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I Thess 1:1-8

Here Paul gives us a contrasting picture of one church - the church of Thessalonica - one of the most dynamic churches in the N.T. era

But notice the Two descriptions

I In vs 3) Paul's emphasis is on their fruit of faith - love and hope. Here's the H.C. where you feel loved, where you see faith exhibited, where you want to spend time because it is a warm loving community of real believers. That's what Christ's Body - the Church should be like - & Paul commends them for it. Especially the love - an example to all the churches. Love is the mark of the truly Christ-centered church

II But at the same time look at (vs. 8) - This is not describing a cozy love nest - this sounds like the hub of agitation for spiritual ^{world} revolution; "The Word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia (their home state) but also in Achaia (their own country) but also in every place (the surrounding countries everywhere)"

These people were apparently the source of a spiritual explosion which was threatening to undermine the foundation of Satan's world system in that entire region - not only Macedonia, & Achaia - but in every place - everyone knows about this church.

the word spiritual is an adjective
the word spirit is a noun
the word spiritualism is a noun
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② This local Body is not lulling people to sleep - far from that! The evidence here is that thousands of lives have been 'set-afire' with the Love of Jesus Christ - hearing the 'Word & labor of love' which has spread out from this H.C.

This brings up the question: Which way is it? Is this Thess. church a loving close-knit group, or are they a group of militant radicals? Which way is it?

What we need to see is that there is no difference between these two pictures Paul paints. This is the point Paul is trying to make:

→ The fact that they were actively fomenting revolution in the world outside of their own loving community was the evidence that they were a loving church - that is the proof of their love (i.e.) "The Word had gone forth". This is a vital truth for us to grasp here at this H.C. retreat.

(i.e.) We are dealing here with the very definition of what Love and Christian maturity is all about. Is maturity in my spiritual life something that I cultivate - by inward focus & concentration or is it something that is produced, (like Wesley claims) by focusing outward towards the lost world - an externalized version of holiness & growth ^{spiritual}. John Wesley said "Any concept of holiness that doesn't issue in ACTIVE HUMBLE SERVICE and outreach is from the devil" - maybe that's why Wesley literally changed the course of English history.

step
giving

love
labor of love
H.C.
leaving

Which:
leaving

II

way a way

militant radicals?

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two circles

difference

actively forming
outside

love
Word
vital truth
H.C. retreat

revolution
leaving
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the
Love and Christian

1.6.1
definitions
motivation

8

new and focus

lost words
Wesley

outward

ACTIVE HUMBLE SERVICE

English history

③ ~~What~~ Wesley is saying is that we cannot achieve holiness - Christian maturity - by isolating ourselves from the world. The Biblical definition of holiness stipulates that holiness should issue in "faith working through love" (i.e.) interaction with other people.

Let me spell this out for us here tonight:
According to Gods in His Word - for us here to form our own little community which meets our own needs, but which does little or nothing for the lost people all around us in the world - it would be a sin.

According to Christ Himself the greatest commandment is to "love God - + then love our neighbor" - so to love God & not reaching our neighbor would be to break the greatest commandment - it would be a great sin.

Sure - we need to meet ~~the~~ ^{our own} needs in our own H.C. - we need to counsel - we need to care we need to use our gifts + minister to one another.

But all of this is moving towards an end of spreading the message of Jesus Christ + the life-changing revolution which He offers. This is what Christianity is all about. If the Body of Christ is not moved to reach out with the message of Christ - the reconciling of man to God - then the Bible denies that we are expressing real love. We would be very far from this N.T. Church here in Thessalonica.

not
Biblical
Romans: "character is maturity"
word

definition

for
"fair" other people
i.e.

God
own
word
last people
like
wording
div

greatest
"love God"
Common & meant
"neighbor"
God - out
break

care
minister
gifts
moving
counsel
was
life-changing
revolution

Bible
love
N.T.
C
C
M
M
class