

Sunrise Community Church Pastor Andrew Kikkert

Jesus is THE Way, not only a statement of faith; the way of life.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.”

One of the greatest weaknesses in the Christian community is the failure to see what is going on in the lives of other brothers and sisters in the faith so we can encourage and rejoice with them. The word “ought” in verse 3 can also be translated as “obligated,” literally a requirement because of what Paul could see happening in the lives of the saints in Thessalonica. It can be easy to say it was Paul’s job to know what was going on in the church; after all he is an apostle. But this is how Paul was with all the churches, not just the churches he founded. Paul is one who felt the obligation to know how the saints were doing in practical and caring ways everyday.

We have to guard our hearts and minds from becoming “isolationists.” Nowhere in Scripture are we taught fellow believers are to be isolated from other believers, whether they attend the same service or are separated by thousands of miles. We have an obligation to be aware of what others in our body are experiencing so we can pray effectively and we have an obligation to know what is going in the persecuted church around the world where many of our missionaries live and serve. We have an obligation to pray as Paul did for them and their spiritual growth and to praise God and rejoice for those who are standing fast.

This month we have an opportunity to engage ourselves as a church in this very practice. For the month of February we are partnering with our missionaries to the Alevi people of Turkey and their associates who are seeking to reach this wonderful people group. This is more than just praying for their work or even being aware we support missionaries in Muslim countries. This is about taking an active stance to learn more about the Alevi people and their culture. We are to pray for an Alevi for Jesus Movement to begin, where the seed which has been sown in this people group begins to bear fruit. And we are to carry the obligation of praising God as we see their faith grow through their many trials and tribulations, bringing honor to the Lord for His work in their midst.

For the next 5 weeks, I encourage you to be in prayer for the Alevi people. We will bring more information to focus our time of prayer as a community and individually in our own homes. And as we see how they “do church” and examine the Scriptures to see how church was done by the apostles, may we learn the lesson we will need to learn for our own perseverance and endurance as we go through our own trials and tribulation waiting for the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.