



MORE THANKING. LESS GRIPING.

Pastor Mark Driscoll

1 Thessalonians | September 10, 2023

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Well, happy birthday, Trinity Church. Happy seventh birthday. I love you with my whole heart, and this is such a fun, exciting day. Amen. Yes. This is so great, and seven years of God's faithfulness in and through you. And so I just wanna start by saying thank you, God, and thank you to the wonderful people that call Trinity Church Home. Amen. If you're visiting, you're surrounded with the best people in the world. Amen. And seven in the Bible is this wonderful number, it, it denotes completion and celebration. And so God worked for six days. Everything he did was perfect. He completed his work. And then on the seventh day, he celebrated and enjoyed everything that he had completed. We are declaring that this is a jubilee year at Trinity Church. This is a year of celebration and joy and fruitfulness in Jesus' name. That's where we begin today. Amen. Amen. And I just wanna start, before we jump into a brand new book of the Bible. I wanna start by thanking God, that we know that no church exists unless God attends it. And the most important person at a church is the Holy Spirit. And if he doesn't arrive, then nothing happens. And the Bible says that unless the Lord builds the house, those who labor, labor in vain, we have not labored in vain because the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, has built this beautiful house. Amen. So I wanna start by thanking Jesus. Number two, I want to thank my overseeing pastors, uh, grace and I have got some wonderful men that we submit to, and they laid hands on us and they commissioned our family to plant this church. And so I just wanna publicly thank and honor Pastor Robert Morris and, uh, pastor Jimmy Evans, who are our founding overseers, and still serve as our pastors and help make this possible. In addition, I want to thank my family and I'm gonna, um, My heroes all have my last name, uh, except for the one daughter that got married. And, um, when we moved here, we didn't know what God would have for us, but it was my sons who called a family meeting and said, dad, we feel like we should plan a church together. And this church started with our family and it started with a series of discussions and prayer times around our dining room table. And, uh, when your teenage kids are like, we love Jesus and we wanna plan a church, you're officially experiencing a supernatural miracle of the Holy Spirit. And so, um, I just want to thank our family for answering the call. Everyone in our family loves Jesus and serves, uh, that's our current family. Uh, one of them is not here because, uh, they actually got married on this stage a week ago, and they're on their honeymoon. So, uh, if you're watching the live stream, turn it off. You just got married, catch up later. Um, and, and this is, you have been, let me, I'll try not to get super emotional. Um, the way you have treated my family is incredible. Amen. Incredible. My wife says, amen. Um, they are loved by you. They are love you. Our whole family is serving here. And being part of this church family has been one of the greatest honors and joys for every member of our family, as well as those who have gotten married and now have their own family. And I just want to say that too few pastors have the kind of people that treat their family the way that you do. But thank you for making this a wonderful place for our family. And the vision of our family was to start a church to where you all would be extended family. And this is our church family. And just thank you on behalf of our family for loving us so well. Our daughter was the first baptism, uh, two of our three kids got baptized or got, uh, married rather on this very stage. We're now four generations here serving together. And, uh, my grandsons are gonna grow up, uh, enjoying the splash pad in the back. Thank you, Lord Jesus. And so we just love you with all of our heart. I also want to thank our church family. And those of you who are part of our church

family, you're the best people in the whole world. You're easy to lead, you're easy to love, you're easy to like, it is very enjoyable to be your pastor. And I wanna start by thanking the lead team and the staff and the great volunteers at Trinity Church. Amen. And then lastly, for those who are joining us online, and uh, there'll probably be a million plus of you this weekend, uh, we have an online ministry called Real Faith. And it's where I give away Bible teaching to the nations. And for those that are part of our extended church family online, if you're visiting this summer, come to Trinity Church, show up early. There's no parking, but, but come to Trendy church and, uh, we'd love to meet you. And if you're moving to the valley, you're gonna meet the best people here. We'd welcome you to be part of this church family. And for the online, uh, viewers who may not know this, you, you were very instrumental in your generosity, was very significant in the planting of this church. When we moved here. Um, I didn't know what we were gonna do. And God said to plant a church. And he said that through our children, for the first 18 months of this church, I was an unpaid volunteer because the people at real faith took care of me and my family. And for the first year, the staff was covered by the good people at real faith. And so I just want to thank our extended family for being generous and then being part of the planting of this church. And so right now we've got this beautiful church family where we get Bible teaching and we send it all over the world to the people who made this church possible. It's a wonderful thing that God has done. Uh, in closing, before we jump into one Thessalonians, another resource, and this is what we like to do, we like to help people learn the Bible. Amen. If you're new, we're the