**Community Group Discussion Guide**

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

*Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12*

*Set the Context…*

**Context**: Paul sets out in this chapter to anchor the Thessalonians in solid biblical foundation of the end times. They had come to be introduced to a teaching that **“the day of the Lord has come” (v. 1-2)**. They were shaken and afraid that they had missed the rapture. Paul gives a theological discourse on why it’s not possible for them to have missed the rapture because of a key event that must take place before. The day of the Lord would not come **“unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness if revealed” (v. 3)**.

**Commentary:** Paul was worried that the Thessalonians would be “shaken” by bad theology in light of the persecution they were facing. If there is ever a time you need to know what you believe and why you believe it, it’s in times of suffering. He warns them not to believe any claims either, by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from him, teaching that the day of the Lord had come. The rebellion and the man of lawlessness must be revealed first. The **rebellion** describes a time of great religious defection. There have always been people who reject Jesus Christ and apostatize the faith. However, this event seems to be seismic apostasy. A defection that is noticeable to the world. The **man of lawlessness** describes the antichrist, or son of **“the son of destruction”** (v. 3). This individual is distinct from Satan and appears to spark the great tribulation period mentioned by Jesus and the prophet Daniel. (Matthew 24:15-24; Daniel 9:27) Paul says that he “***opposes and exalts himself every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God***.” (2 Thess.2:4) The man of lawlessness will demand the worship of the world, arrogantly undercutting and defying the glory of God.
 To further emphasize that this has not yet taken place Paul says that the antichrist is currently being restrained from coming until the appointed time, where the one who is restraining him would move aside and the lawless one would be set loose. There is much debate over what is currently restraining him. The only thing we can be assured of is that the restrainer is a supreme supernatural power and demonstrates God sovereign rule even over satan’s rebellion. The lawless one will have the agenda of deception, “***with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, for they refused to love the truth and so be saved***.” (2 Thess. 2:10) He will cause those who did not live in the truth of God to be given over to a delusion. The text states that God is even at work in using the lawless one as an act of judgment on those who have preferred sin and lies. God gives them over to the influence of this strong delusion to “***believe what is false***.” (2 Thess. 2:11) Though this man would hold great power to lead many astray, he will pale in comparison to king Jesus who would kill him with a single breath (v. 8).

 **“And then lawless** **one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing with the appearance of his coming”** Despite the bleakness of this prophetic word, there was a clear difference in power. Jesus himself will defeat the Antichrist by merely speaking, it would be no contest at all. Great hope should fill the hearts of readers of this letter who have trusted Jesus for the forgiveness of sin.

*Share main truths of the passage along with verses that teach them* and discuss how to apply to our daily lives …

**Key Points**:
- Refuting false teaching on end times theology (2 Thess. 2: 1-2)

- Description of the rebellion and man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:3-10)

- highlight of God’s sovereignty and power (2 Thess. 2:11-12)

**Discussion and Application Questions:**

Verses 1-2

1. Share how this time of quarantine has shaped or reshaped how you value the gospel and Kingdom work of disciple making
2. What does it mean when one is “quickly shaken”? How does good understanding of biblical doctrine guard against misguided worries and fears?
3. Why are signs and warnings a good thing? How do signs and warnings in the Bible display God’s love?
4. How can you not only guard your own theological foundation but help develop others?
5. What are the implications of misguided beliefs pertaining to the Lord and his activities in the world?

Verses 3-10

1. The man of lawlessness rebels against God and exalts himself to be seen as God. How do we find ourselves intentionally or unintentionally doing similar things?
2. What is “lawlessness” and how is it at work in hindering believers to accomplish the work of the Lord?
3. How can we continue to abide in Christ despite the uncertainty that is before us?
4. If this kind of delusion and deception motivate you to pursue Christ through the truth of his word?
5. Read v. 8. How does this passage quiet our fears and allow us to go into the world with boldness?

Verses 11-12

1. In the same way that God first allows the Antichrist to deceive humanity, and then defeats him, how does God use suffering and trials in your life to magnify Jesus?
2. How can we use end-time prophecies to catapult us to becoming more intentional about sharing our faith? How does this encourage the art of discipleship?
3. God promises that deception is for those who are “perishing.” What does this do to our hearts for unbelievers?
4. Why is God to be found right and just in giving unbelievers over to falsehood in believing the Antichrist?
5. How does God show his justice and righteousness against unrepentant sin? How does this truth help us to share the gospel and disciple others?
6. Consider the holiness of God and his judgment against sin. What is the warning set before us for those who find pleasure in unrighteousness or sin?

*Share a key take away or challenge for the week…*

*Pray together in light of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12…*

**Prayer Guide:**

Pray that as some transition out of quarantine, that we continue to love our neighbors by continuing to practice safe social distancing. Pray that this time of “opening back up” may lead our church to praise and worship. That we may not take for granted the everyday gifts of God in our lives. Pray that we may continue to dive deeper into the Word and developing a solid theological foundation so that we wont be shaken.

Pray that our city may be flooded with believers who have grown in devotion to Christ, sharing the gospel with boldness and love. Pray that there may be great awakenings and revivals happening within the city of Louisville. Pray that we may be sensitive to the needs of our neighbors and in love, serve them.

Pray for the church all over the world, that the Lord may protect them in the advancement of the gospel to the nations. That He may give missionaries and lay people alike new insights into reaching unbelievers that the Lord places in their path. Pray that the Lord would protect his church from the false teaching and lawlessness that surrounds them. Pray that we may become wise unto salvation as we draw ever closer to the day of the Lord’s return.