
GOD IS HOPE

SERIES: STAND FIRM

Join us throughout the month of July as we learn what it means to **STAND FIRM** in our faith! We will be going through the books of Galatians, Philippians, and 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

REMEMBER VERSE

2 CORINTHIANS 5:5—Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

SCHEDULE

All Services

0:00—0:10	Welcome/Check-In
0:10—0:15	Transition to Large Group
0:15—0:30	Large Group (B100)
0:30—0:35	Transition to Small Group
0:35—1:05	Small Group (Lesson/Activity/Respond)
1:05—1:15	Dismiss

NOTES

LEADER RESOURCES

SERIES OVERVIEW

WEEK 1: God's Spirit Renews

Fruit of the Spirit & Galatia

WEEK 2: God is Contentment

Letter to the Philippians

CURRENT WEEK: God is Hope

Letters to Thessalonians

EQUIP

Paul only spent three weeks in the city of Thessalonica, but during his time there, he planted the seeds that would eventually grow into a healthy, thriving church. Because Paul's time there was short, he left before answering some of the Thessalonians' lingering questions. So he sent them Timothy as well as two letters, in which he encouraged the believers by reminding them of their hope in Jesus.

In Acts 17 we learn that Paul arrived in Thessalonica after being persecuted in Philippi. This persecution followed him to Thessalonica and caused him to leave the city after just a few weeks. And, unfortunately, the church in Thessalonica suffered persecution as well. The cause of the persecution isn't clear; it may have come from unbelieving Jews or local pagans under strict loyalty oaths. It is possible that the reason some of them had died (1 Thessalonians 4:13) was from that persecution.

Because of the intense circumstances the people in Thessalonica faced, Paul knew they desperately needed hope, so he wrote to them about some timeless truths. He told them how the church wasn't destined to suffer God's wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9), how Jesus' return shouldn't catch them by surprise like it would those who live in darkness (5:4), and how they as believers shouldn't participate in the deeds of darkness but instead behave as children of light (5:5). Through these truths, Paul reminded the Thessalonians of the reality of Christ's return—and in that reality is hope.

ENCOURAGE

A biblical definition of the word hope refers to confidence. But our temporal lives, which contain all of our everyday struggles and successes, view hope almost as a wish list. I wish I were more financially stable, I wish I had a new car, I wish I had a new house ... the list goes on.

As we look beyond this temporal life, ascribing the word wish to eternity with Jesus doesn't quite fit. Of course we long for the day we'll be with Him forever, but by saying we're hopeful instead of wishful, we're communicating our confidence and trust that God's promises for the future include us.

As you prepare for the weekend ahead, take some time to write out a "hope list" that focuses on the eternal. What do you hope for (have confidence in) when you think about your eternal life? Then reflect on this list and ask God to replace your temporal wish list with an eternal hope list you can begin living out today for the sake of tomorrow.

WELCOME

Some fun ideas to welcome kids as they check-in to your room at the beginning of service.

Invite the kids to color on the provided coloring page or work on the provided activity page.

As kids arrive, feel free to ask them this week's Connect Question. Feel free to write the question on the board and encourage some fun dialogue before you start your lesson.

QUESTION: If you could have one pen pal (or friend with whom you exchange emails or letters), who would that person be and why?

RESPOND

A chance for kids to respond to what God is putting on their hearts through creative expression.

God is hope, and we can ask Him to protect our minds with His truth so that we don't listen to lies that make us feel hopeless.

INSTRUCTIONS: Hand each child a piece of paper and an envelope. Have them write an encouraging letter to someone they know, or to be given to a stranger. Remind them to write truths and promises of God. Have them fold it up and place in the envelope to give to someone when they leave or over the course of the week.

SUPPLIES:

- Paper
- Envelope

REFLECT

A chance to reflect on what kids have just learned about The Big God Story.

Paul wrote a letter to the Thessalonians to encourage them as they experienced struggles for believing that Jesus is the Son of God. As the Thessalonians waited in hope for Jesus to come again, Paul told them to encourage those around them by sharing that God is hope.

- Why were the Thessalonian Christians having a hard time? *1 Thessalonians 1:6, 9*
- In what ways is it hard to be a Christian today?
- What does it mean to stand firm in the Lord? *1 Thessalonians 3:7-8*
- What does God promise about the second coming of Jesus? *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*
- How does the second coming of Jesus bring us hope? *2 Thessalonians 2:8*
- How do we know that God is hope and will keep His promises? *1 Thessalonians 5:24*
- Where in your life do you need hope today?

BLESS

A powerful way to bless the kids and parents by sending them off with a benediction.

