

Getting to know you: Has anything ever shaken your faith? Explain.

Reaching Out: Did anyone seize an opportunity to love someone who is not a Christian through works or words in the past week?

Share what happened?

Reaching Up: As you prepare your hearts and minds to interact with the Bible, take a moment to pray that God would:

- open your eyes and ears to God speaking to you through His Word
- make you teachable, that you might be a doer of the Word
- increase your love for God and others

In the Apostle Paul's second letter to the Thessalonian church he is writing to Christians who have encountered false teaching and trials since the first letter he wrote to encourage them in the faith. Where God is at work the adversary is not far behind, attempting to thwart the plan of God by shaking the faith of God's people.

Paul writes this letter to remind the Church that, through the power of Christ, we have a faith that is unshakeable.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5 together and discuss the questions that follow:

1. Faith is growing (v.3a)

There are three ways to react to trials — we can run, fight, or grow. What is your natural inclination when you face trials?

If someone asked you "How do you grow in your faith?" what would you say to them?

It's true, if you read the Bible you may very well grow in your faith. If you attend church services and a Small Group that may help your faith grow, too. But did you know that there are Bible scholars who have committed their lives to learning and teaching the Bible that aren't Christians? And there are people that attend church services, and other church gatherings every week, but they suggest their faith is stagnant.

Have you ever considered that one way you can catalyze faith is by taking risks? Not just any risks, but risks in alignment with God's plan and purposes.

What does it mean to take risks for God? How might taking such risks increase your faith?

What would it look like for you to take a risk for God in the next week? What would it look like if your whole small group took a risk for God together in the next month? What is stopping you from doing it?

2. Love is increasing (v.3b)

Pastor Jeff reminded us in the sermon, "Love is not static, it's either growing or shrinking." What do you do to increase love?

- How do you grow in love for God?
- How do you grow in love for other Christians?
- How do you grow in love for unbelievers?

3. Endurance is expanding (vv.4-5)

What types of things test your faith?

What spurs you on to perseverance when life is difficult?

Read Romans 5:1-5 together and discuss:

- How, or in whom, do we find peace.
- What can suffering produce in us? How do we get there?

Jesus said to them, "You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy...I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." —John 16:20,33