

Lighthouse Bible Church

June 14th, 2015

1st Thessalonians 4: 9 – 12 *Scripture Reading: 1st Peter 2: 11 - 17*

‘Everyday Christian Living’

Stand – Read – Pray

As we are working our way through Chapter 4 of 1st Thessalonians we saw in Verses 1 – 2 Paul’s call to these new believers to learn how to walk in such a way to please God and that the commandments of God, the Word of God contain the directions on how to do that.

Then we saw Paul, in Verses 3 – 8, challenge the new believers to live according to the will of God in their sanctification by abstaining from sexual immorality. He told them they need to possess their body in sanctification and honor and not to live like the unbelieving world does.

Paul told them that God would judge those habitually immoral people and that God did not call them to uncleanness but to holiness. Then he concluded by telling them that if they choose to reject this teaching they are not rejecting him but they are rejecting God and His Spirit.

So now Paul moves from living in personal holiness before God to living in a right relationship with one another and with unbelievers in their community; and he is about to tell them, in verses 9 – 12, that love and personal discipline and conduct are they key to doing that. This is very practical for us today as well because if you think about it, Christianity that doesn’t change the way you live is not the real thing.

We have to live out what we say we believe in order to make a difference in the unsaved world around us.

Remember what James says in **James 2:18** says ‘**show me your faith without works and I will show you my faith by my works because faith without works is dead.** And Jesus said in **Matthew 7: 24** when He was talking about the parable of the two builders that **whoever hears these sayings of mine AND DOES THEM I will liken to a wise man.**

And of course **Ephesians 2: 10** says that **we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.** The Bible is full of admonitions for us to live out in what we say we believe and that is what Paul is encouraging the new believers in Thessalonica to do.

One writer said “Christianity is not just a theological belief system, it touches the earth with daily behavior, right down to the most mundane, routine things. Christianity is not just something to believe, it is a way to live.”
MacArthur GTY 1 Thessalonians

And Paul gives this church, and us, 4 basic ways in which to live and show their Christian faith in action. One is by loving each other more, one is by leading a quiet life, one is to mind your own business and one is to work with your hands. And when you do that, you will impact both the believing and unbelieving world around you. How practical is that for us today, so let’s look at it starting in verse 9.

Verse 9: but concerning brotherly love you have not need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another..

What Paul is about to exhort the new believers at Thessalonica to do, which is to love one another, is in direct contrast to what he just admonished them about concerning immorality and lust. The phrase **but concerning** tells us that there is a change in the subject matter from lust and sexual sin to love of the brethren and all people.

And the interesting thing is that back in Chapter 4: 2 Paul said ‘for you know what commandments we gave you’ and in Verse 11 here he says ‘as we commanded you’. So whatever Paul is telling them here, he apparently told them when he was with them as well. But just like some of us, they needed to be reminded and taught the same things to get through to them.

We know that because if you look at **2nd Thessalonians 3: 10 – 12** He is telling them the same thing because it was apparently still going on. Some speculate that the reason they were admonished about leading a more quiet life and minding their own business and especially to work with their own hands and not eat any one else’s bread is because they became too preoccupied with the coming of Christ.

They may have allowed the excitement and anticipation and zeal for the return of Jesus Christ, that Paul had taught them about, to overshadow their ordinary responsibilities of life, especially working. Some may have abandoned everything, much like has happened in our day with some false prophets such as Harold Camping and others saying the end is near or on this day. And you know how some people react to that

As a matter of fact some of the Thessalonian believers were so anticipating the rapture and return of Jesus Christ that they thought they missed it and Paul had to reassure them that they hadn’t. Look at **2nd Thessalonians 1 – 3a.**

That is why right after this passage Paul spends the rest of Chapter 4 and 5 and 2nd Thessalonians telling them what to expect in the rapture and return of Jesus Christ. But for now, Paul wants to get their thinking and actions back on track by encouraging them how to live their Christian life. He doesn’t want them to be so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good.

It is like what Jesus said in the parable of the workers in **Luke 19: 11** when, it says, **they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.** Jesus said **a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return;** and of course that is talking about Jesus. And then He says **so he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten mina's and said DO BUSINESS till I come.**

He starts by saying **concerning brotherly love, *Philadelphia*** , an affectionate kind of love for one another. In secular writing it referred to blood relatives and relationships and here it speaks of Christian relationships with one another established by the blood of Jesus.

Paul says, **concerning** this kind of love, **I have no need that I should write to you for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.** That phrase 'taught by God' is one word in the original language and it has the idea of a personal relationship with the one teaching; and in this case it is their relationship with God who is instructing them, by His Spirit, through His Word using faithful teachers, how to love in an agape deeper way with one another.

