

Love and Live

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[0:00] Okay. Okay. Okay. I'm just giving you fair warning.

! It's going to look like I'm saying this,! And in the middle of the sermon, it's going to look like I turn around and I'm going to say the exact opposite. I'm not. Okay? Just know. You've got to pay attention. It's all going to make sense. But if you fall asleep in the middle and you wake up, you're going to be going, what in the world just happened? Okay? Be with me on this. For those that are visiting, I preach early in the sermon so that later on in our service we have a question and answer time. So if anything that I said during the message was like, what? If anything during the week where you've been doing your Bible study and you've got, hey, could you give me a perspective on this? Or if you just want to see if I can handle the high heat. All right? That's your chance to throw them at me.

[1:02] But that's what we do here. So if you've got your Bible, I encourage you to open it up to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. You'll find there's some notes in the middle of your bulletin.

If you didn't get a bulletin, there's some on the table back there. But we're going to be in 1 Thessalonians, correct? That's why I've got a marker in 1 Peter.

Here we go. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verses 9 through 12. Now, concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you.

For you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another. For that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia.

But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders, and be dependent on no one.

[2:10] All right. Our key idea here today is that we need to love and to live as believers ought to.

We need to love and live as believers ought to. And I'm going to explain that a little bit more fully later on. Our key idea.

And we who have been accepted, we who have accepted Jesus have a new citizenship. A heavenly allegiance. Though we still live in this sin-filled world, it's time to act like it.

I added that because I think it's really important. If you're a Christian, you've changed allegiances. Your home has changed.

Where you belong is not on this sin-filled ball of dirt. But we live here. And so we need to live in a way that reflects where we belong, not where we are.

[3:12] But, having said that, how many of you have ever heard of the Tunnels to Tower? A couple of you? Oh, good. I'm worried about that for a second. How about this one?

Wounded Warrior Project? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. How about this one? The Bunker in Wenatchee? A couple of us? In fact, this guy right here, Dwayne brought us.

He's been here and he's talked to us about it. Their motto is, Vets Helping Vets. And they do. They do. Absolutely right, they do. All three of these are where individuals give of their time, they give of their treasure, money, they give of their skills to help other people.

Okay? Now, especially for the top two, the Wounded Warrior and the Tunnel to Tower, it's oftentimes an anonymous, I give money and it goes to somebody I never meet.

But especially in the vets serving vets, it's a real personal relationship where people who have been in the trenches literally reach out to those who have also been in the trenches and aren't doing well.

[4:22] And one of the things that Dwayne likes to say, it's a hand up, not a hand out. They really do walk with people through some difficult things.

And I bring this up because that's a lot of what we as believers are supposed to do. We're supposed to reach out and help others.

Bear with me. 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 9 and 10, he says this, Now concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.

And for that indeed is what you've been doing to the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge your brothers to do this more and more. Loving as a brother. Now, he starts off by saying, there's no need for me to mention to you brotherly love because you have already been taught by God to love one another.

And if you go into the Greek, which I have really good study devices that help me understand that because I'm not that smart. But if you go into it, the brotherly love is Philadelphia-ish, phileo, and the love is agape.

[5:42] And what we know about brotherly love is it's an affectionate love. It's friendship. It's reaching out to people like you. Whereas agape love, that's the self-sacrificial love that put Christ on the cross.

That's the self-sacrificial love that we are to aspire to. In fact, we're going to see these two linked in 2 Peter 1.

We'll be back to 1 Thessalonians, but take a look in 2 Peter. 2 Peter 1, verses 5-8, we read this. Well, Peter is writing, encouraging the churches, and he says, for this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, steadfastness with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[7:15] Peter is helping give guidelines showing the church how they should grow, and it starts with faith. It's kind of a good place to start, right?

Do you believe that God is and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him? If not, start over. If you don't have faith, you really don't have anything.

But once we have faith, then it's time to begin building on that faith. And he says, add to it virtue, add to knowledge, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, and brotherly affection, and then love.

And that brotherly affection, it seems to be a step less than agape love.

Brotherly affection is, it's not the same self-sacrificial love. Brotherly affection is between friends, and it's a back and forth.

