

Wednesday in the Word

Digging Deeper

May 19, 2021

1Thessalonians 4:9-12

Love, Business and Honesty

From the first two verses of our text tonight we are told that we are loving one another as we ought yet we should increase in love as well. Seems we can't can't get love truly correct. More is all we need. Romans 13:8. Increase is how Paul put it. The word is perisseuō which is to superabound! Holy Cow! Superabound in love?! Is he asking too much? Maybe, but it can probably be said that all of us could ramp it up a bit. Do you love enough? Can you love more? Jesus gives us the ability. 1 John 4:15-21.

In verse 11 we almost sense a tone of warning. All this brotherly love we're supposed to be increasing in can put us in a position to invade someone's privacy. All this caring and loving can make us think we might have more to say to our brother or sister than we have permission to do. We may feel we ought to give advice or assistance that we haven't been invited to give. 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12, 1 Timothy 5:13. This word 'quiet' can be translated as to refrain from meddling speech. We are to mind our own business and work at our own projects. So we see that the love we show must be in response to a need or request. Acts 20:35, Proverbs 19:17, Galatians 6:2, Deuteronomy 15:11, Proverbs 22:9, Matthew 5:42. Helping those who want no help can be counterproductive. Love and generosity must be balanced by restraint and discernment. We ought to have our own things to do but be ready to drop them to come along side a struggling friend. John 13:35, Romans 12:10.

Verse 12 introduces the tricky part. Phileo, brotherly love must in some way be shared with the unsaved world around us. Paul uses the Greek, exo for this word 'without'. It literally means "out of doors". When meeting as a congregation it was not customary to include the unsaved. Evangelism took place outside of the church body and doors were kept shut to protect the serious discussion taking place in church and to protect from persecution. As we encounter scoffers, skeptics and disinterested people in our daily life it is understandable to resist mixing with them, but know this. They are watching and your reputation precedes you. Proverbs 22:1, Colossians 4:6. Paul says to walk honestly among them. Two Greek words describe this. One is peripateō, which is to tread all around, that is walk at large. The other is euschēmonōs which is decorously: - decently honestly. Decorous means to be characterized by dignified propriety in conduct, manners and appearance. That's quite a heavy requirement! When people outside the church meet us or hear about us this is how we must be. This kind of character will cause others to trust and respect us. We can't be phony. People are sharper than that. We must be real. Perhaps we need to take a deep look at who we are. We represent Christ! 2 Corinthians 5:20, 1 Peter 2:9. If we carry ourselves with such dignity to those "without" they may take a serious look at our Savior. That's why we're here you know....