Bible people. We like the whole thing. We even like the maps and the appendix and the copyright. We like all of it. Um, and so what I've got for you this week, and uh, if you wanna pull out your phone, I'll give you a QR code and give you a free digital copy. Uh, it's, uh, more heaven, less hell, an end time survival Guide from First Thessalonians. We're starting a brand new book of the Bible today and I like to help people learn books of the Bible. So this is a free resource that is available for you, whether you're live or online. That being said, how about we pray and get into a book of the Bible? Amen. Alright, let's do it. Father God, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you Lord Jesus. You said you were gonna build your church and we're here to say you've done it. You've done it beautifully. You've done it wonderfully. You've done it supernaturally. And God, we're just so grateful that you have chosen us to be part of what you're doing. Uh, Lord Jesus, we commissioned this campus to you. We commission this service to you. We commission this time to you because Lord Jesus, this is your church. These are your people, and this is an outpost of your kingdom. And so, Lord Jesus, as we open the scriptures, we invite the Holy Spirit to meet with us, to teach us, to lead us, to guide us, and to encourage us. In Jesus' name. All God's people said, amen. All right, we're in a brand new book of the Bible, first Thessalonians, and we're gonna jump right in. Uh, my first point is this, thank you for loving your leaders despite the drama. Uh, first that if you're new, you'll get this in a minute. First Thessalonians one, Paul Sylvanus, also sometimes translated Silas and Timothy to the Church of the Thessalonians, uh, in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace to you and peace. Typical ancient letter. We give thanks to God always for all of you. That's my heart for you. I thank God for you constantly mentioning you in our prayers, we're always praying for you, remembering before our God and Father, your work of faith, labor of love, and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus

Christ. So we jump into this letter and it begins with the leadership. And leadership requires singular headship, plural, leadership. Here the singular head is the apostle Paul, and then the plural leaders are Venu and Timothy, if all you have is a singular leader, it's a dictatorship. If all you have is plural leadership, it's anarchy. The way the trinity is architected. Singular head plural, leaders in the family, singular head, the husband, plural, leaders, husband and wife in the church, singular head plural, leaders in that church. It was the Apostle Paul with his lead team and our church. That would be me as your senior pastor with our lead team. And they're meeting in a city called Thessalonica. I've been there some years ago with my family. When the Bible says that people in places exist, they do, because the Bible tells us the truth about everything and everyone. And the ancient city of Thessalonica, it was a strategic city. It was the intersection of two highways and it had a port on the a gian C. So that made it a place, much like our own valley, where lots of people visited and passed through. Um, one thing as well, how many of you're new, right? You're new. Um, they had something called, uh, a port at a at a place that had water. And it, it's, it's kind of confusing when you fly into Phoenix 'cause you're like, oh, we're landing at Sky Harbor. And if I Did, I miss it. I can't find the harbor. Um, we say we have one. They actually had one nonetheless meeting, there is a church. And uh, the church is precious in God's sight. And what we are is a church. And the ancient word that is used here is Lacey. It means assembly or gathering. I think of it like a family meeting. And so a church is a family. And when we get together, it's a family meeting. The way this church started was a family meeting. We came home from church. Uh, my sons, uh, called a meeting and they said, dad, we miss your preaching and we wanna plan a church and we want to do it as a family. They were teenagers. So we called a family meeting and we prayed. And this church was birthed through a series of family meetings at our dining room table. And it's named after Grace. My wife's father who's pastor away, but he planted and pastor a church called Trinity Church for more than 40 years. And so they are a church. And what that means is when we get together, we're family. We're family. And, and I love this concept that church is family. And right now what we're having is a family meeting. And so when this letter was originally written, they would've gotten together for the family meeting and the leader would've gotten up and read the letter from Paul for the family meeting. That being said, the church is what we're talking about. And for those of you who are new, let me explain this. There is heaven, there is hell, there is the world and there is the church. And the church is supposed to invite the culture of heaven down for God's people. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, says the Lord Jesus the world. That's where, uh, people invite the culture of hell up. Anarchy, lies, rebellion and destruction between the church and the world is the word of God. And the word of God is the dividing line between the world and the church. And we love people in the world, but we don't love the world. And we want people from the world to come into the church. But we don't want any of the world's culture to enter into the church. The church belongs to Jesus Christ. The church belongs to Jesus Christ. Yes, Furthermore, the church exists for God's people. And so, and, and, and just where we're at right now, the whole world is absolutely against God's people. And wherever you go, you feel outcast and homeless. And so when you come to church, this needs to be a counter-cultural place where we live under the authority of God's word. We love Jesus. We care for each other. And we are filled and led by the

