



# DISCIPLES & THE EARLY CHURCH

## Unit 5 • The Thessalonian Church

### UNIT DESCRIPTION

Before arriving in Thessalonica, Paul, Silas and Timothy experienced much persecution in Philippi. "Undaunted and convinced of their heavenly commission, the trio traveled on through Amphipolis and Appollonia and came to Thessalonica. There they found a Jewish synagogue, where for three Sabbaths Paul reasoned with the Thessalonians from the Scriptures. Jews and Greeks, including a number of leading women, heard and believed. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were seeing the power of the gospel knife through the city. Right before their very eyes, men and women's lives were being transformed by the good news of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the Jews became furious and launched a furious campaign against Paul, Silas, and Timothy. The new Christian believers were also under persecution.

Consequently, the Thessalonian believers sent Paul, Silas, and Timothy to Berea by night. Again, in Berea, the gospel spread like wild fire. From there, Paul went to Athens, and from Athens to Corinth. But the church at Thessalonica was on his heart. How were they doing in the midst of such adamant opposition? Paul had to find out. So about A.D. 51, while in Corinth, Paul sat down to write his first epistle to the church at Thessalonica."<sup>1</sup>

These lessons present the motivation for students to accept the good news and spread the gospel to their friends. Some people will be resistant and may not want to hear about Christ, as was the case for Paul in Thessalonica. However, Christians must focus on the fact that Christ will return to this earth. Our personal relationship with Christ and the benefit of His loving sacrifice should motivate us to work diligently to tell others about Him.



# PAUL TELLS THE GOOD NEWS

Disciples & Early Church • U5#1 1st-3rd Gr. • Oct.27, 2024

## Concept

God gives His children boldness to share the gospel.

## Goal

Students will learn that God wants us to go tell the world about Jesus.

## Passage

Acts 17:1-13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Key Verse: "... with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition." 1 Thessalonians 2:2b

## Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p><b>Lesson:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>"Paul's Journeys" large laminated map</i></li></ul>	<p><b>Activity Stations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acts 1,2, &amp; 3 of "Paul &amp; Silas Tell the Good News," 4 copies of each act</li><li>• Gold, black, red, white, and green pony beads, 2 of each color/student</li><li>• Rubber band, 1/student</li><li>• Pipe cleaner, 1 section/student</li><li>• Scissors</li><li>• <i>12 small bowls</i></li><li>• "Gospel Wrist Band Explanation," 1/student</li></ul>

### \*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

# Background Information (for the teacher)

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"As a large city of perhaps two hundred thousand, and one that dominated Macedonian government and commerce, Thessalonica naturally attracted diverse groups of people including a substantial Jewish contingent (1 Thess 2:14-16). Paul seems to have looked on it as the strategic center for the spread of the gospel throughout the Balkan Peninsula (1 Thess 1:7-8). Therefore Paul and Silas- though doubtless in some pain from their recent beating and time in the stocks- pushed on resolutely the hundred miles from Philippi to Thessalonica...

"At Thessalonica the missionaries, true to their policy of 'To the Jews First, but Also to the Gentiles'... sought out the local synagogue, sure of finding there a prepared audience of both Jews and 'God-fearing' Gentiles...

"Some of the Jews were persuaded,' but the greater number of those who responded positively to Paul's preaching in the Thessalonian synagogue were 'God-fearing' Greeks... and 'prominent women'...

"When writing his Thessalonian converts a few months later, Paul speaks of many times desiring to visit them again but of being unable to because 'Satan stopped us' (1 Thess 2:18)... But though he was unable to return, that did not stop either the spread of the gospel or the opposition of the Jews (cf. 1 Thess 1: 2-10). Amid all their persecutions and difficulties, the Christians of Thessalonica maintained their faith and witness in a manner that filled Paul with joy when he heard of it (cf. 1 Thess 3: 6-10)."[1]

Our privilege before God is to be His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20) to share the love of Christ and His offer of forgiveness. Responses will vary. Some may get angry, some may be apathetic, some may be open to hearing about Christ. But like Paul, regardless of the response, we can willingly risk our comfort to give others the opportunity to hear about the love and grace of Christ and to enter into a relationship with Him for eternity.

