Love in Action

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. I approach the throne of glory, nothing in my hands I bring, but the promise of acceptance from a good and gracious King.

I will give to you my burden, as you give to me your strength. Come and fill me with your Spirit, as I sing to you this praise.
You deserve the greater glory, and so will come as my voice.
To the King in need of nothing, empty-handed I rejoice.
You deserve the greater glory, and so will come with joy I sing.
[2:05] By your love I am accepted, as your good and gracious King.

You deserve the greater glory, and so will come with my spirit. And so will you feel the greater glory, and so will come with me.
You deserve the greater glory, and so will come with me. You deserve the greater glory, and so will come with me. You deserve the greater glory, and so will come with me. You deserve the greater glory, and so will come with me.
I pour out my praise again You deserve the greater glory It's overcome and it's my voice To the King you need a love for me All right, if we can prepare to return to our seats.
I do love to hear and see just conversation and fellowship among God's people. It is one of my favorite parts of Sunday evenings is to be able to have a little bit slower pace, be able to talk to people and find out how they're doing in their lives and all those great, great things.
[3:43] Joy, appreciate you sharing with what's going on Wednesday nights. I've had a chance to be in there a couple of times, a few weeks ago for the whole service, and I'm just so thankful for what our students learn.

They have plenty of fun on Wednesday nights, and they have lots of fun in general in their youth ministry, but they are fed so well and taught and trained so thoroughly.
When I was in there, it was in Genesis 8, and it was just a great encouragement to my own soul and faith and thankful for all the many students who get a chance to learn and be grounded in God's Word every Wednesday night.
Open with me to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. This is one of the reasons I love to preach through books of the Bible because you get to see the flow of thought, and it's so interesting to me in this text tonight what the Holy Spirit is doing as he is leading Paul in writing this letter to this church.
Remember, Paul has been talking about sanctification. We talked about this last Sunday. 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 3. This is the will of God, your sanctification.
[5:06] If you're wondering what is God's will for my life, that is what it is. It's your sanctification. His will is that you would become like Christ.

And so, as we looked at last week, your job, your vocation, your hobbies, your spiritual gifts, your experiences, all of those things matter.
But none of them are the absolute factor to whether or not you can follow God's will because God's will for your life is that you be sanctified.
And you can be sanctified with or without a paycheck, with or without a title, with or without a life of great influence. His will for your life is your sanctification.
And then he's going to apply it specifically in verse 3, as we looked at last Sunday night, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.

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[6:14] So he's talking about these major theological themes like sanctification, and immediately talking about the outworking of that in how you live with other people, how you control your own temptation to live moral lives, not immoral lives.

And the text talks to us in verse 9, as we look at tonight, now concerning brotherly love. So he's talking about sanctification, and then applying it to the very basic foundational parts of our life, sexual morality, and how you love and treat people.
In other words, your knowledge of sanctification should lead to the practical living out of godliness in the normal parts of your life.
In other words, our theology should lead us to obedience, or to say another way, our orthodoxy should lead to orthopraxy. Thinking right, believing right, knowing right, should translate to living right.
This is very important for our church because our church does a lot of things to train in doctrine. Just this afternoon, 80 men were in the gym taking their final exam for hermeneutics.
[7:51] Not a lot of churches having formal classes on hermeneutics. And these men have been studying for close to three months on it, reading books, watching videos, having in-person lectures.

And tonight, in addition to memorizing scripture, taking a final exam worth 205 points. It's a lot of work because we're trying to train them.
We want them to be godly men, godly husbands, godly fathers, godly leaders in their families, godly leaders in the church, godly leaders for the rest of their life.
The doctrine that we're trying to teach them, though, must be lived out. When our ladies meet in here, it's been a couple of weeks ago, and 450 ladies are in here for ladies not in theology, we spend two hours just learning theology.
But, the purpose of that is not just so they know theological terms, it's to leave this place, and the challenge is to go live it out.
[8:58] And that's exactly what he's saying in our text, that God's will for your life is your sanctification, but it must be lived out in the normal, routine parts of your life.

