



What Are We Waiting For? – 1 Thessalonians Love Well, Work Hard, Gain Respect

Date: Sunday 2nd October

Speaker: Andrew McNeil (City Centre Site), Rosie McNeil (South Site)

Key Verses: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Talk Summary:

Love as family - The word that Paul uses is 'philadelphia' which means 'love for a brother or sister'. The Church borrowed this term for God's family because we have a heavenly Father in common. Every family has its own 'feel' or culture. Paul wants the culture of God's family to be love.

Love as you've been taught – The Thessalonians did not just feel love for one another—they did love for one another. If we don't love one another, then we are not disciples of Jesus. Paul teaches them some deeper applications of what it looks like to love each other. Good to great.

What Paul has in mind is a personal instruction that each believer has from God by the Holy Spirit who, if we are sensitive to His voice, instructs and empowers us to please God. He may prompt us to do something else to show love. Listen for His voice. Do something nice that He prompts you to do.

Love more and more - Paul says keep going and keep growing. Don't settle for a shallow picture of what it looks like to love one another.

LOVE - Listen, Observe, Value, Encourage

How do we as church family love well? We can't know or love everyone. That's why we have small groups. They are so important. Maybe you can host one or train to start one. 'Philadelphia' is about families. Families have meals together. They share their lives, the highs and the lows.

Words of affirmation - Encouragement - Build up - Prophecy and pray for one another.

Acts of service - We serve each other - Join teams - Make time available and give it to others.

Gifts - Gifts to others in need - Foodbank - Outside Church and inside Church - Financial gifts in time of need - Give space - Host a group - Open up a spare room for someone to live in.

Quality time - Offering to babysit - Choosing to be with a friend - Making the decision to come early and set up, serve - Being present in someone's grief and loss.

Physical touch - Laying on hands and praying a blessing - Visiting in hospital.

Work hard - The people believed that Jesus was just about to return so they didn't think there was any point in working a job. They were relying on those who were working or wealthy believers to pay their bills and provide for them. "They were so heavenly minded they were no earthly good".

Lead a quiet life - Paul wasn't telling the people to be timid in their Christian witness – Loving others means living peaceful lives that are free from hostility and conflict toward others. We are to live quietly, not drawing attention to ourselves and not causing conflicts or problems. Paul's saying be very careful about the kind of activities you engage in – the decisions Christians make about their involvement in the wider world ought to be significantly influenced by 'philadelphia'.

Mind your own business - There is a difference between 'brotherly love' and meddling in people's lives. Sometimes we can get the two confused. Paul says that we show love by paying attention to our own affairs, not by meddling in the affairs of others. We should be there for each other but do not dig or pry. Attend to your own business.

Work with your hands - The Greeks despised any manual work and regarded it as degrading. It was seen as the work of slaves. But the gospel was in direct conflict with this view. Paul was a tentmaker and worked with his hands – Jesus was a carpenter! Work is a gift from God. So we're to be known as reliable people who work really hard not just so you have enough but that you can provide for others in need. Doing nothing is bad in God's eyes. Whatever our circumstances, God tells us that we still have a contribution to make.

So what is Paul not saying? Paul is not talking about those who are unemployed and who cannot get work. Paul is not speaking to those who want to work but can't find a job – he is condemning idleness – when there is work available but people simply don't want to do it. Paul is saying as Christians we have a responsibility to work in order to support ourselves, our families and those who are unable to support themselves.

So in the context of brotherly love – love is expressed in supporting those who are in need BUT it is also expressed in supporting ourselves if we are able so as not to be an unnecessary burden on others.

Gain respect - This Church was an inspiration. They were faithful in persecution. The Macedonian Churches allowed God to grow them, so they had the capacity to respond to God's leading even in their trials. They had a reputation for generosity. God puts grace on people and Churches to live out radical faith. That faith inspires others to action. How is he calling us to grow? Love and generosity is a good place to start. We want to be known as a place of love, where we love God and we love people.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? (*Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it*)

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- What do we think about Paul's teaching on love and work?
- How could we show brotherly love to others inside our church family and outside?
- What could we try to show love? Where is the Holy Spirit prompting us?
- Do we aspire to live quietly; mind our own business; do our own job?
- Which of these 3 areas could we most grow in?
- How can we help others to grow in respect for our faith?

Witness - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
 - Upcoming Events (*go to bvc.so/whats-on for details*)
 - Young Adults Big Banquet – Saturday 8th October
 - Bring and Share Lunch – Sunday 9th October at our City Centre Site