

2 Thessalonians 1:1-4,11-12

Celebrating God at work

In his second letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul begins in his usual style by greeting them with encouragement. He focuses on their good points and even dares to 'boast' about them. When Zacchaeus meets Jesus, he is changed from a thief to a generous benefactor, a life worth celebrating. Today we celebrate each other and how God is working among us.

Read this week's passage:



Write



Many Christians around the world are facing persecution for their faith, with many charities working to support them (e.g. Open Doors, Embrace the Middle East, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, etc). Could you and your family write a letter to a member of the persecuted Church via Open Doors Youth? Visit <https://tinyurl.com/4vye6rtu/> for the latest opportunities to write to persecuted Christians.

WALK

Go on a local prayer walk (perhaps take a magnifying glass, or make some pretend binoculars out of cardboard tubes). What can you see or hear that reminds you that God is all around us?

Pray



Invite a group over for dinner who you haven't hosted before, praying that being with them will bring them closer to being with Jesus.

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



Living Scripture

'We... give thanks to God for you... because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.' 2 Thessalonians 1:3

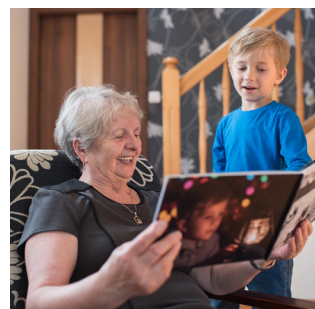
Have you ever received an award, a 'thank you' card, or had someone honour you publicly? Was it memorable or embarrassing? Touching or token? Does their thanks and encouragement still motivate you now?

According to Gary Chapman's book 'The Five Love Languages', there are five ways we like to receive love and appreciation: 1. Words of Affirmation, 2. Quality Time, 3. Acts of Service, 4. Gifts, and 5. Physical Touch. And not everyone receives love the same way. That might be a helpful way to think about how we can show our thanks to others: sending a card, boasting publicly about someone's work or achievements, giving them a trophy/certificate/medal/flowers, throwing them a party, clapping, bowing, a handshake. Does one form of appreciation feel more powerful to you?

Paul wrote a letter to encourage the church, using words of affirmation. How might you notice God's affirmation for you? What could you do to encourage someone in your faith community?

First impressions

- What things can you 'boast about' as a church community?
- Is it obvious to the wider community that God is 'at work'? How?
- What else is God calling your church to do during this season?



Pray

Grace to you from God our Father.
Peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ.
Go with everything you have been given by God.
Go with everything he will help you to be.
Go in peace.



Learn

Research those who have said the right words and done good things while living their life of faith. You could choose saints, such as St Hilda or St Margaret of Scotland, social reformers, e.g. William Temple or Harold Moody, hymn writers, e.g. Fanny Crosby or Charles Tindley, or evangelists and preachers, such as John and Charles Wesley and Carl Day. Ask members of your church for other suggestions. How can they inspire you to live your life of faith?