Next week, Lord willing, in verse 13 and following, we're going to look at issues related to the second coming, what does the Bible say about the return of Christ, what does the Bible say about a rapture, what does the Bible say about what the dead in Christ, what it means that they will rise first, these things related to what we would call eschatology, the study of the last days.
But, as you study, if you're going to study eschatology, you've got to study 1 Thessalonians 4. But, in our study of eschatology, right before that, he's going to say in our text tonight, verse 9, don't forget to love each other.
So, you've got these theological terms like sanctification and eschatology, but right in between that is the reminder to be faithful with your sexual morality, to be faithful with the way you love and treat people.
So, yes, we want to study doctrine and know the things of the Lord, but they are things that must be lived out. So, again, Lord willing, next Sunday night, that's the text we're going to be in with the archangel, the trumpet of God, the dead in Christ will rise first, we're caught up together in the clouds, all these kind of interesting, nuanced, pretty intricate components of eschatology.
[10:40] But, while we're waiting for the Lord and while we're thinking of His return and while we're trying to better understand things related to the last days, don't forget to be faithful in the normal, routine parts of life.

And for many Christians, they tend to err on one side or the other. They either love eschatology and love doctrine but don't treat people very well or they say, I don't really need to learn all that stuff, I'm just trying to make it through my life day to day.
And that's a false dichotomy. It is our theology that teaches us and gives us the foundation and gives us the ability to live in our normal life in a way that honors Him.
So it's a very important part to understand here in chapter 4 that we're not taking high doctrine and then leaving it behind to come talk about application.
But you really can't talk about application if it's not built upon the doctrine of Scripture. And so sometimes you'll hear people say things like, you know, I just, I want preaching that's just, I just want practical teaching, I just want practical things.
[12:02] Well, you can't have biblical practicality if it's not rooted in biblical theology. But if all we do is study theology and we don't live it, then we've completely missed what God's Word has called

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us to do.

Are you with me so far on that? So chapter 4 is telling us, yes, let's think about sanctification next week. Yes, let's think about eschatology. But make sure that while you're studying these things and you're waiting for the Lord and you're thinking about His return, make sure that you also are being faithful in the most normal, routine, mundane, common aspects of your life.
So let's look here at verses 9 to 12. Now concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.
For that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more and to aspire to live quietly and to mind your own affairs and to work with your hands as we instructed you so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.
Three things I want you to go away with tonight. Number one, let's look at the foundation of love from verse 9. What's the foundation of our love? Now concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.
[13:40] We as God's people are to be people of love. John 13, 35, by this all people will know you're my disciples if you have love for one another. He says you've been taught by God.

literally saying here you have been God taught. 1 John 3, 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers.
Whoever does not love abides in death. We've been taught to love. The Holy Spirit indwells us as believers and that is the evidence that we are His, that we love each other.
Romans 5, 5 Hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Galatians 5 The fruit of the Spirit is love. Joy and peace and patience and kindness and on. So the foundation of our love is that we have been saved. We've been changed. The Holy Spirit indwells us and when the Holy Spirit indwells someone the fruit of the Spirit comes out and the fruit of the Spirit is love.
[14:56] So when somebody says I love God I just don't love people what they're saying is I don't possess the fruit of the Spirit. And that's alarming because believers should bear the fruit of the Spirit.

When somebody says I love to study the Bible and I love to study theology I just don't really have a use for the local church. That's concerning because what they're saying is I love to learn I just don't want to put my knowledge into practice with people.
But the Bible is crystal clear here in this chapter that all that we learn must be lived. Our doctrine must be expressed and the foundation of our love is what God has taught us.
Concerning brotherly love the word there's phileo you have no need for anyone to write to you for yourselves have been taught by God to love one another. That's agape.
Speaks of a love that is deep genuine and from the will. In English it's the same word love in the original text it's two different words for love.
[16:17] Concerning this love we have for each other we don't need to be taught again because God has already taught us to agapeo to have a love for each other from the will.

