

10.8.23 / Witness & Doing Good / I Thessalonians 3.12 & 5.15

I Thes 3:12 – Last week / this week... “everyone else”

Within our Covenant church family, I **think of**...

- Men and women who are sharing faith with co-workers, neighbors, international students
- 3 men who stock the food pantry
- Staff and volunteers at Salvation Army, LUM,
- Campus ministers who share the Gospel with Purdue...
- Several who have served at Bravely Women’s
- Countless men and women who have helped build Habitat...
- 11 women who serve as classroom partners...
- Several couples who have participated in adoption
- 4 families serving in Foster care
- 2 individuals volunteering with CASA
- Several people contributing to bring Isaiah 117 house into a reality

Why? Because (to paraphrase 1 Thes 1:4-7) brothers and sisters, loved by God and chosen by God, you accepted the Gospel message that came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You have become imitators of the faithful and ultimately of the Lord Jesus in spite of suffering in this fallen world, you are living out a life of love... through **witness and doing good**.

This is the theme that we’re going to trace through the letter of 1 Thessalonians this morning:
Witness & doing good – everyone else

Notice how 3:12 says *may your **love** increase and overflow for each other and everyone else...* and **I Thes 5:15** – doing good for each other & everyone else.

Doing good is connected with Love – 1:3 labor of love - sacrificial - (Jer 29:7) – love to increase and overflow for everyone else...

Think about who *the Everyone else* is. During the time of Paul, the Gospel message and Christian love was accepting and bringing together differing groups of people who were not otherwise being brought together into community: Jew/Gentile, rich/poor, men/women, tax collectors, zealots, government officials, religious leaders, shepherds... Paul was instructing the church to pour out this sacrificial love on **not just** each other but on **everyone**. This was wild messy/risky/beautiful and it was leading to a shocking multiplication of this young Christian movement! All of these very **different** people being captivated by the sacrificial **life** and **love** of the person of Jesus.

The “**everyone else**” includes people who are so very different from us and the truth is that sometimes we’re tempted to fear or avoid those who are different.

CASA illus. - I've been learning that we should **not** fear/avoid people because they're different. I should pour love on them because they are men/women/children created in the image of God. A persons' value is not based on their beliefs or behaviors or ethnicity or social status or family of origin or accomplishments. Every persons' value is based on the fact that they were **created in the image of God.**

We are called to pour out God's love **not just** on people who look/think/dress/talk like us but on **everyone else** as well.

It is labor prompted by love 1:3 / It is the message that rang out 1:8.

1 Thes 4:11-12 - Paul is commending the people for the way they love one another. He encourages them to do so more and more... and the more and more involves this: **(1 Thes 4)** "make it your

Confusing?

Have a message to ring out **but** live a quiet life?

Do the good work of sacrificial love for everyone else **but** "mind your own business"?

Context - Ambition - love/honor – that is love of God's honor – Paul's saying "out of love of God's honor..."

Quiet life – meek quiet spirits not clamoring for self honor

Mind your own business and work with your hands - System of patronage – Patrons & clients.

Patrons – rich elite who thought highly of themselves

Clients – people with little means, depending on the rich Patrons for support – in return the clients were "fans" of the patrons to contribute to their high standing.

Work with your hands so that you don't have to dependent to these Patrons and promoting **their** honor but so that you can be free to depend on the Lord's provision of bearing fruit from your labor and proclaiming His honor.

Live a quiet life – One scholar writes: *It is a great ornament to religion when the professors of it are of meek and quiet spirits, diligent to do their own business, and not busy-bodies in other men's matters.*

- Not seeking your honor – seeking God's honor.
- Working – diligent – not lazy/idle – taking care of your responsibilities

As you do this, Paul concludes, you will **win the respect of outsiders.** **When those outside the faith see your life, do they see something intriguing about the love of Jesus or do they see an entirely different message?**

We're encouraged towards

- a life that will win the respect of outsiders
- Labor prompted by love
- Message that rings out

As pastor and author David Platt puts it, we are to...
Share life / Show compassion / Speak the Gospel

Why? Because this is what Jesus would do if... here...
What is true about these things? They are all costly.

1. Share life

Spend time with... be open with –

Franki: Friday dinners – see HS – an indwelt, empowered, spiritual life! When you share your life others - others will see real life. ?

2. Show compassion

Conversation with Sophia – “My life is terrible”

Significant needs in our community... There is a depth of **physical** need mixed with **spiritual** blindness. Those of us with **physical** resources and **spiritual** life have so much to offer. ?

Mention Shalom for the City efforts: covenantpc.org/shalom...

3. Speak the Gospel

1) Truth of Gospel (from scripture) **2)** Impact of Gospel (in your life)

4 big words & a choice

Glory revealed

Rebellion against Holy One

Justice – what happens when God encounters evil

Mercy – what happens when God encounters faith

Choice: Faith in him? Who... (Glory, Rebellion, Justice, Mercy)

Share Life / Show Compassion / Speak the Gospel

Conversations about Christianity

Briton, Maureen, and rest of team: intro and chat in the Landing

Share life / Show compassion / Speak Gospel!

“God invites and empowers us to participate in the life God shares with us, a communion-in-love that naturally flows outward in mission to others.” Having the Mind of Christ