

Wednesday in the Word

Digging Deeper

April 28, 2021

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

Tough Love

Let's begin at the end. A few weeks ago it was mentioned that Paul closed each chapter in this book with the encouragement of the second coming of Christ. V13. As this dark world grows even more evil let us never lose sight of the reason for our hope. This blessed Savior of ours has promised to come in glory to snatch us away one day. 4:16-18. Whether we die in Him first or are alive for this awesome event, either way we go. The Greek word for "caught up" in verse 17 is *harpazo* which is to seize or catch away. The Latin uses the word *rapturo*. Back to 3:13. These holy, unblamable hearts of ours are not the result of any personal effort or the climbing of a spiritual ladder. We must continually improve our walk in Christ every day but dare we never think we'll be ready to meet Jesus due to our own effort. He alone will "stablish" us. He alone makes us holy and blameless. Philippians 3:9. His blessing upon us rests in an attitude He creates in us. Philippians 1:21.

Looking now to verses 11 and 12 Paul has shared his request of God with his hearers that the Lord would provide some possibility of joining them. His further appeal to the Father is his heart's desire for the Thessalonians to abound in love. For each other and, notice this, for all men. The word "men" in italics indicates to us that it was added for clarification. We must abound in love for All. Our love for others must have no discrimination or limit. All need salvation. All need Christ. We must use caution and discernment in dealing with others but as much as God instructs us we must share and care so others can enjoy the powerful fellowship of peace found only in accepting the work of Christ Jesus. Acts 2:38, Roman's 10:9. This Sunday Pastor explored the various Greek words translated as love. We understand this letter from Paul speaks of *agape* love, a benevolent love. Selfless, other centered love. Admit it. This is tough. This is hard. We agree we cannot hate. We're told today to tolerate. But love? How? Let's start here. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Great wedding promise right? Wrong! Husbands and wives should have this nailed from day one! This is not about marriage. Charity here in the KJV is *agape* again and it speaks to the church. Review the chapter preceding it to confirm this. *Agape* love begins in the fellowship of brethren we belong to. Do we love each other in this church with a selfless, giving, sacrificial love? Everyone in this church? Or just the group you like best and hang out with? Admit it. We're doing ok but not as well as we ought. How then can we love the unsaved? Start here. Galatians 5:22-23. Exercise these fruit in the world. This should help. Romans 13:8-10. Need more? Colossians 3:12-14. Oh yeah, this as well. Luke 6:31. Loving evil, worldly or cold hearted people can be particularly unrewarding. Caring for those who could care less for you can be frustrating. Loving those who hate you can seem downright stupid. But it's not. Matthew 5:7-16. This love is why we're here. This love saves people's souls. This love is humanly impossible. Ready? Matthew 19:26, Luke 18:27, Jeremiah 32:17, Luke 1:37, Mark 10:27, Philippians 4:13. We can and must love the unlovable. You might think Jesus could do it because He's God. He could succeed. He loved universally. He loved fully. He loved perfectly. They killed Him. What is the true purpose of life? John 15:18-19. Matthew 16:24-25. Every Apostle was killed for sharing the gospel. Please use your head but

count the cost. Luke 14:27-33. We dearly want the easy, happy Christian life but Jesus never referred to that. No scripture to illustrate. Joy in Christ till That Day. Luke 6:22-23.