

Love Abounding
1 Thessalonians 4.9-13

This week's text is brief, but it contains big truths, even though at first it appears to deal with two completely different topics. Patiently look through the text so you can discern how it all connects. This may also be a good time to go back and read through the entire epistle again. Then tackle the questions you have time for.

Pastor Eric

Understanding God-Taught Love

The sermon contrasts *philadelphia* (natural affection) and *agape* (self-denying love). Where do you most clearly see the difference between those two kinds of love in real life?

In 1 John 4:8, we're told that "God is love." How does grounding love in God's character change the way we define and practice it? Why is it important to see that love is both **an action** and **a choice** in a culture that often defines love as a feeling?

The phrase "taught by God" suggests love is something formed in us by him. How have you experienced God shaping your capacity to love in ways that don't come naturally?

Love Inside the Church

The Thessalonians' love overflowed beyond their community. What does it look like for love within a church to "overflow" rather than remain internal? What practical habits help love "abound more and more" instead of plateauing?

Do you agree that "*Agape* results in *philadelphia*?" How does self-giving love strengthen natural affection and unity within a church?

Everyday Faithfulness

Some believers in Thessalonica misunderstood Jesus' return and became idle. Why do you think spiritual excitement can sometimes lead to irresponsibility? How does 2 Thessalonians 3:6-11 challenge the idea that spiritual devotion excuses ordinary responsibilities?

How might "make it your ambition to lead a quiet life" look like in today's achievement-driven culture?

How is "minding your own business" an act of love? In what ways can being a "busybody" damage a church?

Work as an Act of Love

If working faithfully is an expression of love, both for the church and for outsiders, how does that reshape your understanding of your job, retirement, studies, or daily responsibilities?

Considering Matthew 5:16, what kind of reputation is your life currently building among those who don't share our faith?