



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

1, 2 Thessalonians Sermon Series
Supports Session 1: Commended
Sermon Title: How is Love Shown?
Passage: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5

Connection to 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

The church in Thessalonica had a great start: from their initial response to the gospel message to their unselfish ministry that was heard around the region. The beginning of this letter set a tone for the rest of Paul's encouragement to the church as he pressed them to look for new opportunities to minister to each other and the world.

Introduction/Opening

In a world which is often cold, deceitful, and even heartless, love is not only needed, but it is often desperately wanted. But how can the church respond? How is love shown?

Love is shown through transformed lives. A person who is changed by the gospel of Christ becomes a new creature, ready to join with other believers in the church to advance the kingdom. And a church united in Christ will be such a force that the gates of hell cannot withstand. But it all starts with truth. And love. Truth and love work together to glorify God through the work of the Great Commission.

Outline

1. Love is shown in our prayers (v. 2).
 - a. Praying for others was a regular practice of Paul's. He prayed for the church at Rome (Rom. 1:9-10); for his people, Israel (Rom. 10:1); the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 13:7,9); and a host of others (Eph. 1:18; Phil. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:3; Philem. 4). Even though this was a routine for Paul, it was a work of joy.
 - b. Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy consistently thanked God for this church. Their petitions for this church were not obligatory, cold, or by any means lifeless. Rather, their prayers were filled with love for these people. Paul expresses their thankfulness as he stated that they always thanked God for the people of this church. His prayers for the people were rooted in a love relationship with them.
 - c. Loving others and praying for them is a privilege and a joy. It is a connection with God that can be made by all believers to intercede for others in need. Whether in a divine appointment with a stranger or a routine interaction with a close friend, prayer can be an activity that comes straight out of love. Believers pray for others out of love.

2. Love is shown in our partnership (vv. 3-4).
 - a. Paul pointed out three different ways that this new church had born fruit already:
 - 1) Their works were produced by faith. Despite living in a culture surrounded by idols, superstition, and myths, these pagans became believers in Christ. They literally stepped out counter to the culture—what a testimony of faith!
 - 2) Their labor was motivated by love. Out of love, they had already begun to help other churches around them, and Paul mentions this in 1 Thessalonians 4:10. Their ministry to others rang out with such volume that it even made its way back to Paul.
 - 3) Their endurance was inspired by hope in Christ. Even when they were oppressed, they never wavered. And because of that stick-to-it-iveness, their love for Jesus and for one another burned hot.
 - b. The believers in Thessalonica were radically countercultural, unselfishly served others, and loved one another through difficult times. A people like that have the potential to do amazing, incredible, fearsome work for the sake of Christ. Today, churches can partner together to send missionaries to unreached people groups all over the world, train pastors and leaders in seminaries, and plant churches in areas in need of a gospel witness. As partners in the gospel. It's what we do. We do the gospel. We partner together out of love.
3. Love is shown in our practice (v. 5).
 - a. Paul pointed out that his love was not just a matter of words. Instead, love was shown as it came “in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with full assurance.” These three expressions supported the fourth expression, the words of the gospel that Paul proclaimed. In other words, Paul's words and actions matched, and the practice of Paul and his party proved his love for them in the power of the gospel.
 - b. The message of the gospel has a direct correlation to the practices of the messenger, or better put, the credibility of the messenger. Love is not just heard but seen. (See 1 Cor. 2:4-5; 1 Cor. 4:20; Acts 20:18-19; and Phil. 4:9.)

Conclusion

God's love and truth intersect in a marvelous and powerful way. Paul's consistent practice of prayer, partnership, and practice gave a standard for the church to live out daily to expand the kingdom in the power of the gospel. We today must also follow this pattern as we selflessly display love for one another and for the world. After all, more than ever, the world needs the hope of Jesus Christ.

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