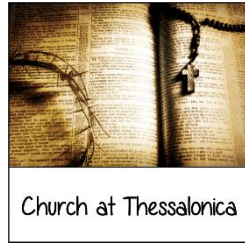


# God's Story Our Story



**April 17, 2016**

**Devotion:** Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions. You can do this alone, as a couple, as a family; in the morning, during the day, or at night. Find a routine that works best for you.

**Pray:** Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

**God of patience and acceptance, although Paul and Silas preached a message of love, people responded with fear and anger. Help us to proclaim your message of love so that it may be received with acceptance and hope. Amen.**

**Reflect:** Reflect on the key verses from Sunday's reading.

*And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you." Acts 17:2-3*

**Study:** Study the reading and consider the background.

**Paul and Silas took on the religious authorities directly, arguing on the Sabbath and proclaiming Christ the Messiah. Religious authorities tried to quell the rebellion by imprisoning those who aided the Christians. But Jesus' message of love endured, despite the culture of fear.**

**Read:** Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding of Sunday's text. After the reading, ask the follow-up questions.

Sunday, Acts 17:1-9, *Church at Thessalonica*

Monday, 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10, *Thanks to Thessalonica*

Tuesday, Acts 6:1-7, *Seven Chosen to Serve*

Wednesday, Acts 6:8-15, *The Arrest of Stephen*

Thursday, Acts 7:1-53, *Stephen's Speech to the Council*

Friday, Acts 7:54-8:1a, *The Stoning of Stephen*

Saturday, Acts 8:1b-3, *Saul Persecutes the Church*

**Why do you think Stephen's message so threatening?**

**Connect:** Connect in conversation with others in your household. Discuss the following questions, or simply check in with "Highs" and "Lows."

**What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?**

**What words are spoken or heard in your community that are threatening to you? To others? How might you hear or speak those words differently so that they can be received with acceptance and hope?**

**What does it mean to you that Jesus is the Messiah?**

**Do:** By acting on what we learn, we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

**Our words can be powerful. Write a one- to three-page story of something about your life as you live it right now. What creates meaning in your life? Create a tag cloud with your story (try tagul.com). What word or words are biggest? Which are smallest? Share your tag cloud with a friend.**

**Bless:** Close your devotion with a blessing.

**May God fill you with words of love, acceptance, and hope. Amen.**