power of the Holy Spirit. And what oftentimes happens is people have spent their whole life in the world, they come into the church like we don't feel very comfortable. It's called conviction because you're a sinner. You're gonna get used to it. Eventually we, we, we have. And and, and the reason you don't feel comfortable is because you're not right with God. And until you repent of your sin and get right with God, you're gonna feel uncomfortable being with God's people singing God's praises in God's presence. And what people will do, they'll walk into the church and they'll be like, well, this is just weird. This feels uncomfortable. Here's what I would say. You've got everything else. You've got the schools, you've got the government, you've got entertainment. Uh, we can't even go to Disneyland and Target just ticks us off. So you've got everything. You've got everything. All we want is the church to be the church, the home for God's people. We love the Bible, we love Jesus. We love each other. We're going to heaven and you're welcome to join us, but you're not welcome to change us because the church belongs to Jesus Christ. So if you wanna know how the church in Thessalonica started, you can read Acts chapter 17 verses one through 10 this week. It's in this study guide. I like to show my work. But what happened was the Apostle Paul pulled into town and the beginning of every church is a miracle. It's a God story. How does God get a church started usually through the preaching of his word. When God began his work in creation, he spoke creation into existence. Nothing comes into existence until the word of God is proclaimed with authority. And then what God does, he brings life out of nothing. And that's how churches get planted. They get preached into existence. You preach the word of God and then the spirit of God honors the word of God, converts people to become the people of God. And then you get the church of God through the preaching of God's word. That's why we lead with preaching. We don't give talks and chats and recommendations. We give sermons here. That's what we do. That's what I do because I love you with my whole heart. And I believe if God's word is unleashed, I believe supernatural things are gonna happen in our midst. Yes. And so Paul pulls into the ancient city of Thessalonika and he starts preaching to those who were Jewish and gathered in the synagogue. He was Jewish, Jesus was Jewish, and he was preaching that Jesus was the fulfillment to the promises, to the Jewish people, descendants of Abraham, while some got saved. So there was a bit of a revival. And then some got angry and there was a riot. You need to know this. Every time God does ministry, Satan does anti ministry. Every time God brings a revival, Satan brings a riot. So there is conflict. What happens then is they threaten to murder the Apostle Paul. So the apostle Paul is in this very difficult situation, and that is that the mob wants to murder him and the church and the Christians love him. This is like a hostage situation where they've got their gun pulled and they've got their sights on Paul. But the church, the Christians whom Paul loves as I love you, they're in the crosshairs. And so Paul is in something that counselors will call a double bind. A double bind is if you do this, you lose. And if you do that, you lose. If he stays in fights, they're going to probably attack and maybe even kill some of the Christians. If he leaves, they're going to lie and tell the Christians that he doesn't love them. Either way, he's in a double bind. So what Paul does, he leaves town not because he's a coward, but because he's a father. In the same way, if there is a hostage situation and your children are in the crosshairs, you'll do everything within your power to cause them to be safe. Even if that means that your reputation is destroyed. That's what Paul does. The reason he writes the letter, he can't be there. And

so Paul leaves because of the mob and the riot, and let me just say this, Paul was right because the mob versus Paul who was going to determine the fate of the decision regarding what would happen to Paul, the Roman government, you just need to know this from beginning to end. Usually the conflict in the Bible is between God and government because government wants to replace God and be the highest authority. And God declares that he has authority over the government. And so ultimately the one who would come in and mediate this conflict would be the government. Well, do you think that they're gonna side with Paul or with the mob? With the mob? How do we know this? Paul spends a good bit of time in his life, in jail and history outside of the Bible records that at the end the government had him beheaded. And so we know for a fact that he made the right decision. That being said, I want you to just see this. Cancel culture is a demonic spirit that has been against Bible teaching since the beginning of the church. And what they're trying to do here, they're trying to cancel Paul, kick him out of the church, kick him out of the city, take away his platform, silence him. This is cancel culture. It's nothing new. It's a demonic spirit in every age. And we live in a day when, when everyone's allowed to speak except for the Bible teacher. And everyone is welcome except for the Holy Spirit. And so ultimately, when you preach the word of God, you're not just preaching to people, but you're preaching against powers, principalities and spirits. And there is going to be reaction and resistance. Um, that being said, if I could point out the obvious, Paul was controversial, time in jail. He starts riots. He started another one in Ephesus. I mean, he could put that on his resume. I'm good at starting riots and uh, I do prison ministry. You