[8:23] But when we step into agape love, we go beyond that. Agape love is a self-sacrificing love where, because I love you, I'm doing this.

And it doesn't matter what comes this way, I'm loving you. Brotherly affection has more of this, the phileo has more of this in it. Agape is more this way.

And so that's why back in 1 Thessalonians, he says, there's no need for me to write to you about phileo, brotherly love, because you've been taught by God to agape.

If we're agape, if we are loving people with that self-sacrificing love, brotherly affection is taken care of. We've got past that. We're beyond that.

We're into something more. Okay? So that's why he says here in verse 9, there's no need for me to write to you. But, what does it truly mean to sacrificially love somebody?

[9:38] I'm glad that I asked that question because I've got an answer prepared. So take a look in the Gospel of John chapter 15. Gospel of John 15.

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, this is fun. Uh-huh. We're going to pick it up in verse 12. Jesus is speaking and he says this, this is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.

Anybody want to guess whether that's the phileo love or the agape love? No! It's the agape love. Alright, so that's where we're going.

Alright. It's a good, you had a 50-50 shot. And this is what it says. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friend if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what the master is doing. But I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

[10:51] You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide. You get that?

Lay down your life. You know, hey, that's a bit tough. Let's get off the throttle a little bit, okay? That's a bit of a big ask, okay? How about 1 John? Let's turn to 1 John 3. Laying down your life for someone, that is a big ask.

But let's take a look at 1 John 3. Pick it up in verse 14. Well, we'll pick it up in verse 11 just to get a good run up to it, right?

For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murder his brother.

[11:53] And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. So, love one another. Don't be bad. Verse 13. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

And here we go, verse 14. We know that we have passed out of death into life. Oh, time out, time out, time out. You know what that's talking about, right?

For you were dead in your trespasses and sins before salvation. That doesn't mean physical death. That means that you were spiritually dead.

You had no life in you. But you've passed from spiritual death into life through salvation. That's why it says you become a new creature, right?

Be born again. So that's what it's talking about. Verse 14. We know that we have passed out of death into life because we agape the brothers.

[12:59] Because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Just for kicks and giggles, I want you to understand what that means. That means if you're not loving the brothers, you're as good as murdering them. Let me say that one more time because that was...

If you're not loving, you're just as good as murdering. Love the brothers. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

By this we know love that he laid down his life for us. There's that concept again of being willing to sacrifice yourself for someone else.

And we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

[14:16] Little children, let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and truth. He kind of ends that with a bit of emphasis. Jesus. In writing to the Thessalonians, the apostle says, look, I don't need to talk to you about brotherly love.

You've got that in the bag because you've been taught by God to sacrificially love. And as we go through the scriptures, we begin to see what that means.

It means being willing to give yourself. I really like what it says down here about what it says, but if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need yet closes his heart to him, how does God's love abide in him?

That's what it's talking about. That's what it's saying. That's not what I wrote. That's what God had written down. That's not my call to you. That's God's call for all of us is to live sacrificial love today. Agape. You're not going to see this in your notes. You might find a little section in there for you to write some stuff down. It's an active love. It sees needs and then it acts to fill those needs.

[15:45] That's what agape is. And if you're going to do what it's calling for you to do here, if you're going to sacrificially live, you can only do that with your mind, your eyes, your hope, your dreams, your goals,

set in glory.

we're born. We're born. Mom and dad theoretically take care of us until they kick us out of the house, right? And then we spend the next couple of years working and earning and amassing so that when we get to be like almost as old as Bill, we can retire.

And, right, and then we've got everything set up so that we're comfortable. that's the way most people live their life. If you look around, how many ads do you hear for financial coverage and prepare for the future and we'll plan your future, you know, bring us your money, we'll invest it and when you turn old, you can live in retirement and glory.

That's the hope of the non-believing world. That in their golden years, they'll be comfortable. They won't have to work.

That they'll be able to spend all the day fishing or golfing or, I don't know, doing something weird like reading a book. But that's their goal.