This is the foundation of our love for each other is the love that God has first loved us. We love because He's first loved us. The second thing I want you to see is the action of love.
Love should be put in action verse 10 for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia.
Now notice what He says I want you to have brotherly love you've been taught by God to love that's verse 9 verse 10 love is what you are doing that's important our love here is a verb it's an action word you're doing this it's not just simply something you are feeling and it's a feeling that's put upon you this is an action you are doing in verse 10 it's very clear that love is not absent of emotion but it's not dependent upon feelings don't miss that biblical love is a decision of the will it's a decision of the mind it's a decision of the heart it is not based simply on something you feel it's based on something you are committed to when I married
Marcy 29 years ago and committed to her until death do us part that was not a comment on my feelings that was a promise of my will true marital love true covenantal love is not saying that this is how I feel today and as long as I keep having this feeling I will keep this commitment and when the feeling goes then my commitment goes that's not what we're talking about this is not about feelings this is about a commitment of the will now let's be careful that we're clear here all love we have for

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Christ and for each other absolutely does include our emotion it's just not based on that it's not rooted on that that's not what holds it together if I were to tell
[19:09] Marcia tonight honey I love you and I feel like being your husband tonight we'll see how I feel in the morning but for tonight we're good she's going to say that's not what we committed to we're not waking up every day and saying how do we feel today this is a commitment of the will love is in action love is in motion love is put from our minds and our doctrine that we hold to and then it's lived out in the day to day aspects of our lives let me just show you a few examples here in this same letter so you can see how he's thinking go back to chapter 3 for just a moment verse 6 but now that Timothy has come to us from you and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and report that you always remember us kindly and long to see us as we long to see you so the report that comes back from Timothy to Paul is that they are continuing in their faith and in their love verse 11 now may our God and Father himself and our

Lord Jesus direct our way to you and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all as we do for you this is how God's people are to be putting their faith and their doctrine into action that we are loving Christ and demonstrating our love for Christ by loving each other so yes verse 13 gets into eschatology the return of Christ all the things regarding the last days but what good is it to be eagerly awaiting the return of Christ if we've not been faithful and obedient to what we've been called to do while we wait so yes we are longing for the appearance of Christ we long for his return we long for him to come and to be with us we've had the first advent we're ready for the second advent for his appearing to come we believe in that we long for that we hope in that but when the Lord returns let's make sure we're found doing what we were commanded to do namely to be putting our love into action it's the action of love there's feelings there's emotion but that's not what holds it together it's a commitment of the will that gets put into action and then let's spend a few minutes here looking at this third part and that's the effect of love what's the effect what's the impact it has on us
I want to show you a few things here in verses 11 to 13 verse 11 says and to aspire to live quietly quietly the first impact or effect that love has on God's people is we'll call it a quiet life to aspire to live quietly this is a really interesting statement it's an interesting way to say it to aspire is to be ambitious be ambitious to live quietly he says be excited to live a quiet life be gung ho that's the original Greek not really to live a quiet life be passionate about a quiet life 1
Timothy 2 1 to 3 says first of all I urge that supplications prayers intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people for kings and all who are in high positions that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life 1 Peter 3 3 to 4 do not let your adorning be external the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry and clothing you wear but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with an imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which in God's sight is very precious life study doctrine know your theology and let it be expressed as you love people and let it impact you so strongly that you're willing to live a quiet life we'll come back in a minute and talk about what that looks like and why the second thing is the effect of love is that we live a simple life again back to verse 11 to aspire to live quietly and to mind your own affairs live a simple life now I'm about to blow your mind okay are you ready this is going to blow your mind this will rock your world you don't have to comment on everybody else's opinion or decision that's it you really don't
I know you think the world's longing to hear what you think about everything it's really not live a simple life life now let's let's understand here there's a balance to this we see in the scripture where there is sin it has to be called out if someone among you is straying into sin Galatians 6 1 you've got to go rescue them a simple life a quiet life is not an isolated life and where there's false teachers you can't let that go on but in areas that aren't sinful don't feel like you've got to get involved in every single thing you can scroll through somebody's
[25:48] Facebook and disagree with it and just keep going you don't have to correct them good friend of mine has a church that they just opened up recently a new sanctuary he was excited about it I was excited for him we've been praying for them put some pictures on there first day great day so excited God was so gracious to us first comment I saw is really I don't like the lighting in that new room I don't know the guy who wrote it and you know what I said back to him nothing because I don't have to comment on everything I see live a simple life simple is not isolated simple life doesn't mean you're on your own I'm on my own we're connected to each other James 5

Galatians 6 somebody's straying we've got to go rescue them someone's in sin we've got to call them out we want to be gracious we want to be patient we want to be forgiving but we've got to care

