

Skin in the Game: Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians

April 5th, 2020

Jeff Bruce, Lead Pastor

Loving at Long-Distance (1 Thessalonians 5:23-28)

1. Mutual Prayer (vv. 23-25)

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. ²⁵ Brothers, pray for us.”

2. Verbal Care (vv. 26-27)

“Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.”

For further thought and discussion:

Getting Started

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. What's the most thoughtful or encouraging letter you've ever received?

Going Deeper

3. What prompted Paul to write the letter of 1 Thessalonians (see Acts 17:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20). How is Paul's situation similar to ours as we "*shelter in place*"?
4. Paul prays the same thing in two different ways in 5:23. What's the focus of Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians (5:23)? How is this instructive for us as we pray for each other during this time? Why is it critical that we pray for each other's spiritual growth, and not simply for protection and provision (see Hosea 13:4-6)? Why can we pray for each other's spiritual growth with such confidence (5:24; see also John 10:28-29)?
5. What, specifically, is Paul asking the Thessalonians to do in verses 26 and 27? How do his instructions demonstrate his care for each member of the church at Thessalonica?

Application

6. How will you pursue mutual prayer with Creeksiders this week? Here are three ways to do it; (1) pick a Creeksider to pray with each week via phone/video conference, (2) join Creekside's corporate prayer meetings on Zoom (Wednesdays at 9:00 am and 7:00 pm), (3) commit to making Good Friday (April 10th) a day of prayer and fasting. Fast from dinner on Thursday (April 9th) through dinner on Friday (April 10th). Use this time to seek the Lord on behalf of our church, our city, and our nation.
7. What's one way you can encourage a fellow Creeksider this week (a note of encouragement, a text of appreciation, etc.)?
8. What's one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?