know, I mean, uh, let me just say this. Uh, I am not Paul, I'm not saying that at all. But one thing we have in common, we get in trouble. Okay? If you're new, I get in trouble and it's not an accident, okay? And it's not 'cause I'm a victim. This is just the way that God made me. God made me to get punched and punched back. That's just how God made me my spirit animal. I gorilla. You know? Um, and so I'll give you a little story of how I see it. Um, I was in college and I had a buddy of mine who boxed and he was like, Hey, do you wanna go to the gym and box? I was like, I've never boxed. I've been in fights and I like sports. I played a number of sports. He's like, well, let's go to the gym and I'll teach you how to box and then throw you in the ring and see what you can do. So true story, we show up and he's like, okay, first thing I gotta teach you is footwork. I was like, what's footwork? He's like, it's like dancing. I'm like, look at me, man. You know, I, I have 0% odds of being a ballerina and I'm Irish. Our people tried dancing. It was called river dancing. It did not go well. Did not go well. I said, I don't need footwork. He's like, well, you gotta duck and bob and weave. I said, no, you don't, you. He said, what are you gonna do? I said, I'm gonna walk out there and I'm gonna hit him, and then he's gonna hit me and then I'm gonna hit him again, and then he's gonna hit me and we're gonna do this until he falls down. I said, that's my plan. He's like, that's not a good plan. I said, that's the plan. Uh, the odds are better than me dancing, by the way. And uh, so I went out into the ring and I did exactly what I said. I hit the guy, the guy hit me. We did that for a while. He fell down. I looked over at my buddy. I was like, good plan. Um, I'll just be honest. That's how I see life. I see lies and truth. I see light and darkness. I see God and Satan. I see good in evil. I see heaven and hell. And I don't hate anyone and I don't want to hit anyone. But man, some issues just need to get punched in the mouth every weekend. So if, if you're new, you just need to know this. Your pastor is one in five star reviews. That's it.

Like anybody who gives me a two or a three hasn't listened to the whole sermon, right? One in five star reviews. That's how I roll. And, and, and I always say this about grace and I, I say, we're a drama queen. She's a queen. I'm the drama. That's how we roll. Okay? And so I love you and I am a little controversial and I do get in trouble and it's awesome. And next time. And, and if you're new and many of you are new, when your Christian friends are like, oh gosh, I heard about your pastor. He gets in a lot of trouble. Here's what I want you to say. I know how come your pastor doesn't get in any trouble? Okay? It's nice to have a hometown crowd. Okay? Alright, number here we go. Again, thank you for loving each other and being a healthy church family. One Thessalonians one, four, and five, we know brothers love. By God, God loves you. You're God's people. That he has chosen you because our gospel came to you not only in Word, but also in power. And in the Holy Spirit full of conviction. He talks about Christians and Christian churches. If you are a Christian, here's what he says. You are loved by God and he has chosen you before you knew him, he knew you before you were looking for him. He was looking for you before you were pursuing him. He was pursuing you before you loved him. He loved you. Before you chose him, he chose you. And the Bible talks of this in a beautiful term called adoption. What happens in an adoption is that a father decides, I love that kid and I'm choosing to be their dad, and I'm committing to love them for the rest of their life. If you are a Christian, that's exactly what God has done for you. Amen. Amen. In addition, he says that, uh, churches, he's talking about the church and the kind of church that they are. And when it comes to churches, pastoring a church is like parenting a child. How many of you, your first child, you're like, we have no idea what we're doing. You know, the child's born. You're like, we apologize in advance that you're our subject for this parenting experiment. Um, and then you parent for a few years and you feel like, okay, we learned a few things, and then you get pregnant again. And, uh, or at least your wife does. I mean, that's what we believe here. I know it's controversial, but, um, um, if you're a man and you have weight gain, it's not pregnancy. Um, it's carbs. Okay? So, um, but then you have a second child and you think, Hey, you know what? We've already had a kid. We know what we're doing. Then you realize this child is completely different than the last one. Totally different child. And different churches are like different children. They have different personalities. So Jesus tells a story of the prodigal son, where there's a religious brother, he's older and smarmy and arrogant and self-righteous and no fun. And then there's the younger brother. He's not religious. He's rebellious and drunken and disobedient and self-destructive. Some churches are like the younger brother. There's one called Corinth in the New Testament. Paul's like, Hey, you guys need pants. You know, uh, you need pants. And uh, and then there's churches that are religious, and that would be like the church in Galatia where he's yelling at them. He's basically like, Hey, God wrote a book. It's got a lot of rules and he doesn't need you to add to them. He's got this covered when it comes to the church at Thessalonika. It's a warm, loving, kind, hopeful, encouraging tone, why they were a great church. Don't let the media fool you. Don't let the critics discourage you. There are still some wonderful churches filled with some awesome people. Amen? And you're in one right now. That's the kind of church that Thessalonians is, and that's the kind of church that you are. And so what, what he's talking about