

Friday, Aug. 28: Read [1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 5:28](#), [2 Thessalonians 2](#)

Very possibly, Christians are being martyred at Thessalonica. The young believers likely are asking about death, resurrection and the second coming of Christ. Paul addresses these topics here in chapter 4-5 and 2 Thessalonians 2. Note his admonitions for us as well today -- stay awake, be alert, be self-controlled. 2 Thessalonians keys in on “the lawless one” and the temple. We would refer to him as the Antichrist. Notice he will powerfully deceive the world into following his leadership. (See [Revelation 13](#)) Our assignment? Like the believers then, we are to be faithful ([Revelation 2:10](#), [13:9-10](#); [14:12](#)) and faithful ([1 Thessalonians 4:1](#), [John 15:4-8](#)).

Friday: Pray for Our Missionaries

Juan & Adriana Palacios (Angola, Africa), **David & Miriam Trott** (Cochabamba, Bolivia), **Mario Bloise** (Argentina), **Dan & DeAnn Gerard** (San Antonio, TX), **Craig & Shelly Shafer** (Sentani, Indonesia), **Sue Saunders** (Bosnia), **Matt and Becky Kooi** (Tijuana), **Daniel Jezowski** (Wycliffe), **Andrew & Sara Williams** (Ethnos360), **Brad and Christa Babjack** (University of West Virginia), **Salomon and Megan Guzman** (Tijuana), **Alvaro and Rachel Garriga** (Central Asia), **William and Salma Garcia** (Tijuana church plant), **Brendan and Ashley Camp** (Columbia)

Week of
August 23
2020



Be the CHURCH is DISCIPLESHIP

Spiritual Disciplines Guide:

- Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading each day.
- Read the chapters and underline any meaningful verses and take note of specific advice or wisdom gleaned from your reading.
- Note any unclear passages or teaching and seek insight, answers or help.
- Think about what you're reading. Ask:
 1. How does this apply to me?
 2. Are there any temptations to avoid, sins to confess, commands to obey or promises to claim?
 3. What insight do I gain on God, myself, others, or life?
- Ask God to show you any specific action you need to take as you read.

We have come to the second part of our study of the book of Acts. Part I -- The Church Established, featuring the Apostle Peter. Part II -- The Church Extended, featuring the Apostle Paul. Luke, who wrote Acts, includes three different missionary journeys of Paul, covering a combined period of some 20 years. Each mission trip sets the stage for many of Paul's New Testament letters. This week, we will survey one.

Monday, Aug. 24: Read [Acts 15](#), [Galatians 2](#)

In [Acts 14](#), Paul and Barnabas preach in the region of Galatia in the cities of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Then, they are stoned by a Jewish mob, a group who next challenges the fledgling church in Galatia. So Paul writes the book of Galatians in defense of “true Christianity”. Notice the debate of whether a person can be a “true Christian believer” without also being Jewish (i.e. obeying the Old Testament laws). This leads to the Jerusalem counsel of Acts 15, which relates to Galatians 2. The theme verse of Galatians is [Chapter 5:1](#) -- Freedom in Christ; moral freedom to do what is right, to serve others in love ([5:13](#)) and to live by the Spirit ([5:16](#)).

Monday: Pray for yourself:

- My relationship with God
- My life roles and responsibilities
- My personal needs/weak areas
- My goals and objectives for 2020

Tuesday, Aug. 25: Read [Acts 17:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 1-2](#)

On his second missionary journey, Paul preaches in Europe. Three New Testament churches and books -- Philippians, Corinthians and Thessalonians -- come out of this missions trip. Paul later writes the Corinthians from Ephesus while on his third missions trip and the book of Philippians later from a Roman prison cell. 1 Thessalonians, however, is written almost immediately after he had preached there. Notice the turbulent context of the book in Acts 17 ([1 Thessalonians 2:1-2, 14](#)). Acts 17:2 suggests that Paul spent less than a month in Thessalonica, yet he has high praise for the believers there in the face of adversity and persecution. They have quickly become a model to others ([2 Thessalonians 1:3-12](#)).