[17:09] That's their whole focus. And so, and so they pinch those pennies and they, you know, they stuff it in the bank and they hope it grows into this huge nest egg. Ah! And to our shame, too many have that same hope and dream within the church because we're failing to keep our eyes on glory.

We're failing to invest where moth and rust do not destroy. And we're terribly worried about taking care and making certain that we're comfortable on this sin-encrusted mud ball.

that's to our shame. This is the opposite attitude.

This is, if I have it and you need it, it's yours. Call me up, borrow my tools. Call me up, ask me to come over. If you're stuck in a ditch and it's 2 a.m.

and you're afraid to call me, you're wrong. Now, when I get there at 2 a.m. and I tug your sorry butt out of the ditch, I'm going to demand some coffee. And you're going to want to have coffee because I'm going to be grumpy.

[18:35] But I would rather be there to tow you out than for you not to call me. And if your life blows up and you don't call me because you're afraid of condemnation, you're wrong.

because I'm here, because I'm your brother, and I love you. Let us put our hands, put our feet, let us put actions to our love.

Take a look in Acts chapter 2. It's one thing for me to say this. It's another thing for you to see it in black and white.

In Acts chapter 2, the church is getting started. Things are happening. It's bubbling up. Look at verse 42 through 47. They have devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

[20:05] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all people.

And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Turn over to chapter 4, verse 32. In Acts chapter 4, we're going to see a similar thing.

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul. And no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.

And with great power, the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as they had need.

Have you ever gone up to your brother in the Lord and said, call on me at any time? I will sell my house and give you all of the money if you need it.

[21:23] Have you ever done that? I have. There are brothers in my life that if they called on me today, I would sell everything.

Because my home is not here. this is my temporary dwelling unit. I am biding my time until I go to glory.

By the way, that's not true for everybody, so don't come ask me for my house, okay? There's a couple of prerequisites that go along with that.

But there are three men in this world that I've made that statement to, and if they were to ever call upon me, I would gladly do it.

Because they are my brothers in the faith, and I'd give to them. Is what I have what you have?

[22:30] Is my perspective on glory? These are questions that we need to ask. what?

Oh, that looks... That's not what we're talking about here, okay? That's not a Christ-like attitude there. But I do, I wanted to put a caution sign, but I saw that and I just thought I had to include that. the blinker is on. We're about to do what seems to be a 180, but actually, we're going 100 miles an hour straight ahead.

It's going to sound like a turn, but we're on the straight and narrow. Just be warned. Because what I've been saying is, let us love in truth.

Let us sacrificially be willing to love to the point to where if I have it and you need it, it's yours. To where if you are in that position, I lay down my life for you.

[23:38] Sacrificial love is what we have been called to do. But what does it look like? 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verses 11 and 12.

And aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, to work with your hands as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before the outsiders and be dependent upon no one.

Number one, if we are going to live as a believer, we need to live quietly. Now, what does that mean? Remember, if you are a believer, you are someone who doesn't belong here.

Your allegiance, your belonging, your home is glory. But what are we supposed to do down here?

It's a very similar situation that happened to the nation of Israel.

The nation of Israel had been defeated and the Babylonians had taken them and planted them and they were worried about getting home. Take a look in Jeremiah.

[24:48] Jeremiah. I think I can find Jeremiah. Can you find Jeremiah? Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. I'm mislaminated.

Jeremiah chapter 29. So the children of Israel have been taken captive. They're living in a foreign land and they're trying to figure out what should they do there.

And this is what God sent to them. It says, these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

This was after King and Queen Mother and the eunuchs and the officials of Judah in Jerusalem, the craftsmen and the metal workers had all departed from Jerusalem.

them. So the exile's done. They're there. The letter was sent by the hand of Elash, I don't know, the son of the guy and whatever.

[25:56] You can pick up those names on your own time. Verse 4. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles who I am sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters.

Take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there and do not decrease, but seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

That's what we are called to do. When it says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 to live quietly, it says build a house, plant a garden, raise your kids, have your kids raise kids, live within the society and live well.

Pray for the society because as that society prospers, so will you. As it is good in the society, so it is good for us. As a believer, we are called to participate in the world in which we have been stranded.

