

A Quiet Life of Love
1 Thessalonians 4:9-12
Thessalonians series #9
June 11, 2023

PreSermon Comments

- 3 Sundays left

PRAYER

Introduction

- “Show her you love her” – a diamond necklace, trip to Paris, car with a bow on it
 - Pastoral counseling experience tells me that doesn’t typically work
- Paul’s most famous definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13 (not exhaustive list)

Love Defined

1 Corinthians 13 ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, ⁵ is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. ⁶ Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- Not grand gestures, but these things are loving

So, why all this talk about love? Because it's the topic Paul & Co. address here

Brotherly Love

1 Thessalonians 4 ⁹ About brotherly love: You don’t need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. ¹⁰ In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers and sisters in the entire region of Macedonia.

- Practical instructions to wrap up the letter (last week sexuality, next week patiently wait)
- You don’t need me to write...but then he does | rhetorical device
- Love for all the brothers and sisters, Jesus “new” command in John 13
- Different Greek words for love: agape, eros, storge
 - Brotherly love: philadelphia, family or brotherly love

Gordon Fee [Philadelphia is] a word that was used throughout the Greco-Roman world for love between actual siblings. But in this its first appearance in the New Testament it has already assumed the familial relationship that God’s newly formed people had with each other because of their common relationship to God through Christ.

- **Redemption history through the family lens:** creation family, fracturing, Jesus our brother

Love Exemplified

1 Thessalonians 4 But we encourage you, brothers and sisters, to do this even more, ¹¹ to seek to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, ¹² so that you may behave properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone.

- Objection 1: personal experience. *World-changer, rock star, history-maker*
- Objection 2: Paul's resume. *Really man, a quiet life?*

Hard-Working Apostles

1 Thessalonians 2 ⁹ For you remember our labor and hardship, brothers and sisters. Working night and day so that we would not burden any of you, we preached God's gospel to you.

- Paul himself was a tentmaker (more broadly a leather worker)
- So yes, he (accidentally) started riots, but his desire was to work hard and make disciples

(big idea) Quiet, dignified, hard work is a beautiful way to love others like Jesus

Loving Action 1: Lead a Quiet Life (For the noisy)

- Remember, this church faces near-constant persecution, opposition, and mockery
- This is a "keep your head down, do your work, don't be a disruption" sort of thing
 - World: you have to have an opinion on everything! Silence is violence!
 - Church: culture war (pastor: *be louder*)
- Of course the church is to boldly proclaim the gospel, and of course they are to speak clearly on important matters like sexual ethics (last week)
- Yet, Paul's instruction is to do so in a non-noisy way

Loving Action 2: Mind Your Own Business (For the nosy)

- This is where we have to talk about gossip
 - World: gossip columns, TMZ, even just social media (Facebook stalking)
 - Church: gossip disguised as prayer requests
- There is a genuine place for transparency, sharing and caring
- But I think our calibration is probably waaaaaay off

Loving Action 3: Work With Your Hands (For the nerdy)

- So many in this church marketing, engineering, design, even preaching | MIND
 - Nothing wrong with that: Paul was a theologian, writer, philosopher
- Humans in the garden, work with hands before the fall
 - Work = worship | Hb. *abdah*
- TRY SOMETHING DIFFICULT: build a fence, garden, split firewood

Paul and Silas say that if we do these things, there will be two results...

Two Results

1 Thessalonians 4 ...[do these things] we commanded you, ¹² so that you may behave properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone.

- Wait a minute, this isn't just about *philadelphia*, brotherly love?

Result 1: Respect from Outsiders

- Somewhat difficult phrase to translate from the Greek
 - ESV walk properly before outsiders
 - NET live a decent life before outsiders
 - NLT people who are not believers will respect the way you live
 - NIV your daily life may win the respect of outsiders
- Our love-in-action towards the church family will win the respect of outsiders
 - Eavesdropping on the date afternoon, "I like their potlucks"

Result 2: Not Dependent on Anyone

- Again, isn't this the same apostle who said to "bear one another's burdens"? (Gal 6:2)
 - Yes, and 3 verses later he says "every man shall bear his own burden"
- Of course he help each other, of course we serve each other
 - But we do not take advantage of each other
 - In fact, we need to work to be able to help lift up others
- Some of you need to get better at accepting help, this verse is not for you
- Others of you need to not take advantage of people, but look for opportunities to give

(big idea style) Jesus' love was demonstrated in his hard work for our salvation

Jesus' Quiet Work of Love

- Jesus was quiet: "tell nobody," like a sheep is silent
- Jesus minded his own business: only concerned with the Father's work
- Jesus worked with his hands: carpenter, heal and embrace, stretched out on the cross
- Through his love-in-action, Jesus won all of us outsiders to himself (there's more to come!)
- Jesus is dependent on nobody, but actually shares his resurrection power with us
 - REALLY IMPORTANT: you can't just work hard, you have to let Jesus work hard through you. It's his life and power working in you.

Jesus is working through you to share his love with the world

Discussion Questions