What God was teaching them to do is **love one another** because that is characteristic of the divine nature and Holy Spirit they now possessed as new believers. That is what **Romans 5: 5** says **the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.** And you remember what the first fruit of the Spirit is in **Galatians 5: 22** is **love.**

Paul is teaching them what Jesus taught His disciples in **John 13: 34 – 35** when He said **a new commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you...** and what John taught in **1st John 4: 20 – 21** when he said **... for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen how can he love God whom he has not seen and this commandment we have from Him that he who loves God must love his brother also.**

These Thessalonian believers had all they needed to be able to love one another. By the way, maybe you have heard that term before **one another** in Scripture. Besides loving one another there are several 'one another's' that we are to practice with and for each other. Here is just a quick list of them:

Be **DEVOTED** to one another **GIVE PREFERENCE** to OA

Be of the **SAME MIND** with OA **BUILD UP** OA

Be **AT PEACE** with OA **RECEIVE** or **ACCEPT** OA

ADMONISH / COMFORT OA **GREET** OA

CARE for OA **SERVE** OA **BEAR** OA's **BURDENS**

Be **PATIENT** with OA Be **KIND** to OA **SUBMIT** to OA

ESTEEM OA **FORGIVE** OA **CONSIDER** oa **CONFESS SIN** to oa

PRAY for oa be **HOSPITABLE** to oa be **HUMBLE** to oa

FELLOWSHIP with oa

Paul then says in Verse 10

Verse 10: and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia but we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more.

These new believers not only showed love for one another in their own congregation but that love extended to other Christians all throughout Macedonia.

Remember in Chapter One Verses 8 – 9 it said that their faith and teaching of the Word had gone out in all Macedonia and Achaia? Well, so also had their love for the brethren gone out in acts of kindness, mercy, hospitality, giving and serving; not just emotional sentiment but accompanied with action.

Now Paul says **increase more and more**, as you are waiting for the Lord's return, in that kind of love; because they were still not loving to the potential that they could be and there is always room to improve. That word 'increase' is the same word used in Chapter 4 and verse one for 'abound' which we saw there meant to super-abound just like he prayed for them to do in **3: 12 – 13**. Don't ever think you have arrived in the way you love, much like he told them they hadn't arrived with their faith in **3: 10**. We can always find deeper more impactful ways to love. Then Paul says in Verse 11

Verse 11: that you also aspire to lead a quiet life...

That word **aspire** means to be zealous for, to be eager for, to aim for as an honorable goal to **lead a quiet life**. That phrase 'lead a quiet life' is one word in the original language and it is used other places in Scripture to mean 'keep your mouth closed' **Luke 14: 4**, to 'be at rest' **Luke 23: 56**, to 'stop talking' **Acts 21: 14**.

But within all of those words, it has the idea of being at peace or tranquil or at rest and not disturbing the peace of others, not being loud or in conflict with others by what you say or what you do. That is what Paul says in **2nd Thessalonians 3: 12**

Paul told the church at Ephesus in **1st Timothy 2: 2** to pray for all in authority over them **that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life..** It is an external quietness from an internal peace. It is not vocal agitation against authorities or against anyone, even in the church.

It is not raising your voice in opposition or protest against something. It is keeping your mouth closed and not talking and being at rest and peace knowing that God is in control. It is like how Peter describes the submissive wife in **1st Peter 3: 4** when he says **let it be the hidden person of the heart with the incorruptible beauty of a gently and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God..**

It is a character quality described by Isaiah in **Isaiah 32: 17** where it says **the work of righteousness will be peace and the effect of righteousness; quietness and assurance forever.** It is a life that does its best to avoid unnecessary contention and to be at peace with all people; as much as is possible with you, as **Romans 12: 18** says, even in persecution and even as you wait for the return of the Lord. So he says ‘aspire to lead a quiet life and then he says;

To mind your own business; Paul here is addressing some or maybe the church in general but probably some specific people that had more time to interfere and meddle in other people’s lives than they did making sure their own lives were in order.

He was telling them to stay out of other peoples affairs, out of the matters of other people; in the negative sense of meddling which could lead to gossip. Paul addresses this again in his 2nd letter in **2nd Thessalonians 3: 11** where he says **for we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.**

That word busybody is exactly what it means. It means a body that is busy; busy going from place to place meddling in the affairs of others, sticking their nose where it doesn’t belong. It means to bustle about uselessly or to busy oneself about trifling, needless and useless matters.

This kind of person, who happens to be a young widow, is described in 1st Timothy 5: 13 where it says **and besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies saying things they ought not.** That's what Paul has in mind here; he says don't be like that.

And of course in our day, someone like that doesn't even need to leave their house. They have the telephone, internet, facebook, twitter or whatever.

And then he says **work with your own hands as we commanded you...** In the Greek culture of that time working with your hands in any kind of manual labor was looked down upon as degrading to them. They felt that it was the job of the slaves to work with their hands. But Paul says just the opposite, he says work at your jobs. He will tell them later in 2nd Thessalonians 3: 10 that **if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**

Paul said in Ephesians 4: 28 **let him who stole, steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hand what is good that he may have something to give him who has need.**

Work and labor has always been an honorable and exalted practice in Scripture both in the Old and New Testament as Proverbs 27: 23 – 27 and Ephesians 6: 5 - 9 and Colossians 3: 22 - 24 and many other places make clear. At the same time Scripture also condemns laziness that can lead to a dependent life and meddling in others business because they have a lot of time on their hands.

