

How you've changed!

- *(Chat with children)*
- How have you changed as you have grown up?
 - take suggestions...
- **Show pictures of how I've changed!**
 - steer discussion round to what else has changed except external appearance?
 - end up sharing testimony - changed by meeting Jesus when I was nearly 12, changed whole direction of my life...
- Thinking today about how the Thessalonians were changed by becoming Christians

Background

- Important city - large - capital of Macedonia - on **Via Egnatia**, the great Roman highway from Rome to the East
- Visited by Paul with Silas and Timothy - see **Acts 17:1**
 - after visit to Philippi (slave girl, jailer, earthquake...)
 - started ministry in the synagogue with the Jews... (**Acts 17:2**)
 - some Jews became Christians (**17:4**) along with many **God-fearers**
 - but the rest of the Jewish community became jealous (**17:5**) and stirred up trouble
 - core of trouble was "**another king, one called Jesus**" (**17:7**)
 - exactly what happened next is unclear, but sounds like they were given the equivalent of a police caution
 - Paul and Silas were sent away to Berea (**17:10**)
 - and the three week old baby church is left on its own!
- Its to this church, admittedly sometime later when it is somewhat more established (**1 Thess 1:8**) that Paul writes
 - evidence suggests one of earliest letters, perhaps only preceded by Galatians
 - maybe around 50BC, **ie within 20 years of Jesus' death and resurrection**
- Letter probably written in response to the news from Timothy (**3:6**) and possibly Silas (**Acts 18:5**)

How they changed!

- Marked out by:
 - power (**v.5**) - fundamentally saving, death to life, in Jesus' ministry and that of the early church often accompanied by demonstrations of God's power in healings etc
 - Holy Spirit (**v.5**) - power through the Spirit
 - deep conviction (**v.5**) - not mere head knowledge, but heart and life change
 - imitation of Paul (**v.6**) - of godly, mature Christians
 - welcomed gospel in face of suffering (**v.6**)
 - looked to by other believers as an example (**v.7**)
 - place of witness, of spreading the gospel (**v.8**)
 - change in lifestyle - idols to living God (**v.9**)
 - anticipation of heaven (**v.10**)

How have we changed?

- We also are those who have received the gospel message:
 - have we also changed?
 - if not, why not?