here, what makes their church great is that they're a church of word and spirit. He's gonna say it here. He talks about in Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And then in the next section of verse, he's gonna talk about the word and the joy of the Holy Spirit. So what makes a great loving, awesome church? People that are word and Spirit, okay? Sometimes you get a church, it's all word. It's all Bible. It's all true, but it's not fun. These are Jeopardy episode churches. You know, everybody's in a suit and very serious. I'll take Leviticus for 200 and circumcision for 800. You know, you're like, you're like, you know, and they're the answer. Like, they get all the answers, right? But they're no. Like, the band gets up, you're like, woo, that's all you got, you know? And uh, and they're like, but we got all the answers, right? I know, but you're not fun. And you know, you're, you're lame. So then, so then there are other churches. There are other churches. They're the spirit churches. They're like, we sing, we pray. We're excited. They're like drunk aerobics classes. That's what they're like. Everybody's like, woo-hoo, woo-hoo, woo-hoo. You know? And, and they're talking, but they don't make any sense. You're like, have you guys, have you guys even heard of a thing called the Bible? You know, uh, you should just think about maybe finding one and reading a verse. 'cause you're crazy. You're excited, but it's a drunk aerobics class. How many of you, uh, just show of hands, uh, how many of you, you're more experienced in a jeopardy episode word church. Okay. Okay. They didn't, this is interesting. They, they're like, uh, you feel bad 'cause you're lame. Okay? Now the other people, how many of you, you have an experienced in a drunk aerobic church? You're like, they love the Holy Spirit, man. But it was happy hour. I mean, it was crazy. Okay? So what we wanna be, we wanna be a church. That is word and spirit, not word or spirit. And I see it this way, I see it like sailing. Um, when you sail, you need to have a rudder on the back and you need to have a sail on the front. And Jesus says that the Holy Spirit's like the wind. So that's the power of the leading of God. And so to me, spirit, churches, uh, they have the sail and word, churches have the rudder. You know what, you want to have both. You want to have the rudder. Lord, we read your word. Where do you want us to go? And the spirit power, I believe, as I've been praying for us this week, I believe that these two sections of word and spirit are a prophetic word. That God has spoken over Trinity Church for this ar jubilee year. I believe it. I believe up until this point, we've been a little stronger on the word. And now we're gonna get a little stronger in the spirit. Not less word, but more spirit. I believe more people are gonna get saved. More people are gonna get healed. More people are gonna get delivered. I believe people are gonna be freed in worship and there's gonna be deep, profound healing in the lives of our people by the power of the Holy Spirit based upon the word of God. That being said, thank you for returning to joy. This is a point I'm so glad to share with you. One Thessalonians one beginning in verse five, you know what kind of men we prove to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord. That's Jesus Christ. For he received, he's gonna echo it again, the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit. So that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Akea. So what he talks about is affliction. Affliction is any trouble that comes into your life or into our church. They have the same categories of affliction that we do. Satan and demons were opposing them. An angry mob was attacking their pastor. Their pastor had to run for his life, wasn't even in town. The news made a big mess of this. You know, conman steals money from church and leaves town. Uh, they've got the world that is against them. They've got family and friends who don't want them to be professing Christ. They have lots of affliction. But what he says is they had joy

of the Holy Spirit. Let me say this. Friends affliction is part of the Christian life, just, just like it was part of the life of Christ, the man of sorrows. And any Christianity that doesn't teach you how to deal with affliction isn't that faithful to the totality of God's word. And so what happens is when affliction comes, you have two choices. And these are very significant. You could choose fear or you can choose joy. Let me explain this to you. The the new brain science is telling us that the two strongest motivators in life are fear and joy. The people will endure incredible amounts of difficulty if they're afraid or if they believe that there is joy on the other side. What happens when affliction comes? You're going to have anxiety and fear because as we look into the future, we wonder what is going to happen. And if you choose fear in affliction, fear comes with a spirit and it's demonic and it becomes oppressive. The Bible says that God has not given us a spirit of fear. And so in your affliction, if you choose fear, a demonic spirit is going to come. Now, this is going to be the most anxious, uh, the most tepid and the worst version of you. Instead, you can choose joy in he says, uh, the Holy Spirit. And what happens is when affliction comes, if you choose fear, the counselors will say, you're dysregulated. You're not doing good. You're not yourself. When you invite the Holy Spirit, you become regulated. All of a sudden you get time with the Lord. This is casting your cares on him. This is transferring your burdens to him. This is verbal processing with him. This is shedding tears with him. I'll be honest with you, I was very bad at this for many years of my Christian life. My wife Grace is good at it. And she would get back to joy. And I would still be in fear. And so I would have anxiety about the