I Thessalonians Series 2
Imitate the Examples of the Apostles
February 12, 2016

I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
Prepare a couple of simple, fun and delightful icebreakers to help your group warm up. Help your cell group members to lay aside their busyness and tiredness and prepare their hearts to come before God.

II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.
Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead the cell group members to worship God. The worship leader would encourage members to come before the throne of God to seek God’s face, and lead them into God’s presence. During this time, the cell group leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for the following prayer items:

A. MISSION ORGANIZATION: ________________, and their needs are: ________________
(Please contact the church if you don’t know the needs of the mission organization.)

B. CHURCH MINISTRY:
• 2/17 Bi-Weekly Prayer Meeting @ 7:00pm in Fellowship Hall
• 2/20 ISI Global Discipleship Training @ 8:30am-4pm
• 2/21 Healing Team Training.
• 3/4 TB test for Community Service @ 6:30-7:30pm. $10 (valid for 2yrs)
• 3/4 Worship Night @ 7:30pm in Fellowship Hall
• 3/13 & 3/20 Christ-Centered Scriptural Reading Class

C. New comer: ________________ Confirm new comers’ name before the meeting.
For sick members, friends or relatives: ________________ Please discuss how you may show your care to them.

III. WORD, 45 mins.
Through sharing and discussing God’s word, the group applies it to their daily life.

A. Sharing the message from last Sunday’s sermon: (It would be helpful if you could listen on-line once again)
1. What is the key message from last Sunday’s sermon? How did God speak to you through the message?
2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

B. Topic of the week: Imitate the Examples of Apostles
Verses: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16
Memorizing Verses: On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. (1 Thessalonians 2:4)

Preface:
When Paul preached the Gospel during his travels, he was falsely accused by the unbelieving Jews. They accused Paul of preaching the Gospel for his own fame and fortune and to please others. As such, they claimed that the contents he preached were wrong. Paul was afraid that the believers could not stay in the Lord after hearing these accusations while being persecuted by the Jews. Therefore, Paul taught the believers in Thessalonica to remember how he boldly preached God’s Word by relying on His power. What Paul preached was the truth and pleasing to God. Both man and God can testify for the price he paid for the Gospel.

Both we and Paul are vessels for preaching the Gospel. The Lord has not only chosen us to be His people but also entrusted us as His witnesses to preach God’s redemptive grace and testify Jesus to the end of the earth. We should learn from Paul’s example of paying the price for the Gospel by imitating his example of making sacrifices in our lives to testify Jesus and preach the Gospel to the people around us and to every corner of the world.

1. Imitate Paul’s example of preaching the Gospel (1 Thessalonians 2: 1-9 )

   A. Boldly preach the Gospel with God’s help (1-5): Paul wanted the believers to remember how he risked his life and relied on God to boldly preach the Gospel to them.

   (1) Dare to preach the Gospel in the face of strong opposition (1-2): When Paul and Silas were preaching the Gospel in Philippi, they were persecuted and locked up. Late at night, they praised and worshiped God while the prisoners listened to them. Their singing and worshipping shook the earth. All the prison doors flew open from the shaking, but not one prisoner escaped. The jailor and all of his household members were baptized as a result of this event (Acts 16:22-33). Similarly, their
effort to preach the Gospel in Thessalonica was also met with rebuke from the opposition because the residents were turning to God from their idols. After Paul left Thessalonica, these young believers were faced with great tribulations and their lives were in danger. However, they didn’t waver and continued to follow the Lord with passion and preach the Gospel. They became a model for other churches to imitate. The prices that Paul paid were not in vain.

(2) **Preach the Gospel with a sincere heart (3&5):** Paul who was falsely accused explained to them that his motive for preaching the Gospel was not unholy and it didn’t go against God’s motive. His motivation is to get the benefits of the Gospel to the people, and he did so by forthrightly preaching the Word of God without using any deceiving words.

(3) **Please God (4-5):** Since they were chosen by God, Paul and Silas preached the Gospel according to the words that God had placed in their hearts. Therefore, the message that they were preaching was not to please men, but to please God. What Paul had preached could certainly pass God’s inspection.

**B. Paul loved the believers like a mother (6-9):**

(1) **Love the believers just like a mother loves her children (6-7):** Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica not to be served by the believers, but to serve them. They were like a nursing mother: gentle, kind, and careful. They were constantly watching over and feeding the believers to strengthen their spiritual life.

(2) **Making Sacrifices in Life (8-9):** Paul did not just preach the Gospel, he loved them and he was even willing to make sacrifices in his life for them. As long as their lives were edified and their souls flourished, Paul was willing to endure all the toils and hardships to serve the believers. He preached during the daytime and weaved tents at night for a living. Sometimes he even reached out to help the coworkers who were in need (Acts 18:3).

**A. Paul’s Life as a Testimony (10-12):**

(1) Paul obeyed God’s word in everything he does and lived out a blameless and holy life. His life could not only pass the scrutiny of God, but also of the believers. As such, both God and the believers could testify for him.

(2) Paul led the believers like a father (11-12). Paul was like a responsible father. He trained and taught the believers so that they could be equipped with truth and live out their lives to glorify God.

**B. Paul thanked God for the believers who accepted the Word of God (13):**

Paul thanked God for the believers in Thessalonica who believed the Word of God rather than the words that pleased them. The authority of the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit enable them to break away from the bondage of the dominion of darkness. God’s Word gave them the faith to accept the grace of God’s redemption.

**C. Paul comforted and encouraged the believers to continue to preach (14-16):** The believers from Thessalonica were not alone. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, many followers of the Word of God were persecuted just as they were. However, they held on to the truth and were undaunted in fulfilling what God had entrusted them. For example, the church in Jerusalem was scattered throughout the area due to persecution (Acts 9:31). However, they did not abandon God and continued to preach the Gospel to the areas they arrived at. Jesus suffered persecution and died on the cross in order to finish God’s plan for the salvation of mankind. The prophets in the Old Testament were killed by the kings or people who were acting against God’s will. Paul himself was also persecuted. God’s wrath towards those who killed our Lord Jesus, those who persecuted God’s servants, and those who resist the Gospel has reached a maximum point of God’s wrath. God’s judgment will soon be upon them.

2. **Paul’s Life as a Testimony (1 Thessalonians 2:10-16):**
Discussion (please choose the topic according to the needs of the members):

1. Please share briefly what you have experienced on practicing faith, hope, and love in your daily life for the past six days.
2. Please list ways of how did Paul preach the Gospel with his whole heart and mind. Which one should you imitate the most?
3. How did Paul describe his love for the believers? Which area can we learn from or apply it in the cell group?
4. Why is our testimony in life so important in preaching the Gospel? How does it affect the effectiveness of our effort to preach the Gospel?
5. Please imitate the example of Paul and try to preach the Gospel to friends and family members around you.

Prayer:
Dear Abba Father, we thank you and praise you. Thank you for using the example of how Paul preached the Gospel to encourage us. He relied on you, and he was not afraid of any difficulties ahead of him and preached the good news of redemption with boldness. Lord! We are willing to live out our lives just like Paul’s – a life that testifies your glorious life. Lord! We are also willing to be edified in the truth. It’s your Word that we are preaching to others and it is pleasing to you. Lord! We ask you to help us to love, with a mother’s love, the people around us who are in need. Let their hearts be touched by your love and may they be drawn towards you. Our prayer and thanksgiving are in the precious and holy name of the Lord Jesus, Amen!

3. WORK (Pray for each other), 10 mins.
Please break into group of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.