

What A Loving Church Looks Like – 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15 – February 9th, 2020

- I want to talk with you today about the church, specifically, what a church that is truly loving will actually be like, and look like.
- The Apostle Paul turns a corner of sorts after talking about the Lord's return, and gives them what I call staccato exhortations.
- I found seven in our text, you might find more, and the common denominator with all of them is they come from the fruit of love.

1. We respect the leaders (Verses 12-13)

12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

- While I realize this sounds self-serving coming from the pastor, the truth of the matter is, those in authority are to be respected.
- It's important to understand that Paul is not talking about respecting them based on their personalities, rather on their position.
- In other words, the respect is earned not because of who they are, but because of all the hard work they do for and among you.

2. We warn the disrupters (Verse 14a)

14a And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive,

- I have to confess this is probably one of the most difficult aspects of the ministry, such that, we are to deal with problem people.
- I find it interesting he would say we're to warn those who are idle and disruptive, as it describes those with time on their hands.
- In my experience, it's usually those who are not busy about the things of God that end up being busy bodies to those who are.

3. We encourage the disheartened (Verse 14b)

14b encourage the disheartened,

- This would seem like a firm grasp of the obvious, however, sadly, instead of encouraging others, we're judgmental of others.
- By that I mean, when someone is going through a really difficult hardship, we accuse them of having some sin in their lives.
- If this weren't bad enough, we're very quick to point out their lack of faith, and we do so with a spiritual pride and arrogance.

4. We help the weak (Verse 14c)

14c ...help the weak,

- Again, this would seem obvious, but the reality is that instead of helping the weak, we're prone to distance our self from them.
- This because, innate within our sin nature is this perception that someone who is weak and helpless has nothing to offer us.
- Perhaps it goes without saying, but this is the opposite of the nature of Jesus, Who was attracted to the weak and helpless.

5. We are patient with everyone (Verse 14d)

14d ...be patient with everyone.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the greatest demonstrations of loving others it would be patience with others.
- It should be noted that when Paul writes to the Corinthians in chapter 13:4, the first characteristic he lists is that "love is patient."
- Whenever I find it difficult to be lovingly patient, the Lord is ever so faithful to remind me of how much patience He has with me.

6. We don't wrong when wronged (Verse 15a)

15a Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong,

- I'm reminded of a quote from Oswald Chambers who wrote that, "it's not a matter of if I've been wronged, it's have I wronged."
- Here the Apostle Paul is raising the bar, as it were, and saying that we are never to try and get even, when we are wronged.
- It should be noted that in the love chapter Paul goes on to say love isn't easily angered nor does it keep a record of wrongs.

7. We do good for everyone (Verse 15b)

15b ...but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

- What Paul says here can be easily missed, or even worse yet dismissed, at first read concerning how we treat other people.
- Notice he says we're to always strive to do what is good for each other, but we're also to do what is good for everyone else.
- What Paul is saying here is that we're also to always strive to do what is good for those who are not within the body of Christ.