2 Thessalonians Series 1
Glorify God In The Midst of Suffering
April 1, 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:
• 4/5 English Leaders Meeting @ 6:30pm in E5
• 4/10 Spring Retreat regular registration deadline
• 4/13 Combined Prayer Meeting @ 7:30pm in Emmanuel Chapel
• 4/16 Women’s Tea Party @ 2-4pm in Fellowship Hall
• 4/17 & 4/24 Christ Centered Scriptural Reading Class
• 4/23 Community Service (Pastor Doris’s Group)

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: Glorify God In The Midst of Suffering.
   Verses: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12
   Memorizing Verses: We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:12)

Preface:
When Paul mentioned in 1 Thessalonians about the return of the Lord, some believers thought the day of the Lord’s return was imminent or already here. Therefore, Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians immediately to correct the false teachings by the prophets and teachers in Thessalonica as well as the confusions that the believers had towards the Lord’s return. Paul encouraged the believers that even though they were in suffering, they needed to have faith, stand firmly, and be unwavering in their faith. In their actions, they needed to continue to work and not became lazy, so that the name of the Lord Jesus would be manifested and glorified. Today we are going to discuss the first chapter, besides the greetings and prayers, Paul also taught the Thessalonians on how to deal with suffering.

1. Victory in suffering (2 Thessalonians 1 : 1-5)
   A. Greetings to the believers (1-2): Paul always prayed for the believers. Every time he wrote, he would send greetings to the brothers and sisters in the church wishing that the presence of God, the grace of Jesus, and the peace of the Lord be with them.
   B. Giving thanks to God for the believer’s faith and love (3): Paul wrote the epistle with a thankful heart to encourage the believers. He thanked God for their work in faith and their suffering in love. He also gave thanks to God with a joyful heart when he saw them growing in faith and filled with love.
   C. Giving thanks to God for the believers’ growth while in suffering (4-5): Paul boasted about the brothers and sisters in Thessalonica and praised them for holding on to their faith, for their perseverance, and for their willingness to
suffer for the Lord while in all sorts of persecution and trials. Not only did they not fall, but they instead grew stronger in the Lord. He encouraged the believers that with the Lord’s righteous judgment they would surely be selected by God and be counted worthy of entering into the Kingdom of God.

2. Hope in suffering (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10):
   A. God will pay back the wicked (6, 8-9): Those who did not know God or those who did not obey the gospel of Jesus could be temporarily in power in the world. They could use their power to oppress the believers and make them suffer. Even though the believers suffered from the persecutions that came from the non-believers, God is just and he will surely pay those non-believers back for the trouble. When Jesus returns these non-believers will be judged and punished. They will enter into eternal death and will not be able to meet with the Lord or receive his glory like the believers will.
   B. The believers will surely be glorified (7, 10): Even though the believers were in suffering, they had peace in their heart because God was with them and they had the hope of meeting with the Lord and receiving glory in the resurrection to come. As it was written in 1 Thessalonians, when the Lord returns, there will be the sounding of God’s trumpets, the chief angel’s voice, the manifestation of God’s power, and the revelation of Jesus in blazing fire from heaven. On that day, the glory of the Lord will fall on the saints and on all believers. Those who are in suffering will be brought up in the air to meet with the Lord and will forever be with him. We have to firmly believe that day will be marvelous and beautiful and the Lord Jesus will rule on earth for a thousand years after that.

3. Prayer in suffering (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12):
   A. Pray for the believers (11): In 1 Thessalonians, Paul urged the believers to pray without ceasing. The best method to overcome sufferings while we are in it is by praying. Paul prayed for the believers at the time and it can also be applied to us. We need to live out a life worthy of the identity of a Christian who is called out by God. We also need to let God bring to fruition on us every desire for goodness that he wants us to have, hold on to our faith in God, and act out his will for us.
   B. The manifestation of the glory of God on the believers (12): During sufferings, the most important thing for us is to manifest the glory of God at any given time or place. People are watching at our every word and deed. We need to show them the glory of God overflowing from us and influence the generation instead of giving in to the sufferings. Whenever we obey God’s will and let the people recognize us as the disciples of the Lord, we will be glorified for exalting Jesus Christ’s name with the grace of Jesus.

Discussion (please choose the topic according to the needs of the members):

1. Please share one difficult situation that you are currently facing.
2. How did Paul teach the Thessalonians to grow in sufferings? What should you do to overcome sufferings?
3. In today’s world, how does a Christian, in his/her work and daily life, bear witness to the Lord in order to glorify his name and influence the generation?
4. What can we learn from Paul’s prayer for the church? Learning from Paul how can we pray for our church?
5. Learning from this passage, how can it change the way you live?
Prayer:
Dear Abba Father, we thank you and praise you. Thank you for teaching us how to glorify you when we are in sufferings, how to hold on to our faith, how to treat each other with love, and how to persevere and obey your will by having hope in your return. Oh Lord, please give us a calm heart, so we can pray without ceasing, give thanks to everything, and let our actions befitting of the grace of your calling so that your glory can be manifested through us. Our prayer and thanksgiving are in the precious and holy name of the Lord Jesus, Amen!

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