

What are some of the influences in your lives? Who do you seek to be like?

Background

Thessalonica

- Named Therma initially likely due to the hot springs there
- Named after Cassander's wife. Cassander was one of Alexander the Great's generals, son of Antipater, regent of Greece. Cassander built a new town nearby which seems to have swallowed up the older town in due time.
- Capital of the second (of four) Roman divisions of Macedonia. These were later (148BC) combined and Thessalonica became the capital.
- Free city (after backing Antony and Octavian against Brutus and Cassius) in 42 BC
 - "Politarchs" (Luke) was considered inaccurate, but inscriptions have been found to affirm the title
 - City rulers
- Seat of Roman governor, but no troops, meaning it remained largely Greek (unlike Philippi)
- 400,000 people live there today (Called Salonica)
- Strategically on the great Roman highway to the East.

Evangelism of Thessalonica

- Given the location of Thessalonica on the Roman Highway to the east:
 - Christianity in Thessalonica means it spreads east
- Acts 16:1,-2, 6-8, 9-12 (refer to map)
 - v1-2 - At Lystra and Iconium (Collects Timothy, circumcises him)
 - v6-8 - Trying to get into Bythinia but prevented, "came *down* to Troas
 - v9-10 - Vision of Macedonia
 - What impact would this vision have had on them?
 - How would their experience traveling up from Lystra have prepared them for this?

- What were they likely discussing by the time they started rounding the top of Mysia?
- v11-12 - Seat to Samothrace to Neapolis to Philippi
- Paul is imprisoned in **Philippi**
 - Paul was beaten and imprisoned (Acts 16:22-24)
 - How He responded (Acts 16:40-17:4) - He moves on and does it all over again
 - What drove him?
 - 1 Thess 2:3-4 - Are you driven by a desire to please God?
 - Gal 1:10 - do we seek to please God? Are we in the flesh?
 - Also regarded as the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 5:11, cf Acts 9:31)
 - Does evangelism cause you to fear God or fear man?
 - How do we cultivate a fear of God like this?
 - Prov 9:10 - the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom
 - Matt 7:24-27 - the wise one was the one who obeyed
- They departed and went to Thessalonica
 - Acts 17:1-10a - evangelism at Thessalonica
 - Conversions included Jews and Gentiles
 - 17:11 - statement about the Jews in Thessalonica
 - Likely there more than three weeks
 - Suggest three weeks evangelizing the Jews and much more time with the Gentiles (as he did in Corinth - acts 18:4-7)
 - 1 Thess 1:9 - suggests a primarily gentile church
 - Paul says he worked to support himself while there (2:9, 2 Thess 3:8)
 - The depth of care (2:11-12) and affection (2:8) suggests a longer stay
 - The Philippians twice sent Paul a gift during his stay there (Phil 4:16)
 - two would not have been necessary if not for a longer stay.

- 100 miles away - horse walks at 3–4 mph (25 hr journey), trots at 8–10 mph (12 hr journey)
- What did it cost Paul to evangelize?
 - 1 Thess 2:1–2, 9–12
- **What did it cost the Thessalonians to be saved?**
 - 1 Thess 1:6–7, 2:13–14

Application

- What is the difference between the church we see at Thessalonica and the church in the west?
 - We think a lot of the deterioration of the west and America
- What was the relationship between the church and its leaders?
- How did Paul know these people were saved? (1:8–10)
- Are you willing to suffer? Paul was single minded (2:9–13) focused on the outcome
- Revisit question at the beginning
- What does a transformed life look like today?
 - Evangelism
 - Willingness to suffer
 - Lack of focus on self - God oriented (like Paul)
 - Abandonment of idols (today's idols are?)
 - serving God rather than idols