future that would cause me unhealth and struggle in the present. And what I've learned by God's grace, I need to go for walks with Jesus. Usually in the woods, I, I got my hike in this week. Hours, me just talking to Jesus. Here's what I'm struggling with. Here's what I'm excited about. Here's what's coming. I need help with this. I just need to give it all to Him and then Him to send me the Holy Spirit. Because what happens is there's affliction that's always going to be around you. And many of us live under this pervasive myth. I'll be fine when everything's fine In a fallen world, never fine. There's never a day you wake up, you're like Jesus, no need to come back. I'm already there. Everything's come together. And so there can be affliction around you, but there can be joy in you because the Holy Spirit lives in the child of God. That means the Holy Spirit gives us an opportunity to be regulated and to return to joy because the fruit of the Spirit includes joy. Joy. Now we learned this from the Lord Jesus. It says this in Hebrews 12, two, for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross. The cross is the greatest affliction that anyone could ever possibly endure. We'll talk about it a little more at the end of the sermon. And Jesus had great anxiety the night before He died on the cross. He's up all night, he's sweating like drops of blood. He's crying out to the Father, he's struggling. It's okay to not be okay, but you go through your affliction, trusting that joy is on the other side. What I like to say is you go through your beating to get to your blessing. It says, for the joy set before him, he endured the cross. He went through the affliction to return to joy. Here's what I want you to know. God wants this house and you as his children to constantly return to joy. He doesn't want you to live in fear or anxiety, but in the spirit and in joy. And it doesn't mean that everything's okay, but you're okay Because the outside does not determine the inside. The inside is determined by the Holy Spirit, the source of joy. Amen. Amen. And so here's what we believe. We believe that the culture of our church should be one of joy. It's our seventh

birthday. It's our year of Jubilee. Our plan this year is whatever we go through, return to joy, get back to joy, we're gonna throw parties. Thank you for paying for the park. It's the grand opening tonight. There's a band playing food trucks, lots of fun sports court just got open for the kids. We're working on permits for the splash pad. We throw parties to practice for heaven. We laugh during the sermon 'cause we take God seriously, but not ourselves. We tell each other we love each other, we hug each other. We're here to have a good time. Amen. Amen. Because we're not going to hell. We're going through hell. But we know that heaven is coming. And let me say this for your kids. We want this to be a safe, joyful environment for your kids. We want kids to build their joy bonds at church when they grow up. It's like, where was your favorite place? Church? Who were the best people? God's people. Well, what do you mean? Well, if we showed up in our swimsuits in the summer and they gave us popsicles and they had a cannon of foam, they stole from a raven, they put in water slides and they had a splash pad. And they told us Jesus loved us and it looked like he did. So we had a lot of good times at the church. They weren't talking about our gender or our genitalia. They just let us be kids. Amen. And every once in a while a religious person shows up, they're like, I don't know, this seems too fun. You need to repent and you need to, you need a popsicle and a nap. Okay? Anyways, so, um, I gotta keep going. Okay? So thank you for helping get Bible teaching out to the world. Here's what he says in one Thessalonians one, eight, for not only has the word of the Lord, you know what? This is the word of the Lord. This is not a word about the Lord. This is the word of the Lord. Amen. This is not what we think about God. This is God telling us what he thinks about everything. He says. Not only is the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, that's their region, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere so that we need not say anything. What he says is from your church, you are the people who love the Bible. You like the Bible, you believe the Bible, you study the Bible and you tell everyone about the Bible. Hey, thanks for being that church. I'm a, I dunno if you know this, I'm a preacher. I really like people who come to learn the Bible. You guys come to learn the Bible. Amen. I had a, I won't name the ministry, one of the, a very large Bible teaching ministry. The the director showed up here and he said, I have never seen a church where that many people show up with their Bible and take notes. He's like, your people really like the Bible. I know because we love the word of God. We believe that we need the word of God. And we know that if you want a word from God, you've gotta open the word of God. And what Paul says is you guys love the Bible and that makes teaching the Bible so fun. And if you're new, this is a short sermon. But sometimes they go an hour and 17 minutes. That's the longest one that I can remember. And you know what, you guys stayed for the whole sermon. I mean your bladders are committed to the Lord. They, they are. So thank you. Let me just share a little good news with you because we've got Trinity Church and then real faith distributes Bible teaching globally. Uh, lemme just share it with you a little good news so far in 2023, social media impressions and views across all platforms is up 770% reaching so far. 270 million people from Trinity Church. That's awesome. New social media followers is up over 1.5 million year over year. People saying, I want more Bible from Trinity Church. Praise God. And just, I would give you a prayer request, pray that we can get to a billion people a year. That's my prayerful goal with Bible teaching sermons, books, study guides, daily devotions, social media, clips, reels, 1 billion. Amen. Will