INSTRUCTIONS: Invite the parents into your room at the end of the service to say one last prayer together with the whole family. Instruct them to find their child and sit/stand by their side. Explain what their child learned today and read the verse below. Pray together and then dismiss.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:16-17 – May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

BLESSING: May God encourage you and give you hope. May you experience His strength this week.

NOTES

This script serves as an outline of what your storytelling might sound like. Items written in italics are cues for the storyteller and are not meant to be read out loud. You are fully encouraged to make it your own and add a personal touch.

The script serves as an example, however if you would like to teach based on the script and are in need of any supplies mentioned, we would be happy to supply those for you! Storytelling images mentioned will always be provided in your basket each week, but if you need any other supplies for your lesson, contact a Grove KIDS Staff member beforehand so we can supply it for you! You are also welcome to bring in your own props if you would like!

RESOURCES PROVIDED

- None

STORYTELLING

Paul taught so many people about Jesus! He gave his whole life to serve God. Paul wanted others to love God and have faith and hope. What is hope? *Pause for responses.* Hope is looking for what our good and perfect God has promised. Let's thank God for His goodness and ask Him to teach us. *Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.*

Paul traveled to the city of Thessalonica to tell people about Jesus. Some of the Thessalonians believed the good news that Jesus died for our sins and rose again. These believers had hope in God's promises. *Invite kids to turn to 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and follow along as you read.* However, some of the people in Thessalonica got angry about Paul being there to share about Jesus. Because of this, Paul had to leave the city after only three weeks!

Paul thought about the Thessalonian believers a lot and wanted to know how they were doing. So he sent his friend Timothy to go check on them. *Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-7 aloud.* Paul knew the Thessalonians were being persecuted, or treated badly, because of their faith. But Timothy told him they were staying strong. The Thessalonians knew God is hope. They knew they could trust that He is good and keeps His promises. They wanted to serve Him no matter what.

But they needed a bit of encouragement. It's hard to stay hopeful when people are treating you badly or teaching you things that aren't true. So Paul did what he often did when people needed to hear the truth—he wrote them a letter! The letter was delivered to the Thessalonians, and they read it together at their church. Paul told the Thessalonians that he was so thankful they were following God. He was happy about their trust in God. Paul said that he was praying for them all the time and that he hoped he would get to visit them soon. The apostle Paul wanted the Thessalonians to know that they could trust God all the time, even in hard times. God is hope.

There's even more good news! Jesus is coming again for those who believe in Him. The Thessalonians didn't understand the timing about when Jesus would return. In fact, they thought that maybe He'd already come back and they had missed Him. Paul wrote to help the Thessalonian believers keep looking ahead to Jesus coming back. Let's read more of Paul's message. *Read 1*

Thessalonians 4:13-18 aloud as kids follow along. Because Jesus died and rose again, that means He's more powerful than death and nothing can defeat Him. When Jesus returns, a trumpet will sound (*invite everyone to make trumpet sound*) and all those who believe in Him will be caught up in the clouds to meet Him. All those who follow God and trust in Him will be in heaven with Him forever.

The Thessalonians were so happy to get their letter from Paul. It reminded them that God is hope and that they could trust that Jesus will return. But a little while later, the Thessalonians had more questions for Paul. Paul heard about this, so guess what he did? *Invite the kids to respond.* That's right. He wrote them another letter! We have Paul's second letter in our Bibles too. *Invite kids to turn to 2 Thessalonians 2.* Paul began to answer the questions the Thessalonians had. He reminded them that one day Jesus would come back. He also told the Thessalonians that some people didn't want to live for Jesus. They wanted to do bad things and hurt Christians. But the Thessalonians didn't need to listen to anyone who was against God. God is hope, and He wins! *Invite everyone to cheer.*

Paul again told the Thessalonians how thankful he was for them and how glad he was that they had believed in Jesus right away. *Read 2 Thessalonians 2:15 aloud as kids follow along.* He reminded them to stand firm and trust in God. It was important for the Thessalonians to remember all they had been taught about our good and perfect God. Paul ended his letter by asking God to encourage the Thessalonians to continue believing His promises. He knew they would need God's strength to keep going. *Read 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 aloud.*

Sometimes it's hard to have hope—to trust that God's promises are true—when we go through hard times. We need someone to remind us so we can keep going. That's what Paul did for his friends in Thessalonica. He wrote to encourage them and give them hope. God is hope. We can look forward to Jesus coming back and trust that God always does what He says He'll do. One day we will get to live with Him forever. While we wait, He gives us His Spirit to strengthen us and help us. *Share a time when God strengthened you with His hope.*