

**Devotional from Pastor Ho**  
**July 30, 2020**

**Acts 17:11**, *“Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”*

The context of this brief but often quoted passage is that Paul and Silas were in the middle of the second missionary in Thessalonica, where not a few believed, then the jealous Jews set the city in an uproar. As a result, Paul and Silas had to be sent to the neighboring city of Berea, where they teach in the Jewish synagogue. The Berean Jews were commended not only for their eagerness to receive the words Paul proclaimed, but also for their seriousness in examining their Old Testament Scriptures to make sure Paul’s words don’t contradict their Scriptures.

Today, an article on Christianity Today caught my attention. The article is entitled When John MacArthur Reopens His Church Despite COVID-19 Orders. I believe most have heard of John MacArthur, who not too long ago celebrated his 50th anniversary as pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, CA, and is one of the few speakers I have benefited from. When I saw this headline, the first question that popped up was, “Why now? Why did he follow the lockdown order the first time around?” Then I went to the church website ([gracechurch.org](http://gracechurch.org)) to find the answer. There is a long exposition entitled Christ, Not Caesar, Is Head of the Church: A Biblical Case for the Church’s Duty to Remain Open, and found the answer I was looking for in the Addendum.

The purpose of our devotion today is not to judge or criticize what other churches choose to do or not do in this polarizing matter, but to apply our passage today. Since the church exposition is subtitled “A Biblical Case for...” and is replete with biblical references, we want to examine “the Scriptures...to see if these things were so.” I personally have no qualms about his biblical basis for reopening the church. In fact, the church exposition is a good teaching material on church-state relationship. Rather, my concern is more on what is not written, namely, how to love our neighbors in the context of the state of California during COVID-19 by guarding against the spread of virus within the church community. May the Lord grant wisdom and mercy!

**Prayer:** O Lord, how we long to gather as a church like we used to! Would you grant us wisdom to navigate during this uncertainty? Amen.

## 何牧師的靈修

2020年7月30日

使徒行傳 17 篇 11 節：“這地方的人賢於帖撒羅尼迦的人，甘心領受這道，天天考查聖經，要曉得這道是與不是。”

這簡短但經常被引用的經文的背景是，保羅和西拉正在第二次旅行佈道途中的帖撒羅尼迦，那裡有很多相信的，後來嫉妒他們的猶太人在城中引起騷動，以至於保羅和西拉被迫送到鄰近的庇哩亞城，在猶太會堂裡教導。庇哩亞猶太人被稱讚不僅因為他們甘心領受保羅所傳的話，也因為他們認真考查他們的舊約聖經以確保保羅所傳的話不與聖經相抵觸。

今天，一篇《今日基督教》(Christianity Today) 的文章引起了我的注意。這篇文章的標題是“儘管有新冠病毒的限制命令，約翰·麥克阿瑟(John MacArthur)還是重新開放教會。”我相信大多數人都聽說過約翰·麥克阿瑟 (John MacArthur)，他不久前剛在加州 Sun Valley 城的 Grace Community Church 慶祝牧會 50 年，也是少數我曾經受教過的講員之一。當我看到這個標題時，第一個冒出來的問題是：“為什麼現在？為什麼他遵守第一次的居家命令？”然後我去教會的網站

([gracechurch.org](http://gracechurch.org)) 找答案。那裡有一個很長的論述，題為“教會的元首是基督，不是凱撒：以聖經為根據維持教會開放的責任”，並在附錄中找到我所尋找的答案。

我們今天靈修的目的不是要論斷或批評其他教會在這兩極化的問題上選擇做什麼或不做什麼，而是要應用我們今天的這段經文。因為教會論述的標題為“以聖經為根據…”，並且多處引用聖經，我們應該“考查聖經，要曉得這道是與不是。”我個人對重新開放教會的聖經根據沒有疑問。事實上，這教會論述乃關於教會與國家關係的優良教材。相反，我的關注點在於未寫的話題，即在新冠病毒期間如何在加州現在的情況下愛護我們的鄰居，以防止病毒在教會圈內散播。願主賜智慧和憐憫！

禱告：主啊，我們多麼渴望教會像之前一樣一起聚會！請賜給我們智慧並在這不確定的情況下引導我們前行。阿們。

## 何牧师的灵修

2020年7月30日

使徒行传 17 篇 11 节：“这地方的人贤于帖撒罗尼迦的人，甘心领受这道，天天考查圣经，要晓得这道是与不是。”

这简短但经常被引用的经文的背景是，保罗和西拉正在第二次旅行布道途中的帖撒罗尼迦，那里有很多相信的，后来嫉妒他们的犹太人在城中引起骚动，以至于保罗和西拉被迫送到邻近的庇哩亚城，在犹太会堂里教导。庇哩亚犹太人被称赞不仅因为他们甘心领受保罗所传的话，也因为他们认真考查他们的旧约圣经以确保保罗所传的话不与圣经相抵触。

今天，一篇《今日基督教》(Christianity Today) 的文章引起了我的注意。这篇文章的标题是“尽管有新冠病毒的限制命令，约翰·麦克阿瑟(John MacArthur)还是重新开放教会。”我相信大多数人都听说过约翰·麦克阿瑟(John MacArthur)，他不久前刚在加州 Sun Valley 城的 Grace Community Church 庆祝牧会 50 年，也是少数我曾经受教过的讲员之一。当我看到这个标题时，第一个冒出来的问题是：“为什么现在？为什么他遵守第一次的居家命令？”然后我去教会的网站 ([gracechurch.org](http://gracechurch.org)) 找答案。那里有一个很长的论述，题为“教会的元首是基督，不是凯撒：以圣经为根据维持教会开放的责任”，并在附录中找到我所寻找的答案。

我们今天灵修的目的不是要论断或批评其他教会在这两极化的问题上选择做什么或不做什么，而是要应用我们今天的这段经文。因为教会论述的标题为“以圣经为根据…”，并且多处引用圣经，我们应该“考查圣经，要晓得这道是与不是。”我个人对重新开放教会的圣经根据没有疑问。事实上，这教会论述乃关于教会与国家关系的优良教材。相反，我的关注点在于未写的话题，即在新冠病毒期间如何在加州现在的情况下爱护我们的邻居，以防止病毒在教会圈内散播。愿主赐智慧和怜悯！

祷告：主啊，我们多么渴望教会像之前一样一起聚会！请赐给我们智慧并在这不确定的情况下引导我们前行。阿们。