

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

Welcome to Thessalonica!

cf Acts 17:1-10

A very young, vulnerable church ...
but, wonderfully 'standing firm' (3:8)

When Paul visited them, they received
the word. Look at the evidence for ...



GOD'S WORK IN YOU

you worked and laboured, steadfastly (3)

you received the word ... in affliction (6-8)

you turned around (9-10) so that you are now:

- working
- waiting

So ...

- how to spot a genuine work of God
- how to pray at prayer meetings
- how to repent ... once-for-all and every day



PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Spend these next 15 mins listing everyone in your RML group, one by one.
Use phrases from *1 Thess* to thank God that these Christians are Christians.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-3:10

Why would anyone think Paul's visit was a failure (2:1)?
because fellowship in the gospel resulted in fellowship in suffering

But their visit really wasn't in vain because:

2:1-12

we declared the gospel

even though we 'suffered/were shamefully treated ...'

How could we do that? because our motive was ...

Not ... to please man (4)

so, no error/impurity/deception (3), words of flattery (5)

greed (7b), glory from people (6), making demands (6b, 9)

But ... to please God (4)

An insight into the pastor's heart:

- like a mother, gentle (7-8)
- like a father, urging (11-12)

You are our glory and joy (19)!



2:13-16, 3:3-4, 6-10

you received/accepted the word of God

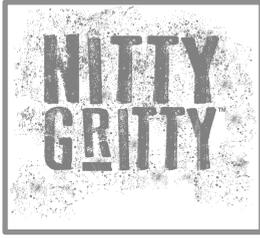
even though you 'suffered ... afflictions'

The suffering you experienced is ...

- common to all Christians (14)
- consistent reaction from unbelievers (15)
- controlled by God (16 cf 3:3-4)

But the suffering you experienced brings genuine risk (3:3-4)

- Satan is work to hinder (2:18), to tempt (3:5)
- the danger is that you are 'moved by these afflictions' (3)
- but ... we're 'urged' (3:7) to hear you're *standing firm* (3:6-8)



1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-3:10

What things from the talk(s) this morning would you like to chat about now?

Why does it matter that those who 'declare the gospel of God' are like Paul (as he describes himself in this passage)?

(... this is worth thinking through for a while; it's not straightforward!)

What can we learn from Paul's example of someone who declared the gospel even though he suffered and was shamefully treated?

In what ways do you feel that the 'afflictions' you face for being a Christian might be used by 'the tempter' to unsettle you (cf 3:3-5)?

Imagine you have a chance to talk to a brand new Christian: what would you say to them *from this passage* to prepare them for the Appalachian Trail that lies ahead?

1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-4:12

The story so far ...

The issue is *standing firm* (3:8)

So ... Paul prays for their love and holiness (3:11-13)

Paul urges them to more and more HOLINESS

(4:1-8)

be different from the world

an example: sex

Paul urges them to more and more LOVE

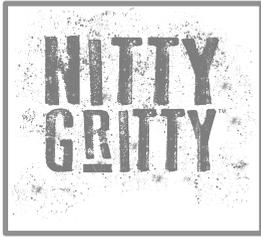
(4:9-12)

be attractive to the world

an example: money and generosity

So ... where's home?





1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-4:12

What things from the talk this afternoon would you like to chat about now?

What is the link between holiness and self-control?

What do you think of the PowerPoint slide that suggested 'self-control' means:

- 1 stop
- 2 think
- 3 what could happen to you?
- 4 is that what you want?

Why is love important?

How is 'money' a good test case for our love?

Explore the link between 'holiness' and 'love'. What do you think the 'so that' means at the start of 3:13?

Pick up on the question from the end of the talk: 'where's home?' How can we help each other to be 'foreigners and strangers' (1 Pet 2:11) in this world ... both *different* from the world, and *attractive* to the world?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-5:11

The story so far ...

Standing firm (3:8) until the coming of Jesus

The pressures are:

[cf Mark 4:1-20

- falling away because of tribulation
- being choked by the cares of the world

Will they stand firm until the coming of the Lord / the day of the Lord?

don't grieve as others do

(4:13-18)

don't sleep as others do

(5:1-11)

The implication for us:

encourage (= 'urge') *one another with these words*
(4:18; 5:11)



1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-24

The story so far: will this young church *stand firm* (3:8)? Paul prays (3:10-13) for their **faith, love, hope** (cf 1:3)



How to keep standing firm: four key relationships ...

- to your leaders (5:12-13)
- to one another (5:14-15)
- to the Lord himself (5:16-22)
 - talk to him (16-18)
 - listen to him (19-22)
- to Paul (5:25-27)

Paul 'urges' them for more and more

And he now ends (5:23-24) praying 'God, please will you do it'

So, is standing firm my work or his? ... Yes, it is!

an introduction to Bible grammar ...

2 Timothy 2:7; Colossians 1:28-29; Jude 1, 24 but also 21

So when I ... then he ...

SOME BOOK-WIDE APPLICATIONS:

'stand firm' is one of the most important applications of the NT

what threatens the young church / young Christian:

- the opposition of this world: experiencing affliction and hardship
- the seduction of this world: pursuing 'peace and security'

why the coming of the Lord / the day of the Lord matters

the normal Christian life