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for each other we've got to help each other so I'm not talking about a life of isolation and we've got to stand for the truth where there's false teaching we've got to speak to that but in terms of things that aren't matters of sin don't think that you have to get involved in everybody else's stuff which is why he says in verse 11 mind your own affairs parents have been teaching their kids scripture for years they just didn't know it mind your business that's biblical it's biblical mind your own affairs now again don't think that means that you can be a part of a church and what somebody else is going through doesn't impact you we're to weep with those who weep rejoice with those who rejoice feel compassion on those who are in need we're to be burden bearers our lives are absolutely to be entwined with each other but just be willing to live a quiet life and a simple life third the effect of love should be that we live a trustworthy life there's something here that from the culture that may help you to understand what he means here verse 11 aspire to live quietly mind your own affairs and to work with your hands as we instructed you the idea here is be a hard worker labor let me tell you the thought that's going on many of the Greeks thought that manual labor was beneath them the fear was that if people are converted they may start to think they have an elevated status and if they think they have an elevated status as
God's people then they would be too good to work with their hands too good to have a work ethic too good to be people who do their job and if people don't do their job they're going to have to be relying on other people to do things for them so the concern was if Christianity spreads and people get saved and they start to think they're elevated they're above everybody else now they're too good to work hard now they're too good to be disciplined they just think everybody ought to do something for them society breaks down because now they're relying on everybody else to do their job for them second Thessalonians you might just make note of this just in the next letter here second Thessalonians 3 10 and 11 says for even when we were with you we would give you this command if anyone is not willing to work let him not eat for we hear that some among you walk in idleness not busy at work but busy bodies now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and earn their own living second Thessalonians 3 10 to 12 it's a fascinating logic that's being used here part of what our doctrine should do for us is give us a willingness to live a quiet life to live a simple life but also to live a life that is trustworthy where we are hard workers and people can take us at our word we're trustworthy we're not relying on everybody else to do things for us Ephesians 4 28 let the thief no longer steal but rather let him labor doing honest work with his own hands so that he may have something to share with anyone in need the idea in Ephesians 4 isn't only don't steal because it's wrong though it's wrong to steal the idea is be a faithful worker so that you can take care of what
God's given to you and so that you are then able to go and share with other people so our lives are intertwined but we don't want to be the one sitting back doing nothing waiting on everybody else to take care of us but instead we work hard and we're good stewards so that people who are genuinely in need we can be freed up to help them there's a fourth thing and that's to live an honorable life an honorable life verse 12 so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one this does not mean as you go through your life that you don't need anyone to help you this doesn't mean that you don't need the spiritual gifts of other people what it does mean is that you're not going to fail to provide for your family and just assume somebody else will do that you don't just sit back and say well it's someone else's responsibility to take care of my needs in the body of Christ we absolutely want to help each other and serve each other and take care of each other but when we do the
[33:08] Lord's supper we take a love account offering and we've got an account that our deacon officers help us to work with and oversee and when people have unique financial needs they look at that and they're able to respond accordingly but the love account when we do that we're giving of extra so that we can be a help to other people who are struggling that's bearing burdens but it would be wrong if everyone in this room said you know what I'm not paying my electric bill next month because I don't have to I'll just let the church take care of it that's not the heart of the love account or I'm just going to quit my job and when I quit my job I'll call my parents and say hey I'm not going to work for the next six months I need you to take over my house payment that's not what we're talking about be faithful be honorable be a hard worker so that you're dependent on no one that does not mean that you live independent of the church and you don't need the people in the church to help you and to strengthen you what it does mean is you don't ever use the generosity of God's people as an excuse to be lazy and sinful don't you wish our world understood that it would be so different so different we live an honorable life as we walk properly before outsiders now here's

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where it gets difficult if you live properly among outsiders and if you believe the truth and speak the truth and stand up for the truth then it sometimes gets difficult to live a quiet life it's difficult sometimes to live a simple life when you're faithful to the gospel as we looked at this morning the gospel divides and sometimes the gospel unifies enemies of the gospel to go attack those who believe the gospel but even when that happens keep a simple life know the truth stand up for the truth refuse to compromise on the truth and keep loving people that's all you've got to do doesn't guarantee your job will go well doesn't guarantee your ministry will go well doesn't guarantee you're going to always have a bunch of friends it's just keeping your life simple one of the ways we express our love is to help those in need that's important and sometime you may be the needy one and you need to receive the blessing of God's people serving you but don't neglect your responsibility assuming you'll just put that burden on somebody else to do that makes your life really complicated second

