Ravi Zacharias

In this interview they were discussing a world renown evangelical Christian minister and apologist named Ravi Zacharias.

People came to the Lord through his ministry ☑ Passed in 2020 ☑ Double life

Many people had come to know the Lord through Ravi's ministry over the years. After he passed away in 2020 reports began to surface of a double life he had lived which involved sexual abuse of many women in the past.

People questioned their faith ☑ Their hope was in Ravi

Many people struggled with this news and questioned their faith and felt defeated by a man they trusted to lead them spiritually but was instead leading a double life contrary to Biblical truths.

People walked away from their faith

Many people even walked away from the Lord because they felt duped.

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

Danger of faith in human ☒ Trust in faith, love and hop of the scriptures powered by Holy Spirit

This is the danger of putting our faith in a human rather than the unfailing faith, love and hope of the scriptures that is powered by the Holy Spirit.

Good models ☒ Carried out in next two verses

With that said, there are a lot of great examples of Christians who have gone before us who have and are called to model the way after the Lord. We to should be models to both young believers and unbelievers of our dedication and devotion to the Lord. We see this carried out in the next 2 verses.

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

⁶You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

How Paul knew God had chosen ☐ Became imitators

Paul introduces a new point in his explanation of how he knew God had chosen the Thessalonians. In a relatively short time they “became imitators.”

The lifestyle of the Thessalonians was completely different from what it was before the Gospel came to them because their conversion led them to imitate Paul and his companions.

Paul encourages wholesome following

Paul repeatedly encouraged this wholesome following of examples in his letters.

1 Corinthians 4:16

¹⁶I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

Ephesians 5:1

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

Philippians 4:9

⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

1 Corinthians 11:1

¹Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Thess didn't have scripture bound in a book ☐ Relied on imitators

Now back then the Thessalonians didn't have the scripture bound in a book like we do today, so they relied on Godly men and women to provide these examples.

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

Need imitators in our life □ Always check for congruency in scripture

Today we should have someone in our life who is an imitator of the word of God. With that said, it is so important for us to always see a congruency between those who we look to as our examples and the holy scriptures.

Someone once told me, it is great to be a leader, but you better know where you are going. Likewise, it is great to be a follower, but you better know where the leader is taking you.

Gospel didn't come with path of leisure

The young church accepted the Gospel when it came to them and it didn't come with a path of leisure.

In the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit

In fact, the end of verse 6 says the Gospel came to them "in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit."

Many things we pair □ Don't naturally pair suffering and joy

Now there are many things we pair together today. Suffering and Joy are not the first two that come to mind for most people.

Experienced suffering □ Don't gravitate towards □ Stronger on back end

All of us have probably experienced some sort of suffering in our lives at one time. It isn't something that we gravitate towards, but it is in our suffering that strength comes on the back end.

God provides people to aid in navigating pain

Often, God will provide us with someone to endure the suffering with that aids us in navigating the pain.

This severe suffering that Paul speaks of is coupled with "the joy given by the Holy Spirit."

We often don't think of the term joy in the midst of our sufferings. Joy isn't a feeling or something that we can generate on our own. Joy is not temporary like we find with happiness. Joy is a deep rooted love and trust in the Lord because of the hope that he has given us.

Persecution was common and often grew intense. Christ's enemies would do anything to make life miserable for Christians. Yet instead of misery the Thessalonians displayed a "joy given by the Holy Spirit." Such a response defies natural explanation.

We see a snippet of the intense persecution in Acts 17:5-9

Acts 17:5-9

⁵ But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out

Encouragement Changes Everything

Imitators of the Lord

February 11, 2024

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

Sermon 2

to the crowd. ⁶And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, ⁷and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." ⁸And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. ⁹And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

If you are serious about following Christ, then get ready to suffer.

2 Timothy 3:12

¹²Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

You won't find that one written on a Hallmark card.

Life is being watched ☐ Good or bad

As a Christian, people are watching your life. They are watching how you live it out when life is going well and when it is not.

