

1st Thessalonians

Faith, Love, and Hope exemplified

Lets review our passages today: 1 Thess. 1:1-5 & Acts 17:1-12

Acts 17:1-5 (NKJV)

¹ Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

³ explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ."

⁴ And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

⁵ But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

Acts 17:6-12 (NKJV)

⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

⁷ Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king--Jesus."

⁸ And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. ⁹ So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

¹⁰ Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

¹² Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5 (NKJV)

¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

⁵ For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

Initial observations from 1 Thess. 1:1-5 and Acts 17:1-12

1 Thess. 1:1 (NKJV) 1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- This letter is co-authored by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy via customary greeting of Grace and Peace.
- It was a Christian church founded on a major trade route - in a large cosmopolitan city with enough Jews to establish a synagogue but mostly idol worshiping Romans, Greeks, Macedonians, Thracians, Asians etc. totaling about 100,000 - 200,000 people
- The Thessalonian converts were made up of some believing Jews but mostly of two categories of gentiles - gentile proselytes (devout Greeks) of the Jewish Synagogue and other idol worshiping gentiles. (Acts 17:4)
- Interestingly, an apparent majority of Gentiles vs Jewish believers. (Acts 17:4)
- Berean's seemed to have a more even ratio of Jews vs Gentile believers?
(Acts 17:12)

What else did you notice?

1 Thessalonians 1:2 (NKJV)

² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

The Greek word translated 'always' carries the idea of "on all occasions"

For what purposes do you think Paul, Silas, & Timothy were 'always... making mention of' the Thessalonians in their prayers?

Interestingly, in the Greek, 'making mention' carries the idea of 'of spending a time or tarrying'

What do you think prompted them to 'tarry or spend time' praying for the Thessalonians?

Or perhaps it was rather 'who prompted them' to pray instead!

Take a moment to consider the times that you may have been prompted to 'spend time or tarry' thinking about someone or their situation!

Describe your response? In what ways were you compelled to take action?
After all, who is it at work on both sides of evangelism?

(Jn.16:8; Phil.2:13; 2 Cor.5:14-15)

1 Thessalonians 1:3-4 (NKJV)

³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

- In my opinion, these two verses form the summary statement of the entire 1st letter to the Thessalonians.
- It is Paul's first use of his triad of virtues of 'faith, love, and hope' - often expressed as 'faith, hope, and love' as seen in 1 Cor. 13:13; however, let's begin to consider the significance of the sequence here (v. 1:3; 5:8) of 'faith, love, and hope.'
- But first, What do you think is the significance of:
'remembering without ceasing'?
- What does that reveal about the *co-authors* Paul, Silas, and Timothy?
Do you think that they were in some way 'impressed' with the Thessalonians' 'work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope'?
Or at least genuinely excited about their growth and maturity at this point?
In the face of persecution, no less!

1 Thessalonians 1:3-4 (NKJV)

³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

Spoiler alert!

Next week, we should see some encouragement and evidence concerning the Thessalonians' state of faith, love, and hope in 1 Thess. 1:6-10.

- But, today, let us try to better understand what Paul means by 'work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope'

1 Thessalonians 1:3-4 (NKJV)

³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

What do you think Paul 'remembered' about their 'work of faith'? Why?

What does a 'work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope' actually look like? What are some of their characteristics?

The Moody Bible Commentary had this to say: (*emphasis mine*)

"Faith, love, hope, are here named in their logical order.

'Faith rests on the past;
love works in the present;
hope looks to the future'"¹

Do any Questions, comments or Scriptures come to mind?

¹(D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Thessalonian Epistles* [Chicago: Moody, 1971], 47; Hiebert cites J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1959 reprint of 1879 ed.], 134).

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³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

The Moody Commentary unpacks it further via Hiebert : *(emphasis is mine)*

"Faith looks back to Christ on the cross;
love looks up to Christ at the Father's right hand;
hope looks forward to the coming of Christ for His own!

Here the emphasis is on the "qualities" affixed to the virtues, thus
work that flows from faith,
labor that is motivated by love, and
steadfastness that is grounded in hope.

"Paul's stress is not on these virtues alone
but rather on what [qualities] they produce" ¹

Questions, comments or Scriptures that come to mind?