you commit to pray that we can get to 1 billion people a year? Total impressions with the word of God. And those numbers include names and faces that Jesus knows and loves. I'll share one with you. Um, there was a family, a mom, uh, a dad and a girl. They lived in Ukraine and they would listen to the sermons from Trinity Church. The Russians invaded mom and the daughter fled to America. Dad is still there. So pray for him. They're out of state. They still listen each week to the sermons at Trinity Church. The little girl, according to the story that I've been told, gave her life to Jesus. Listening to a live stream from Trinity Church, told her Mom, I feel like God is calling me to get baptized. So we brought them out this weekend and we're gonna baptize that girl. Amen. We live in this wonderful day when because of technology, you can reach people in Ukraine and then invite them to be baptized. Amen. And to profess their faith in Jesus Christ. Lastly, thank you for living. Like Jesus is coming. And lemme tell you this, Jesus is coming. Amen. Amen. Jesus is coming. This is the great theme of Thessalonians. We're gonna get into the mark of the beast and the antichrist and the second coming of Jesus and the end times come back. It's gonna be awesome. And, but, but, but, and I got a special water bottle for this series. Jesus is coming look busy. Um, and so Thank you for living. Like Jesus is coming. Alright, here's the last section of scriptures. First Thessalonians one beginning in verse nine, for they themselves report concerning us, the kind of reception we had among you, how you turn to God from idols to serve the living. Jesus is the living God. He's not dead. Jesus Christ is alive right now and he's the true God and await for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead Jesus who delivers from the wrath to come. And what he's saying is this, sometimes you gotta say no. So you can say yes. You can't say yes to everyone and everything. You need to say no to some things. So you can say yes to the most important things. What I want you to know is this is the day of your salvation and decision. You are now here by divine appointment with God to choose Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. And what he says is you need to say no to idols. So you can say yes to Jesus. Lemme explain this. Idolatry or idols in the Bible, it simply means this. You are worshiping the wrong thing. And worship is not just something that Christians or religious or spiritual people do. It's what human beings do. Everyone is always a worshiper. The question is, who or what is your object of worship? What do you make sacrifices for? What is your priority? What's the center of your life? What's the source of your identity? What's your greatest motivation? What makes you happy? Maybe when you get your idol, what makes you sad or angry? When you lose your idol, what hope are you living for? Number two, idolatry is where we worship anyone or every anything but God. And what this means is every one of us is passionately devoted to someone or something. And the Christian is passionately devoted to Jesus Christ above all. The apostle Paul says that this way. In Romans one, same author, he said, some worship the creator and enjoy the creation. Some worship the creation and ignore the creator. Idolatry is when you take a good thing and you make it a God thing. And then it's a bad thing. And I've, I've got it in the study guide and you can look it up. But in their day, they had a number of gods and goddesses, idols that were worshiped in their city. Archeologists have excavated them. And these idols are not powerful. But the demons who work through them are they worship sex with the gods of Osiris, Aphrodite, and Kaba, they worship, worshiped success with the God. Demeter. They worshiped influence or power with the Egyptian goddess. Isis. They worshiped pleasure with the uh, God of wine,

Dion, ISIS, they worshiped the environment and the green agenda when they worshiped Zeus, who was the God of the earth and they worshiped health and wellness with the God. Asclepius. These are all demons that they worship. True or false. In our day, we're still worshiping sex, success, influence, power, pleasure, the environment and health and wellness. That's what we're giving our whole lives to. And those aren't bad things, but they're bad gods. And so when you see the same thing happening in different cultures and times and places, you ask, well, how could that be? Because we have new days. But old demons, that's what I like to say. These same idols, which is a demonic, counterfeit spirit, are working in every age to seduce the worshipers, to worship anyone or anything, be devoted to anyone or anything other than Jesus Christ. And what he's saying is you need to say no to those idols, which is repentance of sin so that you can say yes to Jesus Christ. And that's why we're here today in a bit. We're gonna baptize a bunch of new Christians who have given themselves to Jesus Christ. And Jesus here is called the Lord Jesus Christ, the son from heaven, raised from the dead, who delivers us from the wrath to come. Lemme just summarize this for you briefly. There is God. And then he gives us gifts like health. And we can work a job and we can have a marriage, and we can have children and grandchildren and we can make love to our spouse and we can enjoy our life. And what happens is we use these things in honor to God, to worship God. So we worship God with how we spend our money and how we treat our spouse and how we view life and how we live. What happens when you commit idolatry? All of a sudden you're not using the things that God gives to honor him, but to dishonor him. So the alcoholic lives for the Bible, the sex addict lives for the dopamine hit. The workaholic works for their position in the company. The greedy person works for another zero in their bottom line. We want to worship Jesus and enjoy everything that he's given us. We want our job and our marriage and our kids and our family and everything that we have, and everything that we believe and everything that we do to be under the lordship of Jesus Christ. And we worship him by obeying all that he says about these things and not replacing him with any of these things. Let me just bring it down to you and Jesus, my friend. 