



David Chadwick | January 19, 2025

Message Title: “Fanning the Flame”

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

Something very special is going on in MOHC right now. Spiritual fires are growing and growing (the California wildfires - **Luke 13** as reference):

1. The highest attendance ever the last few weeks (parking!)
2. Miracles (the other night at the Men’s Gathering)
3. Generosity (Christmas Eve, cityofhopeclt.org, etc.)
4. 37 baptisms last Sunday (200 plus last year!): new converts to Jesus
5. People serving (over 100 to western NC) - every Hopester in ministry as a goal

My prayer: Holy Spirit, fan the flame!

Paul saw the same thing in the Thessalonian church: a beautiful, growing and alive church, planted in a godless, pagan culture. He wanted it to continue to thrive. Here are the **four ways** Paul saw that the Thessalonian church could fan the flames of their spiritual life and remain strong for the Lord..

May we learn from Paul’s teaching for MOHC.

1. Believe God's Word is the Word of God

1 Thessalonians 2:13

13 *And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.*

- Not the word of man but the word of God

- **2 Timothy 3:16**

16 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*

- Responding to critics (ie Bart Ehrmann at UNC) and two major criticisms:

a) 400k errors in the NT manuscripts

- 5,000 manuscripts in Greek; 20,000 in Latin or Coptic
- Copyist/scribal errors over time
- They are errors or misspelled words, miscopied punctuation, a scribal gloss
- 99.5% doctrinal accuracy
- We have manuscripts within 50 years of the originals (we don't have originals)
- We do believe the originals were "God-breathed", written by the Holy Spirit without error/inerrant/infallible
- Sheer numbers of texts allows us to get back to the author's original intent
- As compared to Homer, Plato, Herodotus, Caesar's Gallic Wars manuscripts (from 2 to 12 copies with a 700-1300 interlude from author): **yet there is no doubt to their veracity.** With the Bible: 25,000 manuscripts and can get to 50 years of original authorship

b) Discrepancies

- le: only one angel at the empty tomb in Matthew; two in Luke...which is it?
- Interviewing eyewitnesses at a crime scene
- The differences validates the eyewitness testimonies
- One more: What about **John 8:1-11** and **Mark 16:9-20**? They are in later manuscripts
- There are answers to apparent discrepancies!

Also remember:

- Fulfilled predictive prophecies hundreds of years in the future fulfilled in specificity: only God knows the exact future
- Archaeology: not one has disproved a fact stated in the Bible
- The Bible's self-attestation
- Jesus's (God's) view of Old (the prophets) and New Testaments (the apostles)
- Scholars' anti-supernatural biases: coming to scholarship with a presuppositional bias against miracles and anything supernatural and seemingly anti-natural explanation

The Bible: written by 40 different authors (shepherds, kings, priests, scholars, fishermen, prophets)...over 1500 years...in three different languages...on three different continents...with one unified message:
Jesus is the way to eternal life.

Paul: the word of God is at work within the believer's heart

Hebrews 4:12

***12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

Your choice! Either God or man wrote the Bible...not Paul's opinion...not my opinion... but God's opinion is all that matters.

MOHC is under the Word of God

2. Persevere through suffering

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

14 For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, **15** who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind **16** by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!

- Thessalonian church: Learn from the churches in Judea which are suffering
- **Acts 1:8**: What happened in Jerusalem and Judea?
- Peter and John in **Acts 5**
- Stephen's death in **Acts 7**
- Paul: Thessalonians, imitate how they persevered through suffering
- For us: look at the persecuted church worldwide

3. Understand spiritual warfare

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18

17 But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, **18** because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.

- Paul wanted to return to Thessalonica
- And see these beloved friends face to face again
- Satan “hindered” his return
- There is a real spiritual enemy who wants you ineffective
- Know the difference between Satan hindered and the Spirit wouldn't allow
- You will just know
- The power of Jesus's name and blood against the enemy

4. The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? **20** For you are our glory and joy.

- Paul's main thing: evangelism / eternal life / salvation. This is primary...again, the unified message of the Bible
- Paul's love for the Thessalonians
- The end times sequence: the rapture...then the Bema seat of rewards...then the 7-year wedding feast...then our return with Jesus to set up the 1,000 year millennial reign
- The Bema seat: our greatest reward is those who have come to faith in Jesus because of us
- Like Paul, they are our joy, crown, glory: our greatest reward when he returns
- Pray for them
- Invite to MOHC, send literature, podcasts, daily MOH
- Financial gifts (Jesus in **Luke 16**): the people worldwide who come to faith because of you (YCI, Syria, WNC and beyond)
- Again, Paul calls the Thessalonians, at the Bema seat of rewards, his "hope, joy, crown of boasting, our glory and joy"
- May we do so as well!

Fan the flame! Let's keep what's happening in MOHC burning brighter and brighter throughout 2025.

Holy Spirit, fan the flame!

God's best is yet to come!

Take Ryan Carson's "The Story of God" class (coming in March)

Miracle time now.