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**Sermon: *“Love & the Gospel in Our Community”***

**Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 2:8**

Pastor Stephen Schultze

Sunday, August 18, 2019

Introduction: The mission of the Gospel calls the church to selfless, loving fellowship in the body of Christ and sacrificial, loving outreach to the community.

* + Jesus Christ willingly gave himself to “seek and to save the lost.”

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 8:9; 5:21; Philippians 2:5-10; Isaiah 53:3-5; Romans 8:3-4; 1 Peter 3:18

* + Paul consistently gave himself that the lost may “obtain salvation.”

Scriptures: Ephesians 3:10; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Corinthians 9:12, 23; Galatians 2:5

1. **Gospel living in our community is rooted in love and longing.**

**“So, being affectionately desirous of you,** we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, **because you had become very dear to us.”** (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

* Christ-like love and longing for our community is rooted in a clear understanding of the Gospel and meaningful relationships with our neighbors.

1. **Christ-like longing produces a willingness to share God’s Gospel.**

“So, being affectionately desirous of you, **we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God** but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.” (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

When we genuinely care for others, we readily share with them…

* What we have been freely given. (Titus 2:11; 1 Corinthians 2:12)
* What can meet their greatest, eternal needs. (Psalm 130:3-4; 38:4; Romans 3:23; 6:23)

1. **Christ-like love produces a willingness to share my life.**

“So, being affectionately desirous of you, **we were ready to share** with you not only the gospel of God **but also our own selves,** because you had become very dear to us.” (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

When we genuinely love others, we readily share our lives.

* For we are not our own. (1 Corinthians 6:20-21; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Romans 12:1)
* For we care more for souls than friendship. (Proverbs 11:30)
* For the eternal gain far exceeds the immediate sacrifice. (2 Corinthians 4:17)

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How does a growing understanding of the Gospel produce the love and longing necessary for effective outreach?
2. How does genuine care for others (longing) produce a readiness for sharing the Gospel?
3. Why might we easily feel more comfortable meeting immediate needs than addressing eternal needs?
4. Why is it significant that Paul and his companions were ready to share “their own selves” in addition to the Gospel?
5. In what ways is the Holy Spirit leading you to…
   1. Grow in your understanding of the Gospel?
   2. Share the Gospel of God with family, neighbors, friends or coworkers?
   3. Share your life with family, neighbors, friends or coworkers?