¹(Hiebert, *Thessalonian Epistles*, 47).

1 Thessalonians 1:3-4 (NKJV)

³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

It seems clear that the object and focus of their 'faith, love, hope' is in the Lord Jesus Christ; but ...

What do you think Paul meant by 'in the sight of our God and Father'?

In what ways was Paul encouraging to the Thessalonians when he said: 'knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God'?

What do you think it was that led Paul to 'know' that they were genuinely 'brethren' and 'elected by God'?

The answer, as I alluded to earlier, may best be found in next week's lesson covering verses 1 Thess. 1:6-10

However, there is one more essential person involved, let's look at v. 5

1 Thessalonians 1:5 (AMP)

⁵ For our [preaching of the] glad tidings (the Gospel) came to you not only in word, but also in [its own inherent] power and in the Holy Spirit and with great conviction and absolute certainty [on our part]. You know what kind of men we proved [ourselves] to be among you for your good.

What do you think Paul meant by: "... not only in word, but also in power..."?
(see also 1 Cor.2:1-5)

Describe what you think Paul meant by: "... and in the Holy Spirit and with great conviction..."? (see also 1 Cor. 2:10-13; Jn.16:8)

What do you think Paul meant by: "... You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your good." (See also 1 Cor.9:19-23; 2 Tim.2:10)

Application Assignment

What are some Scripture Passages
that would support these statements?

¹Faith looks back to Christ on the cross;

love looks up to Christ at the Father's right hand;

hope looks forward to the coming of Christ for His own!

¹(D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Thessalonian Epistles* [Chicago: Moody, 1971], 47; Hiebert cites J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1959 reprint of 1879 ed.], 134).

Extra Credit:

Observations of some avenues
leading to faith, love, and hope
in Thessalonica and Berea

Acts 17:4-5,11-12

⁴ And some of them (*Thessalonian Jews*) were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

⁵ But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

¹¹ These (*Bereans*) were more fair-minded (noble) than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

¹² Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

Extra Credit:

Observations of some avenues leading to faith, love, and hope in Thessalonica and Berea

Conclusions:

The Thessalonian converts were made up of some believing Jews but mostly of two categories of gentiles - gentile proselytes (devout Greeks) of the Jewish Synagogue and other idol worshiping gentiles. (Acts 17:4)

Interestingly, in Thessalonica, there was an apparent majority of Gentiles vs Jewish believers. (Acts 17:4)

In Berea, there appeared to be a more even ratio of Jews vs Gentile believers? (Acts 17:12)

What do you think were some of the reasons for the Thessalonian Jews' unbelief?

Their intellect, pride, position, prominence, blocked and clouded their openness to the pronouncement of Christ as Messiah according to the Scriptures.

The Thessalonian Jews had the scriptures but many seemed to refuse to examine them as the Bereans had. And the majority of the believing Thessalonians were God-fearing Greeks and leading women of Thessalonica who believed without having the benefit of examining the Scriptures!

Extra Credit:

Observations of some avenues
leading to faith, love, and hope
in Thessalonica and Berea

It is interesting to observe the two 'avenues' leading to saving faith: (1) 'simple acceptance' of the message by the majority of Thessalonians (mostly Greek) and (2) that of the Berean Jews' faith found after examining and accepting the Truth of the Scriptures? *(It was Luke who pointed out the "Nobility" of the Bereans! Why?)*

Is it not a lot similar to Tim Sandford's illustration in his sermon on last Sunday?

<https://www.fbcva.org/media/6mc9y6v/and-the-word-became-flesh-do-not-be-afraid-behold-all-things-new>

Where he spoke of Zacharias (Luke 1:18), a Priest, who knew and had the scriptures but doubted the Angel's message concerning the Messiah. His unbelief, consequently, caused the loss of his voice until he saw and finally believed. (Luke 1:59-64)

All of that contrasted with the Angelic messages received and simply believed by Mary, Joseph, and the Shepherds.

Certainly, both the believing Thessalonians as well as the believing Bereans had saving faith yet through different avenues in coming to that faith.

Some of us seem to be from Missouri and need to be shown!

3 passages that speak to these avenues of faith: Prov.3:5-6; John 20:29; Heb 11:7