Proverbs 13: 4 says **the souls of the lazy desires and has nothing...**Proverbs 21: 25 says **the desire of the lazy person kills him for his hands refuse to labor.**

Proverbs 22: 13 says the lazy person says ‘there is a lion outside, I shall be slain in the street’. In other words he is making an excuse for not having to work. Finally, **Proverbs 24: 30 – 34 says I went by the field of the lazy person and by the vineyard of the person devoid of understanding and there it was all overgrown with thorns ... its stone wall was broken down. When I saw it I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction.**

Well, some of these Christians that were saved in Thessalonica may have been slaves or working somewhere and maybe now they feel that with the soon return of Christ, they didn't have to work anymore. Whatever the reason, Paul had **commanded them** when he was with them and reminds them again that they are to increase in love, aspire to lead a quiet life, mind their own business and work with their own hand so that:

Verse 12: that you may walk properly toward those who are outside and that you may lack nothing.

The reason Paul wanted them to increase in love for one another and to lead a quiet ordered life and not meddle in the affairs of others and to work with their own hands and not depend on someone else was for one very specific reason; their Christian testimony to the outside, unbelieving world.

Listen, when believers live and display the integrity of diligent work ethics, attitudes and habits, when the believers display the sacrificial love for all people, friend or enemy, when believers are able to live in peace and respect others business and do not meddle or gossip, that becomes an incredible testimony to unbelievers and makes the gospel believable.

Remember what Jesus said in the sermon on the mount in **Matthew 5: 16** **let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.** In **Colossians 4: 5** it says **walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.**

As a matter of fact, Pastor and Elders **1st Timothy 3: 7** says are to **have a good testimony among those who are outside...**and Peter said in **1st Peter 2: 12** **having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles that when they speak against you as evildoers they may by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

So really, the key to evangelism and the sharing of the gospel is the integrity of the Christian life in the living of a gospel centered life of love and quietness and not being involved where you shouldn't be and working as if you were working for Jesus, because you are. That will be the kind of **proper** or honest or decent walk that will speak volumes to the outside, unbelieving world.

One writer said this “such practical, straightforward living, as embodied in the apostle Paul’s exhortations to the Thessalonians is the foundation of all evangelism. Believers who sacrificially love other people, exhibit tranquil peaceful lives, conscientiously focus on keeping their own lives in order and faithfully carry out their daily responsibilities in the workplace (thus avoiding any welfare dependence) all the while proclaiming the gospel in light of the return of Christ are the most effective witnesses to their unsaved neighbors, friends and loved ones”. *MacArthur GTY pg 121 Thessalonians.*

Not only that but Paul says **that you may lack nothing.** Those who live like that will not need to depend on other Christians or secular organizations because they will know the provision of God through exercising proper Christian responsibility.

Another writer said “the Christians who lived dishonorably and depended on unbelievers for their daily necessities because of an undisciplined life would have been a shame and a displeasure to God, plus a contradiction to the gospel. The brightest testimony to the power of God would be evidenced most convincingly by one with an industrious walk and an independent life”
Richard Mahue 1st Thessalonians pg 117.

So the way you love, the way you live, the way you conduct yourself with a gently quiet spirit and the way you work in your everyday lives will say volumes to the unbelieving world. What is your life saying to them today?

Do you need to work on loving others more than yourself or are you loving sacrificially. Do you aspire to live a quiet, peaceable life or is your life marked by turmoil and unrest and bitterness and quarreling and gossip. Do you have a difficult time minding your own business and find it easy to involve yourself in the affairs of others and then share those involvements with other people. Do you have a disciplined life and a work ethic at home or the workplace that testifies to your serving and laboring with your hands for the Lord or do you find yourself spending more time idle and being lazy and making excuses for not doing what you know you should.

Depending on how you answer those questions will determine the testimony and impact you will have on your unbelieving spouse or children or on your unbelieving neighbor or your unbelieving co-worker. Let your light so shine.

Next time we will begin to look at the rest of the book and the book of 2nd Thessalonians regarding the rapture of the church and the return of Jesus Christ.

Gospel and closing prayer.

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Introduction and Review:

James 2: 18, Matthew 7: 24, Ephesians 2: 10

Verse 9:

2nd Thessalonians 3: 10 – 12, 2: 1-3, Luke 19: 11
Romans 5: 5, Galatians 5: 22, John 13: 34 – 35
1st John 4: 20 – 21

Verses 10 – 11:

Luke 14: 4, Luke 23: 56, Acts 21: 14
2nd Thessalonians 3: 10 - 12, 1st Timothy 2: 2
1st Peter 3: 4, Isaiah 32: 17, Romans 12: 18
1st Timothy 5: 13, Ephesians 4: 28, 6: 5 – 9
Colossians 3: 22 – 24, Proverbs 27: 23 – 27
Proverbs 13: 4, 21: 25, 22: 13, 24: 30 – 34

Verse 12:

Matthew 5: 16, Colossians 4: 5, 1st Peter 2: 12
1st Timothy 3: 7

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1st Timothy 5: 13, Ephesians 4: 28, 6: 5 – 9
Colossians 3: 22 – 24, Proverbs 27: 23 – 27
Proverbs 13: 4, 21: 25, 22: 13, 24: 30 – 34

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