[27:28] Before we get to glory, we are to live here and to live well.

You're not to be so heavenly minded that you don't take care of business here. Take care of stuff here.

By living quietly, that means that the police aren't at your place every Friday night or Tuesday morning. That the bill collectors aren't waiting around to find you.

You're living quietly. Probably means you're an upstanding good citizen who pays his taxes, who participates in the community, definitely who prays for the community, who wants the community to do good.

Living quietly doesn't mean we whisper and we're really quiet and nobody sees us. But it also means that we're not so blatantly loud and obnoxious that our neighbors are calling the cops. Live well. Not only are we supposed to live well, mind your own, I didn't write this.

[28:45] You can read it right here in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. But I want you to turn to 2 Timothy. Because this is important. 2 Timothy chapter 2 verses 4 through 7.

No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

It is the hard working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. When Paul tells the Thessalonians to mind their own affairs, he's not saying don't pay attention to what's going on around you.

He's not saying when you're driving down the road and you see somebody in the ditch, you just keep on, I'm just taking care of Todd, drive on by. That's not what he's saying. What he's saying, mind your own affairs.

Pay attention here first. How many of you have ever heard the safety briefing on an airline flight? In a case of an emergency, the oxygen mask will deploy.

[30:12] You take it and you put it over your mouth and you snap yourself in the back of the head with the rubber band. Mothers, if you have a child, take care of yourself first.

Because while you're taking care of putting that on the child, you could pass out and die. And the child will not be able to strap it on your head. But if you have taken care of yourself, then you can take care of the child.

Mind your own affairs. As a Christian, living on a sin-filled world, take care of how you live before you go out and try and tell other people how to live.

This does not mean not to be involved in our community. But it means if you're not taking care of this, what good are you going to do over there? Mind your own affairs.

Get a job. You can put whatever colorful metaphor or whatever you want in it. Get a job. I understand that some of us are 90 years old and we're retired.

[31:40] fine. You had a job. This is a proud daddy moment. During COVID, my children worked.

One of them even got canned from a job, went out and found work. I can't tell you how proud of them I was. Todd, it said that those people that had sold and gave to the people in need.

Yes, it did. Now we need to talk about the definition of what need is. Need is not, I went out and was stupid with all my money and now I'm hungry, therefore I have need of food.

No, no, no, no. You need to be hungry. It'll teach you not to blow all your cash. Get a job. Be productive. Take care of yourself so that you will have the money to help others.

Because quite honestly, life happens and sometimes you get run over when you did nothing wrong and you're going to need a handout. And those of us that are over 50 are going, yep, been there, done that.

[32:50] You know how it goes. There are times you can do everything all right and you can be working, you got your head, nose to the grindstone, you're taking care of yourself, you're living quietly, and boom, asteroid falls out of nowhere.

That's when we help people out. Not when we see some bum sitting on the stride of the road saying, one dollar for good karma points. Saw that. Boy, I was tempted to preach the gospel at him while I ran him over.

How arrogant is it for people out there to be shoving Bible verses at you? When they're not even living for Christ. The vengeful preacher nearly came forth.

But I quietly drove on because I've needed to mind my own fears. Get a job. Why? Why should we live quietly?

Why should we seek to do right as citizens in this country? Why should we take care of our own personal responsibilities, making certain that we're square?

[33:54] Why is it that we need to be out there and be productive people, not sucking away others' resources? resources? He says that we may live or walk properly depending upon no one.

Why? Because we're ambassadors for Christ, people. When I put my eyes on glory, I realize that God has given me a responsibility down here.

And that responsibility is to remember that apart from God, I was hell bound. And everyone that I see that is not walking in faith are hell bound.

And God has given me that responsibility to reach the lost. And just as much as he's given it to me, he's given it to us. So yeah, I know.

I said if it's mine, it's yours. And that's true. I'm also saying get a job. Take care of yourself. Live the way you're supposed to. Because this is how we live to honor Christ.

[35:10] Let us love with our eyes on eternity. That means willing to give everything. But also let us live every day keeping our mind on our purpose.

And that is to reach the lost with the gospel. Let's pray. Father,