Thessalonians 3 that we looked at just a minute going verses 10 to 12 back to verse 11 we hear that some among you walk in idleness don't be idle don't be idle let your life be lived to the service of God and to his people if you have a if you're employed be the hardest working one you can be this is really important I think let people know there's something different about you that you're at work on time that you hit your deadlines that you don't blame other people when you don't do it right that you're responsible and accountable for what you've said you would do if you said you're going to be somewhere you be somewhere!
you're going to do something you do something you don't look for loopholes you don't look for excuses you don't live with alibis you're a hard work you have a work ethic of a child of God if you're in home put the same exact principles into action every single this isn't about a paycheck or a title this is about a commitment if you're a worker in the home be a committed worker in the home and you serve your family to the best of your ability!
and you do everything you can to be faithful to what you've said you would do to what you should do and we don't want to live idle lives we want to be doing the work God's called us to do and that may be being a keeper at home that may mean raising children that may mean volunteering at the school that may mean being at church and serving that may mean different things but this is the will of God for your life your sanctification be like Christ be found faithful don't live an idle!
life of laziness and then sit back and blame everybody else for all the problems you have and it's so interesting to me that this paragraph comes right before he talks about eschatology verses 9 to 12 feel very earthy 13 to 18 feel very doctrinal and they're right next to each other because in the mind of scripture here those who know and love doctrine will live it out in the most practical ways of their life that's why there's nothing more practical than what you believe about God because what you believe about God will be demonstrated every single day of your life be dependable be trustworthy be honorable be hard working if you're a student be the hardest working student in your school don't be the smartest can't help that but you can be dependable and you can be respectful and you can be courteous and you cannot make excuses and if a student or a teacher or a professor says to you what is different about you you can say the difference in me is
[40:39] Christ I know him I love him and his grace has effected me I want to live a quiet life a simple life a respectable life and an honorable life and part of that is me taking care of what I'm supposed to do that's your answer when your teacher says what's different about you if you work a part time job and it's not the job of your dreams go to that part time job and be the hardest worker there don't be the most successful person there you can't always control that but be the hardest worker be the most kind be the most diligent be the most thorough expect and set and expect high standards of yourself and when somebody says to you why do you take this part time job so seriously your answer is because

Christ has saved me and the grace that saved me is working in me every single day even down to how I work at this part time job and Christ is worthy of my very best and when people in the office tomorrow start to chatter and gossip don't get involved in it live a quiet life live a simple life you don't have to correct what everybody says you don't have to listen to what everybody says keep your life quiet keep your life simple keep your life honorable keep your life trustworthy and do what God has called you to do verse three is sanctification verse thirteen is eschatology sandwiched in between there is be faithful in the common daily workings of your life life our doctrine holds us together so that we can live it out in the normal routine parts of our life so when you go home tonight be faithful to your family if you go to a restaurant to eat be a good representation of Christ if you've got

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homework due tomorrow turn it in and do it with excellence if you go to a job tomorrow and you say oh I'm not going to get it done
I'll just blame it on somebody else don't do that if you go to get online tonight and type in some wonderful thing that's going to bless the whole world and before you can type it out you see someone who says something you disagree with let it go it's alright let it go keep your life simple keep your life quiet and if somebody speaks something untrue about the gospel speak up somebody says something hurtful defend the weak someone's hurting use extra you have to bless them but as you do that do it with a heart that would live out the love you have for them in a way that shines a light not on you but on the grace that has saved you and that is biblically what love in action should look like for
God's people Lord your word is so helpful speaks to us about the deepest of subjects and the most common of things may it tonight be useful in our life for the work of your spirit to strengthen us to do exactly what it is said for the glory of Christ and the good of your people we pray in Christ's name amen have a good night maybe watch the weather overnight if your alarms go off pray and take shelter and then go to work on time you're dismissed what are you said it an gonna get if you can make or or not have a good help be if it can go and take on time and take on time and take for the life and take on time and take for the last way and take on time and take
And take an try and take for the second fathers and take S on time fathers and take on time fathers and take as way that can well canürlich

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