

Preparation Study
Sunday, June 3, 2012

MONDAY STUDY

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and answer the following questions:

- *How did Christ demonstrate His love for us, according to these verses?*
- *What has the fact that Christ died for you compelled you to do so far in your life? How often does the fact that He died for you affect your day-to-day life?*
- *How do you make sense of the phrase “If One died for all”? Did Jesus indeed die for all, or did He die for those who would receive Him (refer to John 1:12 as well as the information in “Compelled to What?” to help discuss this question).*
- *Can we honestly say that the love of Christ is the primary reason we demonstrate love to others? What might be some other motivations?*
- *How do we become more aware of the love of Christ? How can we deepen our love for Him in light of that?*
- *Are we more likely to love others because of Christ’s love in relationships that are pleasant or relationships that are difficult? Why?*
- *Whom do you know that loves others out of his or her love for Christ? How do they demonstrate that it is Christ who compels them to love?*
- *How would your love for your family, friends, and even strangers look different if it were compelled by the love of Christ instead of whatever else compels you?*

Summary: The decisions we make to love throughout the day are brought about by a variety of forces. We love our kids because they depend on us for everything. We love our parents because they raised us. We love our neighbors because they get our mail when we are out of town. Sadly, though we appreciate Christ’s love for us, it is usually not the driving factor behind our love for others. But according to this passage, it was for Paul, and it should be for us. So the question is this: How do we allow that love to be such a driving force in our lives?

TUESDAY STUDY

Read Acts 17:1-4 and answer the following questions:

- *What can we learn about the number of Jews living in Thessalonica in this passage? In what ways could Paul relate to these Jews living so far away from Jerusalem?*
- *How did Paul help the Jews understand the truth of who Jesus is? (He used the Scriptures.) How comfortable are you in using the Bible to share Christ?*
- *What impact did Paul’s conversations with the Jews have on the other inhabitants of the city?*
- *In what ways do our own VBS, Sunday School, fellowships, and other “church-centered” activities draw others to Christ?*

Paul’s Missionary Journey: Paul crossed many barriers to share Jesus.

1. *Physical Barriers:* Based on the map, Paul crossed at least six barriers between regions. Although they were all part of the Roman empire, each region had its own distinct culture and practices.

2. *Social Barriers*: According to verse 4, Paul broke down barriers between Jews and Greeks as well as men and women.
3. *Keys to Success*: Verse 2 indicates that Paul made a practice of visiting the synagogue and that he was persistent. He went every Sabbath for three weeks.
 - *How long was Paul in the synagogue? What does that indicate about his passion and love for the people worshiping there?*
 - *What does the phrase “as usual” tell you about Paul’s travels? What actions are “as usual” in your life? Are your “as usual” actions the kind of actions that demonstrate love to others?*
 - *Do you have places either in or out of town that you visit regularly? (Answers may include a favorite coffee shop; a restaurant where you eat lunch every Friday; or an annual vacation spot.) How are you developing relationships there? In what ways are you communicating Christ to those people who are getting to know you?*

Summary: Like Paul, we are called to use different forms of communication depending on the situation and the people hearing our message.

WEDNESDAY STUDY

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 and answer the following questions:

- *In verses 2-3, what role does prayer play in remembering a brother or sister in Christ? How devoted are you to lifting up each other in prayer?*
- *In verse 6, whom did the Thessalonians imitate? (Paul and Christ) How does this verse remind us of the importance of imitating Christ out of love in terms of the example we set for our children?*
- *Notice in verses 6-7 that the persecutions faced by the Thessalonians made their witness much more powerful to their neighbors. What trials and persecutions are you facing right now? How are those situations demonstrating Christ to the people watching your life?*

Connect—diagram: Direct learners to the icons at the bottom of the page. Discuss what each might represent. If the class seems to be struggling, explain that it is meant to be a diagram of verse 5:
Word + Power + Holy Spirit = Much Assurance

On what do we base our assurance that we will be effective in our communication of the gospel? (If we are proclaiming God’s Word faithfully in the power of the Holy Spirit, we can have assurance that it will have the results God intends.)

Does this mean everyone who hears us will decide to follow Christ? (No. Go back to Acts 17:4. Even though Paul had all four of these elements, still only “some” of those who were listening were persuaded. But the results are not up to us. They are up to God.)

If we effectively communicate and demonstrate the love of Christ to our children, have we reached the goal of proclaiming Christ? (No. We should also teach our children how, in turn, to demonstrate that love to others.)

In what ways is the gospel evident in this church? In this class? In us as individuals?

Connect—“Rang Out”: Point out the first half of verse 8. Just as a bell rings out to everyone in a room, the love of Christ should ring clearly to people we know and encounter. Invite a volunteer to read the feature about the Tsar Bell in Moscow.

What are some of the things a bell is supposed to do? (It warns; it announces celebrations; and it notes the passing of time.)

Can you draw any parallels between what we just said and what the church or individual believers are supposed to do in the world?

Which bell is more useful: big and broken or simple and functional?

Do the Math: If a person shares Christ with 10 people per year, how many believers will he have reached in 10 years? ($10 \times 10 = 100$) However, if he shares Christ and intentionally disciples two people per year, and each of those people makes two disciples per year, and so on, how many disciples will there be at the end of 10 years?

Year 1 = 2	Year 6 = 728
Year 2 = 8	Year 7 = 2186
Year 3 = 26	Year 8 = 6560
Year 4 = 80	Year 9 = 19682
Year 5 = 242	Year 10 = 59048

Our goal should not be simply to share Christ and bring people to Him but to help them truly understand the extent and power of His love so that they too will bring others to Him.

THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY STUDY

Read the following articles contained in you study packet:

1. Paul and the Thessalonians;
2. The Scriptures in Jesus' Day;
3. Thessalonica;