You will be presenting this lesson to students who likely have many years of witnessing opportunities ahead of them. One day a student in your class may impact a segment of society you could never reach. Who knows, one day in heaven a total stranger may approach you to thank you for challenging that student to risk witnessing to an unapproachable person like himself.

[1] Gaebelien, Frank E., The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 9, © 1981 by the Zondervan Corporation, pp. 468-470.

## Set Up

Coordinate with other classes to combine for the Drama.

## Incorporation Lg. Group

### Activity Stations:

- **Drama – "Paul & Silas Tell the Good News"**
  - **Instructions:** As students arrive, assign the following characters to act out the Drama. The characters are: Young lady, Jason, 2 angry men. The teachers will play the roles of Narrator, Paul and Silas. Read Acts 17:1-13 and the sample drama. Feel free to embellish as you wish. However, all script and action must follow the Acts 17 story. The characters for each act should practice their lines together.
- **Craft – Gospel Wrist Band**
  - **Instructions:** Put beads in bowls according to color. Slide 2 sets of the gold, black, red, white and green beads (in that order) onto the pipe cleaner section. Twist the ends of the pipe cleaner onto the rubber band. Tuck the ends of the pipe cleaner back into the beads. As students work on their bracelets, discuss the explanation of each bead below. Talk with them about who they might share the gospel bracelet. Give each student a copy of the "Gospel Bracelet Explanation" to take home.

## Introduction Lg. Group

We're beginning a new unit about the church in Thessalonica. (Show Thessalonica on the "Paul's Journeys" laminated map.) Paul began the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. This church didn't start easily. The book of Acts tells us that some people in Thessalonica didn't want Paul there. They tried to get rid of him because they didn't want to hear about Jesus Christ. We will learn today that Paul risked the Thessalonians rejection and his own physical safety to tell them about Jesus. So even though the people didn't want to hear about Jesus, Paul kept telling them anyway. Our key verse this week is 1 Thessalonians 2:2b, "... with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition." Because Paul dared to tell others God's gospel, many people did come to know Christ.

Good news is sometimes associated with bad news. When we talk about starting a relationship with God, what is the bad news? The bad news is that we can't have a relationship with God because our sin separates us from Him. What is the gospel or good news? The gospel is the good news that Jesus came to this earth to take the punishment for our sins. If we personally accept Jesus' death on the cross for our sins, God will forgive us and we will have a relationship with God.

Why would you risk getting someone mad at you in order to tell them about Jesus? If they listen and get to know Jesus, they'll live forever in heaven with Him and be very grateful to you. This did happen to Paul. Listen as I read **1 Thessalonians 2:13**.

## Introduction Continued

Here we see that some did listen and were grateful. And they were a great joy and encouragement to Paul. However, others didn't want to listen and they were nasty to Paul. But whether people are grateful or nasty, God wants us to go tell the world about Jesus. Paul was an excellent example. Look at our key verse, verse 2, "... with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition."

With God's help, Paul told the people the gospel – how to become Christians by receiving Christ into their hearts. As we read in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul was grateful that some of the Thessalonian people accepted the gospel as the word of God. God gave Paul the privilege of sharing the gospel of Christ in places where people had not yet heard.

Why is it important to tell others the gospel? God wants everyone to hear about Jesus so they can ask Him to forgive their sins and be assured that they will be with Him in heaven when they die. Can you think of anything that is more important than that? This is why Paul was willing to endure suffering. He knew God's love and wanted to tell everyone about Jesus. "... with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition" (1 Thessalonians 2:2b).

There are many people today who want to tell others the gospel like Paul did. Do you know of some people God has chosen to tell the gospel to others? Do you know that ALL Christians have been chosen to tell the gospel to those who don't know? God has given each of us who know Him the privilege of representing Him just as He did to Paul.

### Transition

Now we're going to see Paul and his friend, Silas, in action. This is from the Bible in the book of Acts, chapter 17.

### Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

**Drama - "Paul & Silas Tell the Good News,"** presented by students & teachers  
**Instructions:** Teachers will act as narrator, Paul and Silas. Students and teachers will act out the sample drama below as practiced in the Activity Station. Divide the rest of the class into 3 "crowds:" mean, uninterested and believing. Practice the lines of the 3 "crowds" a few times before the drama is presented.

### Transition

Let's get into small groups to discuss ways to share Christ with others and to pray.