'cause that's what it all comes down to. Your biggest problem, our biggest problem. My biggest problem is sin. Whatever problems we have, the problem under all of our problems is human sin. That we have disregarded, that we have disobeyed the God of the Bible. And what happens because of that, we are living in the path of the wrath of God. He uses the word here. He says that Jesus alone delivers from the wrath to come. Lemme talk about the wrath of God. People don't like to talk about the wrath of God. Talk about the love of God and the mercy of God and the grace of God. Let's talk about the wrath of God because God in love, God in grace, God in mercy saves you from his wrath. That's right. And the wrath of God is spoken of 600 times in the Bible with 20 some different words. And what this means is God is holy and we are unholy. God is good, we are bad. God is right. We are wrong. We have sinned against God. And as a result of his goodness and his holiness and his righteousness, he has to declare war on that which declares war on him. He would no longer be good if he didn't deal with sin and the result is wrath. So let me tell you that apart from Jesus Christ, you are living in the path of the wrath of God. And there are only two ways that the wrath of God is satisfied. It says this in John 3 36. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. But whoever rejects the son will not see life. For God's wrath remains on him. Two options. Hell or Jesus Have I been clear? See,

I've gotta stand before God and give an account for what I tell you. And you've gotta stand before God and give an account for your decision. You have two options. Hell or Jesus. Hell is where you pay God by enduring his wrath forever and ever and ever. The Bible talks about conscious, literal, eternal torment in hell for those who reject the grace of God. And all that remains for them is the wrath of God. This is as serious as it gets. My friend. God will not be mocked. Everyone will reap what they sow. It is a fearful and dreadful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. Jesus speaks of hell more than anyone in the entire Bible. And what happens is many people sin and God doesn't deal with them immediately. So they think that they're getting away with everything. My friend do not believe that deceptive demonic myth, when you sin, you're not getting away with anything. You're storing up everything Paul says in Romans same author, chapter two, that you are storing up for yourself wrath for the day of wrath. It is like every sin you commit that there is just flaming conscious judgment and torment. And there is a firewall that God in His grace has given you. But if Jesus returns before you die, or if you die without knowing Jesus, that firewall is gone. And all you have is the fire that you have deserved and earned forever and ever and ever. You need to take this with the utmost seriousness. The second option I told you it is Jesus. I can see to your faces, you're like trying to scare the hell outta me. No, I'm trying to scare you outta hell. That's exactly what I'm doing. Hey, we love you. Heaven's open. Jesus will forgive you. Join the party, join the family. Hey, don't be kindling. You know, be adopted into the family of God. Amen. Amen. So how do you do that? Option two is Jesus, he delivers us from the wrath to come. Wrath is coming, my friend. Either you die and stand before him or he returns before you die. All of human history, every human being is in a head-on collision with Jesus Christ. We're all gonna stand before him. There will be no exception. And I want that to be the best day. Because what Jesus did, he endured wrath for you and me. On the cross, God made him who knew no sin, Paul, same author, to become sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God, our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He looked down and he said, they have become my enemy. They have declared war on me. All they deserve is wrath. And then he came down as one of us. God became a man and he lived as we lived and we murdered him 'cause we thought there was something wrong with him. And on the cross he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? In that moment, Jesus endured the wrath of God. And then he said, it is finished. What happened on the cross. Jesus took your place. He put you in his place. If you believe in Jesus, he died so you could live. He endured the wrath so you could receive the grace. He tasted hell so that you could enjoy heaven. He was separated from the Father, so you could be adopted by the Father Jesus Christ. And see what Christians say. Like, are you saved from what God? You're saved from God. Who are you saved by God? Who are you saved for God? God saves you from the wrath to come. If you've never turned from your sin entrusted in Jesus Christ, this is the greatest day of your life. And this changes your eternal destiny. This is where you just in your heart and mind, say, Jesus, I'm a sinner. And you're a savior. Deliver me from the wrath to come and he will friends. And I promise you, you'll go from wrath to grace, from damnation to salvation, from hell to heaven, from demonic spirits to the Holy Spirit, from dying to living, and from fear to joy that never, ever, ever ends in the presence of our savior who delivers us from the wrath to come. Amen. Woo.