



Sermon Growth Guide

August 24, 2025

Find your People

1 Thessalonians 1:8-2:6

Key Verse: “We are not trying to please people, but God, who tests hearts.” 1 Thessalonians 2:4b

Big Idea: Gospel sincerity is the foundation of true community and witness.

Foundations

Community is hard. Most of the time, we are waiting for the “magic” of that unnamable something that creates friendships. The need for a little magic never really goes away, but in the body of Christ, we should intentionally make sincerity in the Gospel the foundation of our small groups.

In today’s passage, Paul ends his commendation of the extraordinary faith of the Thessalonians, and begins a defense of his sincere ministry in Thessalonica. The Thessalonians’ faith is preaching without words. They’ve changed. They showed true hospitality to Paul and his companions. They no longer serve idols, but the living God. Their hope in Christ is visible to everyone.

The foundation of this extraordinary little community is the Gospel. And the Gospel was preached by Paul and his companions with sincerity. They weren’t in it for greed or gain. They didn’t come with impure motives and they weren’t discouraged by the suffering and opposition they faced in past cities or in Thessalonica itself. Contrary to what we might imagine, this community was founded by missionaries who weren’t trying to please other people, but God, who tests our hearts. The theme of our “Belong” series today is: “Find your people.” As we open our communities to others, we remember that the Gospel is the foundation of our fellowship. We welcome others the way Paul approached the Thessalonians: with sincerity and love, sharing our lives together (v. 8). We do this not to please others. We love, because God first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

Understanding God’s Word

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:8 - 2:6 together. Reading verses 7-8 might help with context.

What is the evidence for the sincerity of the Thessalonians faith and of Paul’s ministry?

Paul might have been defending his ministry against accusations during his absence. What might those accusations have been?

Applying God’s Word

When you reach out to others in community or in sharing the Gospel, what are your motives? It might take a little bravery, but ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer honestly.

What do you think a community founded on the sincerity of the Gospel looks like?

Witnessing God’s Word

In many ways, this passage is primarily about the results of sharing the Gospel with integrity.

What are the results of you or our church sharing the Gospel? Does the evidence reveal the integrity of you and our church?

Are there any ways that you can grow in sharing the Gospel with integrity, just as Paul and his ministry partners did? How can our church grow in this way?