

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Love and Labor

Proposition: *The Church's conduct in the World must be marked by brotherly love and quiet labor—a labor of love.*

I. Introduction

When we run the race of faith with a limp, the world will rightly wonder, “What’s wrong with those people? What’s wrong with their legs?” We need to walk with both legs, keeping in lockstep with Christ. How do we do that? How do we as saints “walk properly before outsiders?” In our text, Paul says that *love* and *labor* are the stabilizing legs on which the Church walks properly before the World. In chapter 1, Paul calls it “your labor of love.”

II. The Love of the Saints

a. Brotherly Love as Taught (v. 9) (cf. Jn. 6:45)

- i. *Under Christ's authority.*
 1. Christ commands brotherly love. (Jn. 15:9, 10, 17)
 2. Christ warns of neglecting brotherly love. (1 Jn. 4:20)
- ii. *According to Christ's example.*
 1. Christ's example is the standard of love. (Jn 13:34)
 2. Christ's example is the proof of love. (Jn. 13:35)

b. Brotherly Love is Labor (v. 10)

- i. *Love must be unending.* (1 Co. 13:8)
 1. Unending love is free.
 2. Unending love is generous.
 3. Unending love is continuous.
- ii. *Love must be extensive.*
 1. Love for those who are near.
 2. Love for those who are far.

III. The Labor of the Saints

a. Quiet Labor as Instructed (v. 11)

- i. *Minding our own affairs.* (cf. 2 Th. 3:11, 12)
 1. Saints *should not* strive after lofty ambitions.

2. Saints *should* strive after a job well done.
- ii. *With our own hands.* (cf. Ep. 4:28)
 1. Saints *should not* shirk so-called “lesser work.”
 2. Saints *should* aim to fulfill their station.
- b. Quiet Labor is Love (v. 12)
 - i. *Idle dependence undermines love.*
 1. It's bad stewardship.
 2. It's parasitic.
 3. It's dangerous.
 4. It's sinful.
 - ii. *Quiet labor enables love.*
 1. It's good stewardship.
 2. It's life-giving.
 3. It's healthy.
 4. It's holy.

IV. Our Response

- a. Love the saints like Christ loves them, because our love testifies of his love before the World.
 - i. Seek opportunities to serve saints in the local and global Church.
 - ii. Give freely, generously, continuously of what God has given you.
- b. Labor like you have something worth laboring for, because our labor testifies of his labor before the World.
 - i. Aspire to humble, honest work, not the accolades of the World.
 - ii. Work diligently, quietly, and consistently within your giftings.