

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5,13-17

Living tradition

One of Paul's reasons for writing to the Thessalonians was to quash a rumour that Jesus had already returned. He explains that they must hold fast to what they have been taught and stand firm when other persuasive voices are heard. In the Gospel, Jesus challenges the beliefs of the Sadducees (who don't believe in the resurrection). Together we explore whether the traditions we hold point us to the living God.

Read this week's passage:



EXPLORE

Research different traditions from other parts of the world, either to do with Remembrance, Christmas or winter. Are there any which you would like to start with your friends, family and church?

Pray



Choose a candle to use as an Advent candle. You could buy a decorated one or use a plain one, which you could then decorate yourself using modelling clay. Light this every day and pray, 'Jesus, Light of the World, come into our darkness'. Think about the people who give you light, and about how you can bring light to others.

ACT

With your family or group of friends, agree on one new tradition that you will start this month or next. Agree to commit to it for at least 6-12 months, while being flexible to adapt or change it as you go along.

Find more free Roots resources to reflect on this week's theme:



Living Scripture

'Stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.'

2 Thessalonians 2:14b



Fake news can spread quickly. Misinformation can confuse and unsettle us. Or we might have experienced someone we trusted in the faith, shattering our certainty through their actions. For some, as we grow in faith, the ways we once understood things no longer fit like they used to. It can feel like an earthquake: the foundations of our beliefs or community crumbling. Who can we trust? What bedrock are we building on?

Paul writes to the Thessalonians who were worried and confused by false teaching (that Jesus had already returned to judge the earth). Paul reminds them of the truth about Jesus they learned from him. He encourages them to 'stand firm and hold fast'. It takes real effort not to be swayed by confusion and fear, a choice to hold on to something secure – a tradition faithfully passed down. And in verse 16, Paul says we will receive comfort, hope and strength from God. It is not easy, but we can hold on to Christ, our firm foundation. When you feel shaken, what truth and traditions ground you? What strength and comfort can God provide?

You could say the words of the Apostles' Creed, said by Christians for around 1400 years. Hear it set to music by scanning the QR code above.

First impressions

- What traditions do you think are important and should be passed down to the next generation(s)?
- What Christian teachings and traditions do you hold fast to?
- What comfort and hope might you ask God for in the coming week?



Pray

Jesus was born in Bethlehem: pass it on.
Jesus was an amazing teacher: pass it on.
Jesus did many miracles: pass it on.
Jesus died for our sins: pass it on.
Jesus rose again: pass it on.
Jesus is Lord: pass it on.
Jesus loves you: pass it on.
Alleluia! Amen.



Discuss

As a family, think of as many family traditions that you have and do. If you're struggling to get started, think about whether there's something you do every Christmas. If you're fortunate to see grandparents or aunts or uncles on a regular basis, ask them what traditions they used to do when they were your age. Then ask the question, 'Why?'