What have you learned from the example of others who are persevering in struggles? How could God be teaching you faith and faithfulness in the face of difficulties and adversity? And, what good might God want to bring about in your life through personal struggles and even spiritual opposition? ([Romans 8:28](#))

Tuesday: Pray for Family by Name.

Wednesday, Aug. 26: Read [1 Thessalonians 3](#)

We pick up with Paul sending Timothy back to Thessalonica to report how the church has fared under persecution. Timothy has become Paul's right hand man by this point ([Philippians 2:19-24](#)). He eventually becomes the pastor of the church at Ephesus ([1 Timothy 1:3-4, 18-20](#)). His assignment is ours as well, to strengthen and encourage the faith of those who are struggling. His report -- the believers are "standing firm in the Lord". Who do you know today that needs spiritual encouragement and faith in their struggles? Take a cue from the Apostle Paul. Pray for them (v. 10-13). Then send them encouragement in the form of someone, a note or phone call, or, if possible, by visiting them yourself.

Wednesday: Pray for Bethel Gilead Community Church

1. **Leadership**: Pray for God's grace and guidance in Pastor Jim and Pastor David's ministries and families. Pray for Linda Penn in her work at BGCC. Pray for the church council and the various ministry team leaders. Ask the Lord of the harvest to raise up more workers for the harvest ([Matthew 9:38](#))
2. **Worship**: Ask God to strengthen our devotion to Him, in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. Pray for more musicians to help lead the church in worship, including a pianist. Pray for the development of a youth praise team.
3. **Fellowship**: Ask God to deepen our love and commitment to one another as a family of believers. Pray that we incorporate newcomers into our church fellowship. Pray through this past Sunday's congregational prayer requests.
4. **Discipleship**: Ask God to develop the faith, dedication, and leadership of our people. Pray for the children and youth ministries at BGCC. Ask God to bless our small group ministry, to raise up new groups, new teachers and more leaders.

5. **Outreach**: Pray that God will use Bethel Gilead to make a positive impact on our community so that many would come to Christ. Ask God to embolden our people to intentionally reach out to others.
6. **Future Faith Goals**: Ask God to give our congregation a united vision for the future. Pray for God's clear leading in our 2020 plan as we call our members to a greater love and commitment to the Lord and his service. Ask God to bless our finances so that we can better accomplish his purposes for our congregation.

Thursday, Aug. 27: Read [1 Thessalonians 4](#)

Paul changes the subject from enduring persecution to living a model Christian life. He highlights three themes -- sexual purity, brotherly love and personal responsibility. The first and third were his greater concerns. Note his extended teaching against idleness in [2 Thessalonians 3:6-15](#). God is industrious, creative and productive. As his people, we should be also. Your personal work ethic reflects on what you believe about God. Paul says that daily productivity wins the respect of outsiders. Idleness (laziness) impresses no one. In America, we tend toward both extremes -- an over emphasis on work and busyness or, an over emphasis on entertainment and leisure. Ask God to keep you in balance in this area, along with so many other areas of Christian living. You are a model to others. Someone is learning about God by watching you!

Thursday: Pray for "My World"

(Write down names as God brings people to mind.)

- **Neighbors** • People who live around me.
- **People at Work** • Others God brings into my life. Take note of specific needs around you and ask God what he wants you to do to help. Who can you invite to church?
- **Community** -- Ask God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to Branch County, even through the Coronavirus crisis.
- **Pray for the area churches** and a greater spirit of unity and cooperation, especially as churches reunite after the quarantine.
- **Pray for the community parachurch ministries** serving our county, including Beginnings Care for Life Center, Branch County Right to Life, Celebrate Recovery, Coach Eby Youth and Family Center, Damascus Road Ministry, Family Promise, Forgotten Man Ministries, Foster Closet of Branch County, God's Choice Church, Jacob's Well Ministry, Presbyterian Free Health Clinic, Shelterhouse, Tommy's House, the Gideons and the Bronson Food Pantry.
- **America**: Continue to pray for the nation, our national leaders and a revival in America. Pray that God would use the Coronavirus outbreak to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ.