

God With Us in the Mundane
Advent 2021 | 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12
December 5, 2021

Pre-Sermon Remarks

PRAYER

(Introduction) Big God, Big Faith

- God of creation
- God of history & time
- God of all people
- God of miracles
- God of redemption
- God of courage

How much more in the USA: exceptionalism, heroism | George Washington to Anna of Arendelle
Reality: laundry. grocery shopping. oil change. boredom. | Christmas business vs. rest of the time

Big idea: Emmanuel means God is with us, even in the mundane

Thessalonica

- Macedonian capital city
- Important for trade, politics (named after Alexander's sister)
- Paul visited in AD 50-51

World Turned Upside-Down

Acts 17 ¹ After they passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. [**Jews expelled from Rome in AD 49**] ² As usual, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and rise from the dead: "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah." ⁴ Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, including a large number of God-fearing Greeks, as well as a number of the leading women. [**Birth of a new church!**] ⁵ But the Jews became jealous, and they brought together some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob, and started a riot in the city. Attacking Jason's house, they searched for them to bring them out to the public assembly. ⁶ When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city officials, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them. They are all acting contrary to Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king—Jesus." [**they got that right**] ⁸ The crowd and city officials who heard these things were upset. ⁹ After taking a security bond from Jason and the others, they released them.

- Talk about a "big" start to the church
- Remember this as we get into the 1st letter to this church

First Thessalonians

- One of Paul's earliest letters
- More pastoral, less philosophical
 - Reminder, encouragement, clarifications, updates
- Christ's return a central question

Pastoral Reminders

1 Thessalonians 4 ⁹ About brotherly love: You don't need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. ¹⁰ In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers and sisters in the entire region of Macedonia. But we encourage you, brothers and sisters, to do this even more, ¹¹ to seek to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, ¹² so that you may behave properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone.

- Isn't this ironic coming from the "you're turning the world upside down" guy??
- Remember, they're still living in the aftermath of the riot. Early letter, maybe a few years

Five Instructions

- Live quietly
- Mind your own business
- Work with your hands
- Consider your witness
- Be self-sufficient
- Live obnoxiously
- Be nosy and gossip
- Be unproductive
- Consider yourself only
- Drain others

God and the Mundane

1) Most of life is mundane

- Contrast between Acts 17 / 1 Thessalonians 4 | big moments are punctuation
- Our culture idolizes the big, the important, the loud, the fast
- The day-to-day is training in character for those bigger moments | King David's sling

2) God delights in the mundane

- **Psalm 19** ¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour out speech; night after night they communicate knowledge. | *Monday at the river*
- **G.K. Chesterton** A child kicks his legs rhythmically through excess, not absence, of life. Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we.

3) The mundane testifies to the gospel

- Remember the evangelistic encouragement from Paul: *live a peaceful and quiet life, and behave properly in front of outsiders.*
- Situation in Thessalonica was still tense
 - Pluralistic Greek city, emperor worship cult, devout Jewish opposition
 - Paul says “don’t get big, don’t get loud, don’t be obnoxious, live quietly

When we think about sharing the gospel, we don’t often think “live quietly.” Easy to miss!

A Big Christmas

- The Word made flesh | John 1:14
- Miraculous virgin birth | Matthew 1:18-25
- Angelic announcements | Luke 2
- Magi from the east | Matthew 2 (Herod’s target, flight to Egypt)

A Big Gospel Story

- Public, miraculous ministry
- Shocking, atoning death
- Astounding, victorious resurrection
- Visible ascension to heaven

Jesus’ Quiet Life

Luke 2 ³⁹When they had completed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God’s grace was on him... ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

- Jesus approx 1 month when dedicated, 12 when in the temple, then 30 when starting out
- How much of Jesus’ life was just...mundane
 - Mary sitting there nursing the baby Jesus and changing diapers
 - A young Jesus doing his Torah studies and helping carry construction supplies
 - Regular participation in the festivals: Passover, Sukkot, Hanukkah
 - Meals, baths, laundry

Big idea: Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, even in the mundane

Big idea: In Jesus, even the mundane is made sacred

Application: go live a mundane life? Instead...

*Testimony of God in the mundane | Andrea Fox

**Transition to communion, prayer