

Episode 106

Now they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Paul went in, and as was his custom, for three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."

- Acts 17.1-3

One night while we were chatting in the kitchen after lifegroup, some of the guys were teasing their friend because they had heard that he had to join his parents at their church on Sunday mornings if he wanted to join us in the evenings. This Sunday morning servitude included wearing a suit and tie and sitting through a lengthy monotone sermon in utter silence. Hearing the conversation, I asked one of the main instigators if he could tell me what was preached that past Sunday. After mumbling a few vague 'Jesus loves you' type comments I then asked what was preached the week before. Silence was the only answer I got.

Now consider the Thessalonians. It says quite clearly that the church was established on the back of three Sunday services. Just three sermons and the Jews who were persuaded joined Paul and Silas, along with many God-fearing Greek men and quite a few prominent women. And then we see Paul going on to the next town.

As best as we can tell, Paul never went to Thessalonica again. He sent Timothy at one stage because they heard news of violent persecution against the church, and there are the letters he sent them from time to time, but that was it. The Thessalonians church thrived, grew, and multiplied all on the back of three weeks of church.

I've often quoted a friend who liked to say "if we as a church simply took the last five sermons and massaged them into our lives, we would be a radically different people." However, the Thessalonians prove that it can take as little as three sermons. It all depends on what we do with what we've heard.

So, can you remember what was preached last Sunday? And the week before?

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