



BROTHERLY LOVE

SCRIPTURAL LESSON: *I Thessalonians 4:1-12*

GOSPEL TRUTH:

One word suffices to express Jesus' expectations for the behavior of the Church in all ages: Love. The emphasis rests on two commandments: Love God and thy neighbor. Paul reemphasizes that the path to God's righteousness can only be navigated with a heart of love (*Matthew 22:34-40; II Corinthians 3:4-5; Galatians 5:14*).

GOLDEN SCRIPTURE:

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me (Matthew 25:40).

THE APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH DOCTRINES:

1. A true expression of love is to live a changed life that compels obedience to the known will of God (*Joshua 24:15; Matthew 6:19-21; Ephesians 6:1-2*).
2. The Bride of Christ is the faithful remnant who "stand in the holy place" despite perilous times. As brethren, we are unified and bonded to each other through the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 24:15; Romans 9:25-27; I Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 3:12-14; I John 2:15-17*).
3. We were born into sin and were strangers to the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Being born-again, brotherly love becomes essential. Brotherly love is to love and respect every creature born into this world (*Genesis 1:26-31; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-29; Hebrews 13:2; I John 4:7-21*).
4. A "holier than thou" spirit impedes the fruit of the Spirit (spiritual growth). It is ungodly and offensive. However, the Holy Spirit strengthens and helps us to overcome. Settled and rooted in God's love, we are admonished through *His Word* that every individual is a soul that is in need of salvation

(Isaiah 65:5; Psalm 78:37-41; Luke 6:31-38, 19:1-10; John 15:12).

BACKGROUND SETTING:

The Apostle Paul's first documented encounter with the people of Thessalonica is found in the book of *Acts*, chapter 17. During his time there, Paul did not shy away from finding occasion to spread the gospel of Jesus. Sternly dedicated to his divine calling, Paul attended religious services at the local synagogue (Jewish house of worship) where he unyieldingly revealed to those in attendance the power, sanctity, and the designed purpose of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. After hearing Paul's reasoning in correlation to the scriptures, many were converted and believed in the salvation that Jesus provides. Continuing his evangelism for Jesus Christ to other regions as led by the Holy Ghost, Paul's love and concern for the newly converted believers in Thessalonica never faded.

In an effort to encourage his fellow brethren in Christ to keep the faith, Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians, an epistle we know as the book of *I Thessalonians*. Paul celebrated the congregation's labor of love and unwavering faith even when they were faced with adversity (*I Thessalonians 1:1-10, 2:13-14*). Paul offered spiritual advice to exhort the readers to live according to God's will, including the doctrine of brotherly love.

LESSON SUMMARY:

Although our inherent sinful nature conflicts with God's supernatural love, brotherly love encourages and inspires believers to adopt and embrace His teachings. Enacting brotherly love is evidence that the Word of God is alive in us which inspires a greater presence. Brotherly love is not jealous, boastful, arrogant, rude, envious, resentful, or rejoicing in the wrong. Brotherly love rejoices in truth, supports, encourages, believes, hopes, and endures all things (*I Corinthians 13:4-7*). Empowered by His Holy Spirit, we abandon our sinful ways and transition to let God have His way. Let brotherly love continue in us all (*Hebrews 13:1*).

Associate Pastor Seth Asano, Sr.