**1. Motivate**

What are some topics you refer not to talk about around the dinner table?

* gruesome car wrecks you have seen (like the movie they always show in drivers’ ed class)
* the kids’ biology lab where they dissected some animal
* what was in someone’s garbage down the street
* the murder scene in a movie or tv show
* some radio preacher’s description of hell
* the descriptions of war time death camps or prisons
* description of someone getting sick at school

**2. Transition**

Hell is often an uncomfortable topic.

* But it is real, eternal punishment awaits those who do not follow Christ.
* And we can let people know they don’t have to go there.

**3. Bible Study**

A video introduction to the Bible study is available. View it at <https://tinyurl.com/5ez5nhwa> . If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download the video to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/mr2u38jw>

3.1 God Watches over Believers

Listen for Paul’s boast.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-7a (NIV) We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. 4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well.

Why did Paul express thanks to God for the Thessalonian brothers and sisters?

* their faith was growing, more and more
* their love for one another was increasing

One of the translations says their faith was “flourishing.” What examples does Paul give that described how their faith was flourishing?

* perseverance
* faith
* during persecutions and trials
* they were enduring

What can we do to keep our faith growing and flourishing?

* continuous communication with God
* pay attention to what He is saying to us – through His Word, through the prompting of His Holy Spirit
* talk to God daily in prayer – worship, praise, thanksgiving,
* tell Him your feelings
* tell Him you are trusting Him

 What are the characteristics of perseverance and faith amid persecution?

* not get discouraged
* not get angry and try to get revenge
* ignore the insults
* continue to respond with grace (love) and mercy (forgiveness)
* not give up trusting God
* trusting God for the patience and kindness of response

How will such “flourishing faith” work to increase our love for others?

* as we trust God, we are surrendering to His rule in our lives
* God’s Holy Spirit works in our lives to produce the Fruit of the Spirit
* we will have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control

Paul declared that their patience was proving …

* God’s judgment is right, just
* They were worthy of the kingdom/rule of God
* Their suffering was worth it

What would be the Lord’s response to unbelievers who opposed the gospel, Christ, and His people?

* God would pay back trouble to those who were troubling them
* He would give relief to those who had caused their suffering
* Paul would also feel relieved

3.2 Unbelievers Face Eternal Destruction

Listen for eternal consequences.

2 Thessalonians 1:7b-10 (NIV) This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

What three phrases did he use to describe the Lord’s revelation?

* Jesus is revealed from heaven
* blazing fire
* powerful angels

Upon whom will he exact vengeance and why?

* those who do not know God
* punishment of unbelievers,
* disobedient

Note what unbelievers be denied that will make the punishment so severe.

* Shut out from the presence of the Lord
* Separated from the majesty of His power

How does Paul’s description of eternal punishment compare to our typical ideas about what hell is like?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Our ideas of Eternal Punishment | Paul’s Description of Eternal Punishment |
| * burning fire
* devils with horns and barbed tails
* torture
* lots of people suffering together
 | * everlasting destruction
* separated from God’s presence
* not unlike total sensory depravation
 |

What is your initial reaction to the penalty of eternal destruction, eternal separation from God?

* scary, severe
* want to make sure it doesn’t happen to me
* wonder what is it like
* realization that even though many people will be in this situation, they will not have even the fellowship of one another
* their idea “I’ll be there with all my friends.” is just not true
* they will be separated from God, separated from one another
* must be something like *total* sensory depravation

In verses 6-7, the text speaks of God's righteous judgment. How can we reconcile the idea of God's judgment with His love and mercy?

* each person born has the opportunity to respond to God’s revelation
* even if they have natural revelation only, some will respond to that, and God will somehow make the Gospel message available
* those who exist where the Gospel is readily available will be judged on our response of faith or lack thereof
* God is sovereign, He does as He pleases to do
* He has made His salvation possible through His love and mercy
* it is for us to receive it by faith or reject

3.3 Called and Equipped

Listen for Paul’s prayer request.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (NIV) With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. 12 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.

For what did Paul pray on behalf of the Thessalonian believers?

* God would count them worthy of His calling
* His power would fulfill their every good purpose
* God would empower them to live by faith lives of righteousness

What is the relationship between believing the gospel and living godly lives?

* the “gospel” is more than just a “fire escape” from hell
* the Good News is that not only are we set free from the penalty of sin, but we are also set free from the power of sin over us
* God’s Holy Spirit lives within us … God’s very presence is at work the live of a believer
* He empowers us to live a life of righteousness

According to Paul, what is to be the desired outcome of faithful Christian living?

* God’s name is glorified
* our faith is demonstrated by how we honor and glorify God
* God’s grace, the favor and love He shows towards us, is demonstrated in and through our lifestyle
* people will see the uniqueness, the distinctness of our lives …
* that is God’s holiness displayed in and through us

What can we learn from this prayer about the importance of spiritual growth and the role of faith in our lives? How can we apply these principles in our own walk with God?

* our salvation is more than the initial profession of faith
* it is an ongoing relationship with God
* He is chipping away at the sinful elements of our lives
* He “sculpts” us by removing those actions and attitudes that are sinful
* He adds to our lives actions and attitudes that glorify Him
* this happens as we trust Him and obey His leadings, promptings, empowering

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Trust.

* Are you sure where you will spend eternity?
* If not, you can settle that by faith in Christ, Trust Him to save you.
* You can receive help with this by speaking with your Bible Study leader.

Study.

* Identify the passages in Scripture that refer to hell.
* Read them and write a description of hell based on your findings.
* Thank God for delivering you through Christ from a punishment you deserve.

Tell.

* We’re often reticent to tell others about Jesus.
* Let the reality of hell motivate you to share the love and salvation of Christ.
* Pray for the opportunity to share Christ.
* When that opportunity presents itself, walk boldly into it with the power of Christ.



One of our consular attachés in Iro Liangorial received this message passed to him on the subway. Our decryption personnel are gone to the six man middle school football tournament. We need you to help us decode the message. the key is below and the demonstration of the “Hello
World” shows how it works. Time is critical. Please hurry. Help and other Family Activities are available at <https://tinyurl.com/mr2u38jw>

Cryptogram Puzzle