### Learning Activity#2 Sm. Groups

Let's talk about the skit. Paul met some real resistance, didn't he? While some people wanted to hear about how to have their sins forgiven, there were many others who didn't. Paul was chased by an angry mob and then had to sneak out of town at night.

## Learning Activity# 2 Continued

- Why was Paul willing to risk his safety?
- In our country today, we certainly don't have the same safety risk as Paul did. But there are countries in the world where it is very dangerous to share the gospel. There are families from this church who moved to Southeast Asia so they can share the gospel with the people. They have to be very careful because it is against the law to talk about Jesus and Christianity. Our key verse again is, "... with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition" (1 Thessalonians 2:2b). Why do you think these people willing to risk their safety like Paul did? Would you be willing to do the same?
- Do you think someone might be unkind to you if you tried to tell them about Christ? Are people always angry when we share Christ? What would you do if they were angry? Is it your responsibility to convince people about Jesus' love?

**Missions Prayer:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray together now and thank God that He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Let's also thank Him for Paul, who was grateful for the privilege to share the gospel with others. Let's ask God to help us remember that it is a great privilege to share the gospel with others and to give us the power to tell others the good news like Paul did.

**"Paul & Silas Tell the Good News"**  
**Sample story line for drama**

**Characters:**

**Act 1:** Narrator, Paul, Silas, Young lady

**Act 2:** Narrator, Paul, Jason, 3 crowds: mean, uninterested, and believing

**Act 3:** Narrator, Paul, 2 Angry men, 3 crowds: mean, uninterested, and believing

**ACT 1**

**Narrator:** One dusty, hot afternoon, two men, Paul & Silas, arrive in the town of Thessalonica. God has chosen them to bring the gospel to this town. They have come to Thessalonica to tell others about Jesus. Out on the road, they meet a young lady.

**Paul:** Boy! Was that a long walk!

**Silas:** Yeah, I'm really tired!

*Silas walks toward the young lady standing by the side of the road.*

**Silas:** Excuse me. Is this Thessalonica?

**Young Lady:** Yes, it is. Where are you from?

**Silas:** Well, we've just arrived here from Apollonia.

**Paul:** Where is the synagogue, the place where the Jewish people worship God?

**Young Lady:** It's right over there. Why?

**Paul:** I plan to talk about this guy named Jesus, who was an amazing man, actually, the promised Messiah.

**ACT 2**

**Narrator:** Paul and Silas know that the people don't know about Jesus. So they are determined to tell them. Paul begins by talking to a crowd of people in the synagogue.

**Paul:** Jesus died for your sins. If you let Him into your heart, your sins will be paid for and you can go to heaven. (Turning to the crowd) What do you think?!

*Narrator points to the mean crowd*

**Mean Crowd:** "BOO! I don't believe it!"

*Narrator points to the uninterested crowd.*

**Uninterested Crowd:** "I don't care."

*Narrator points to the believing crowd*

**Believing Crowd:** "HOORAY, I believe it!"

*Jason steps forward from the crowd to speak to Paul*

**Jason:** I'm Jason. You're definitely right. Please stay at my house while you're here in town so you can tell me more about Jesus.

### ACT 3

**Narrator:** Paul has upset some people because they don't want to hear that they sin and need forgiveness and that Jesus Christ died for their sins. These people want to throw Silas and Paul out of town. It is nightfall in front of Jason's house. Two angry men have come to get Paul. They pound at the door and Jason answers.

**Angry Man #1:** Where's Paul?

**Jason:** He's not here right now. Why do you want him?

**Angry Man #2:** Well, we want him out of town. We don't believe what Paul preaches. And we don't want him here.

**Narrator:** As they drag Jason out of his house, the mean crowd yells...

*Narrator points to mean crowd*

**Mean Crowd:** "BOO! I don't believe it!"

**Narrator:** Meanwhile, in the darkness Paul and Silas slip out of the back door. As they are sneaking out of town, the uninterested crowd sees them and says...

*Narrator points to the uninterested crowd.*

**Uninterested Crowd:** "I don't care."

**Narrator:** With the help of some friends they make it safely outside of town where they meet up with the believing group who are yelling...

*Narrator points to the believing crowd*

**Believing Crowd:** "HOORAY, I believe it!"