

“Love Is The Testimony”

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

If there is one word that should define the Christian, and the Christian Church, it's “Love”.

1 John 4:7-8⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Yet many Christians are good at everything except love.

Revelation 2:3-4³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. ⁴ Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

1 Corinthians 13:2² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Today we want to re-affirm the priority of love in our Church. Love IS the testimony!

1. LOVE'S COMMAND – THIS IS WHY WE LOVE (1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-2)

A. Love is commanded by God. “Received from us...Commandments” (Verses 1-2)

- i. *John 13:34-35³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

B. Love pleases God “To please God” (Verse 1)

- i. *1 John 4:19¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.*
- ii. “Someone has said that everyone lives to please someone: himself, his spouse, his parents, his child, his God, or someone else. Paul focused motivation for correct living on love for God. Many people regard the Christian life as a set of rules to be obeyed, or a list of prohibitions to avoid; but Paul regarded it as the outworking of a loving desire to please God who had chosen him – BKC
- iii. *1 Thessalonians 1:4 (NLT)⁴ We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people.*
- iv. “Sanctification will be drudgery unless we believe that holiness is possible and that it is pleasing to God.” - Kevin DeYoung

- v. *Hebrews 11:5*⁵ *By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*
- vi. “So here is what it comes down to: the ultimate choice in life is between pleasing ourselves and pleasing God.” - Greg Laurie

C. Love is made possible by God “Through the Lord Jesus” (Verse 2)

- i. *1 John 2:7–8*⁷ *Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before.*⁸ *Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining.*
- ii. Love has always been the command, but love is only now possible through Christ

2. LOVE’S COUNTERFEIT – FAKE LOVE (1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-8)

A. Fake love says, “My will be done”, but real love says, “Thy will be done” (Verse 3)

B. Fake love feeds the flesh, but real love is self-controlled (Verses 4-5)

- i. *1 Corinthians 10:13*¹³ *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

C. Fake love hurts people, but real love cares for others. (Verse 6)

- i. *Galatians 6:7–8*⁷ *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*⁸ *For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.*

3. LOVE’S CALLING – TRUE LOVE WORKS (1 THESSALONIANS 4:9-12)

A. There is a difference between teaching and learning about love, and practically loving others.

- i. *1 John 3:18*¹⁸ *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

- ii. “That day, she was amazed to discover that when he was saying "As you wish" what he meant was "I love you"”

B. Three practical ways to love: Mind your own business, work hard, treat “outsiders” well.

- i. “To love the whole world For me is no chore; The only real problem's My neighbour next door.”

1 John 3:10–11 ¹⁰ *In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.* ¹¹ *For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,*

Growth Group Questions:

- Paul starts chapter four talking about his desire for the Thessalonians to walk and please God more and more. Why do you think that a loving desire to please God is the best motivation for obedience to God?
- If love is the most important thing, than why do you think that love is missing in so many Churches and among so many Christians?
- Read verses three through five. In our current cultural climate do you think that Christians view some forms of sexual immorality as worse than others ie. homosexuality? Discuss.
- “Fake love” is the type of love that the world offers. What are the differences between the world’s love, and God’s love?
- We have all been guilty of loving people in word only and not in deed. What are some examples of ways we love only with our words and not actions?