

St Annes Ryde
ANGLICAN CHURCH



CGS 20 Term 1
2010

Theology 101

2 Thessalonians



**Bible based, application focussed
discussion material**

prepared by Greg Burke and linked to sermons
preached at St Anne's Ryde Anglican Church

Discussion 1 Trinity: The 3 in 1 God

Sermon 7/2/10 2 Corinthians 13:14, Luke 3:21-23

1. Read Deuteronomy 5:1-15 What responses are required of God's people as they live in relationship to the one true God? What are they to avoid?
2. How do you think Thomas makes the transition from Deuteronomy 6:4 to his 'confession' in John 20:28?
3. How would you respond to a visitor at your door who claims you are wrong to believe in the trinity because the word is not found in the Bible?
4. In the 1st C Graeco-Roman society belief in many gods was common. What was so radical about the Christian gospel? To what extent is our modern world like this?
5. How does 1 John 4:7-21 help us to understand the importance of love for others in Christian living? How does the doctrine of the trinity help us to understand the statement "God is love"?

Discussion 2 God's justice

Sermon 14/2/10 2 Thessalonians 1

1. Read (aloud) all of 2 Thessalonians. Take a note of the 'big themes' of this short letter.
2. Paul refers to the faith and love of the Thessalonian Christians in 1:3-4. What does he say about their 'hope' in the rest of the chapter? What is it that they hope for?
3. Imagine your group is a small house church in a country today where Christians are persecuted. How would this opening chapter help you?
4. Who does Paul say will be punished when Jesus returns" (see verse 8). What is surprising about this?
5. How would you answer a friend who says "I don't believe in judgement. What right has God got to judge me?"

Discussion 3 Don't be deceived
Sermon 21/2/10 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1. What evidence is there in this passage that even the activities of forces opposed to God are completely under his sovereign control? What is comforting or disturbing about this?
2. The 'lawless one' will deceive people with 'counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders' (2:9-10). Why do you think claims of the miraculous are so readily accepted by people who are often not prepared to consider the claims of Jesus?
3. What does this passage teach about truth? How should we respond to the truth? What is the alternative? How does Jesus' claim to be the truth help us to understand these verses in 2 Thessalonians 2? (See John 1:14,17; John 14:6. See also John 8:42-27).
4. How would you advise a friend who was impressed by the 'signs and wonders' of a television preacher who claimed to know the date of Jesus' return? What Bible passages would inform you advice? (See also 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11)

Discussion 4 Chosen to Persevere
Sermon 28/2/10 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

1. Paul thanks God because he has "chosen" the Christians in Thessalonica. What evidence does he give for this statement?
2. Do you agree with the statement: "God's election provides comfort in suffering, not complacency in good times" What are the dangers and the benefits of the doctrine of election which states that God is sovereign in our salvation?
3. What does Paul's request for prayer tell us about the difficulties of his gospel ministry?
4. You are a teacher in a Christian School and the chairman of the school board states that you are not allowed to tell your class that God loves them because "God only loves the elect." How would you respond biblically to this statement?

5. In a talk to primary aged children a KBF leader states that “God hates sinners” How would you help this person to gain a broader and more accurate understanding of the doctrine of election?

Discussion 5 Idle Hands

Sermon 7/3/10 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

1. Paul begins and ends this letter referring to “grace” and “peace” (2 Thessalonians 1:1-2, 3:16-18) What do these significant terms encompass? Why does he refer to “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”?

2. Why do you think some Christians in Thessalonica gave up their daily employment earning the warning in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 ff? How does Paul’s response highlight the importance of “modeling” and not simply teaching Christian faith?

3. What place do you think discipline should have in the life of a local church? What motives for discipline are revealed in 2 Thessalonians 3:11-15?

4. Thessalonians Your group is the ‘discipline committee’ of your church. You are asked to draw up guidelines so that your church can support unemployed members. What would they include? Under what circumstances would ‘discipline’ be necessary?

Discussion 6 God the creator

Sermon 14/3/10 Genesis 1:1-2:4

1. What features of the creation account indicate that it is highly structured and loaded with meaning?

2. Do you think the chapter division between chapters 1 and 2 is helpful or unhelpful? Give your reasons.

3. What do you think Paul means when he says that “all things were created by Jesus and **FOR** Jesus” Colossians 1:16

4. Why do you think the Bible’s teaching that God created the universe is so controversial today?

5. Some commentators say that Genesis 1:1 - 2:4 is written as a strong argument against popular “religious beliefs”. What modern beliefs or assumptions about life are ruled out by this passage?

6. Imagine you are a Christian science teacher in a government high school and a fellow teacher asks how you can teach science when you believe in God the creator. How would you answer your colleague?

Discussion 7 Man: the image of God

Sermon 21/3/10 Genesis 1:26-31, Colossians 1:15-20

1. How would you argue from Genesis 1 that human beings are unique in God's creation?
2. What do you think our creation in God's image involves?
3. In what ways is Jesus uniquely "THE image of God"?
How does Colossians 1:15-20, Hebrews 1:1-3 and John 1:1-18 express this uniqueness?
4. How is the relationship between Humans and other living beings pictures in Genesis 1:26-31? What potential for abuse is here? How does this view differ from some of modern "animal rights" groups?
How could a Christian farmer/grazier apply his/her faith to their animal husbandry practices?

Discussion 8 Sin: fatal independence

Sermon 28/3/10 Genesis 3:1-24

1. Read Genesis 3:1-24 and note who takes initiatives in speech and action during the different stages of the narrative? What differences do you notice between the two halves?
2. How does the serpent twist and distort the truth in the account?
3. What do you think Australians understand by the following terms:
a. Sin b. Sinner c. Evil d. God e. Judgment f. Punishment
4. In what ways is sin presented as a grasp at independence? What are the potential dangers in teaching children to be "independent"?
5. How would you respond to someone who says that Christianity is just one long guilt trip. It creates psychological cripples who always feel like they fail? How does the Bible's teaching on sin help us to have a realistic and hopeful message?