In the midst of persecution ☐ Respond Biblically

One of the hardest things to do when you are being persecuted by others or your life isn't going well is to respond in a Biblical way.

The world expects people to respond in worldly ways to worldly problems but if you want to be an imitator of Christ to the unbelievers around you, respond in a Biblical way to a worldly problem, especially when you are being persecuted.

WORSHIP TEAM BACK UP

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

⁸The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

All of us should respond to the Good News as the Thessalonians did:

-Turn to God

-Serve God

-Wait for his Son, Christ to return from heaven

Turn from sin ☐ Turn to God ☐ Don't waste life on sin ☐ Be prepared for His return ☐ Don't know the time

We should turn from sin to God because Christ is coming to judge the earth. We should be fervent in our service because we have little time before Christ returns. We should be prepared for Christ to return because we don't know when he will come.

Encouragement Changes Everything
Imitators of the Lord
February 11, 2024
1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Sermon 2

Matthew 24:35-37

³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁶ "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Paul emphasized Christ's second coming through this book. Because the Thessalonian church was being persecuted, Paul encouraged them to look forward to the deliverance that Christ would bring. A believer's hope is in the return of Jesus, our great God and Savior as it promises us in Titus 2:13

Our perspective on life remains incomplete without this hope. Just as surely as Christ was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, he will return.

Acts 1:11

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Jot in notes or in Bible ☐ Imitator of Christ ☐ You ☐ Who you are imitating for

If you get a chance to jot this down in your notes or in your Bible somewhere, write down the main person who God used to draw you to salvation. Next to that name draw an arrow from left to right and write down your name. Next, I want you to think and pray on who it is that God is calling you to be an imitator of Christ to? Maybe that spot will remain blank as you leave the sanctuary this morning, maybe you already know who it is.

If still seeking ☐ Who has been an imitator ☐ write their name ☐ Write yours

If you are here today and the Lord has you in a place where you are seeking Him but haven't put your full trust in the Lord yet, that is okay, allow the Lord to continue to work on your heart. Write down the name of the person who has been an imitator of Christ to you. Draw an arrow to the right of that name and maybe today you want to add your name after that arrow, maybe you are still considering everything and want to leave here today with that spot blank. That is okay! The Holy Spirit is going to convince you of his truth. And when He does, write your name down after that arrow.

God always moving ☐ Directing ☐ Navigating to reveal true nature of who he is to us

You see God is always moving. He is always directing and navigating our world to reveal the true nature of who he is to us.

Luke 7:28-35

²⁸ I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." ²⁹ (When all the people heard this, and the

Encouragement Changes Everything

Imitators of the Lord

February 11, 2024

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

Sermon 2

tax collectors too, they declared God just,²⁹ having been baptized with the baptism of John,³⁰ but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

³¹“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.”

³³For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ ³⁴The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

Everyone will wrestle with the name of Jesus

Everyone who walks this earth is going to have to wrestle with what they are going to do with the name, Jesus.

Finding excuses not to believe

Many of us who are struggling with our submission to Him will find every excuse we can to not believe.

If this is you this morning, allow the Holy Spirit to grapple with your unbelief.

Home Group Questions

1. How do the 3 ingredients (Work produced by faith, Labor prompted by love and Endurance inspired by hope) that Pastor Nick referenced from last week’s sermon bring you joy in your life regardless of the circumstances?
2. How does the fruit of how you live out your life demonstrate to your family, neighbors, friends, coworkers, etc. that you a passionate follower of Christ? What would those people say based on what the witness?
3. Read through the following verses (Rom. 8:33; 9:11; 11:5, 7, 23, 29; 16:13; 1 Cor. 1:27, 28; Eph. 1:4–6; 2 Thess. 2:13, 16; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:10, 19; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:10; 2:5, 9–10). How do these verses cause you to wrestle with or affirm your view on election?
4. What safeguards can you put in place when following after an imitator of the Lord without putting that person so high up on a pedestal that they become an idol?
5. Who has been someone that God has put in your life to endure through persecution in your life? What was it about that person that God used to help you through the pain and circumstances of the persecution?