

From Thessalonika to Everywhere

1 Thessalonians 1:2-8

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, **3** remembering before God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. **4** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, **5** because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. **6** And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. **8** For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

Discussion Questions

1. How can our lives invite people to ask the question, "Why do they do that?" in a way that encourages Gospel dialogue? Can you think of an example of something someone else did that caused you to wonder, or perhaps directly ask, "Why did they do that?"
2. Paul was "provoked" when he saw the city full of idols. What are things that provoke you at a deeper heart level?
3. How do we understand the reason for the difference between the things we care deeply about and the things God cares deeply about? While some of those deep desires are aligned, others are quite divergent. What areas do you care deeply about that are probably not as high a priority for God? What things does God care deeply about that are not a high priority for you?
4. Giotis described the "Pax Romana" as an idol of Ancient Rome—how people worshiped the predictability and stability of society separated into neat sectors divided by race, gender, religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. How has that idol been manifested in our community? How was the first century Christian community different from their society, and how does that shape our view of Christian community today?
5. Giotis described a painting in which there is a large pulpit from the Reformation era, with Luther standing in it but simply pointing to Jesus. What platform has God given you, and how might you use it to point to Jesus?