

Speaking to the soul



Ringling out

And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. 1 Thessalonians 1:8

Paul's first visit to Thessalonica began well and a number of people decided to follow Jesus (see Acts 17:1-8). But, as was so often the case, his success caused jealousy among the local Jews who were losing some of their adherents. They recruited a group of troublemakers from the marketplace and formed a mob in order to attack Paul and Silas. The mob didn't find them and so picked on some of the other believers and hauled them before the city council. The situation was clearly getting dangerous and so the believers encouraged Paul and Silas to leave the city that night. Given that difficult background, it must have been a massive encouragement to Paul that the church in Thessalonica was doing so well. How wonderful that they had not merely survived but grown so strongly that the word of the Lord was spreading throughout Greece. Paul sounds as if he was really chuffed by their progress.

I love the expression that the word of the Lord was ringing out from the Thessalonians. The verb 'ringing' makes it clear that this was no passing phase but a way of life. Sadly, this wasn't a description that Paul was able to use of all the churches under his care. Some got distracted by divisions and false doctrine. Others were weakened by persecution. But the Thessalonians had come through it all and were clearly a wonderful advert for the gospel. I don't sense that there was anything self-conscious about their way of life. They just got on with the business of living for God and the result was an infectious blessing for all. Our prayer for all our churches should be that they be so strong in faith that, whatever the circumstances, the good news of Jesus will continue to ring out from them.

QUESTION

Does the word of the Lord ring out from your church? If it does, rejoice. If it doesn't then what could you do to help this to happen?

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you for the inspiration of those churches from which your word rings out. Amen