

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3
“The Work of Faith, Hope and Love”

Introduction

Paul on his 2nd Missionary Journey comes to Thessalonica; or today called, Thessaloniki. He was with these new Believers for only 3 Sabbaths – 4 weeks at the most. Concerned about them, Paul writes his very first letter; this “Epistle to the Thessalonians.

Last week we looked at verse 1,

1 Thes 1:1

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.

and focused the message on the “Grace and Peace” that comes from God:

Today, lets continue on with the next couple of verses:

1:2 making mention of you in our prayers

1 Thes 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

A. We give thanks to God always for you all:

- When Paul thought of the Christians in Thessalonica, his heart was filled with gratitude.
- Paul started the church there in less than ideal circumstances, being run out of town after only three weekends with them (Acts 17:1-10).
- Yet, the church was strong and full of life.
- Paul knew that this work was beyond him and his abilities, and that it was the work of God.

Quote: (Hiebert)

“The regularly recurring nature of the thanksgiving is also implied in the **use of the present tense of the verb**. It is their **practice to give thanks to God continually**, never skipping a single day.”

B. Making mention of you in our prayers:

When Paul prayed for people and the churches, it wasn’t necessarily a long time of intercession. He often simply made **mention** of a church, or a person in prayer:

Rom 1:9

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I **make mention** of you always in my prayers,

Eph 1:16 do not cease to give thanks for you, **making mention** of you in my prayers:

Philemon 1:4 I thank my God, **making mention** of you always in my prayers,

Quote: (Moffatt) “**We** give thanks to God always for you all...”

“And not Paul alone. **The plural implies** that **all three missionaries prayed together.**”

Praying without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17) and intercession (1 Tim 2:1) prayer, means that as people come to mind you just lift them up or “mention” to God in prayer.

Something all of us should be open to do.

C. Important Note:

Paul’s gratitude was NOT because they were:

1. **NOT morally impeccable.**

Later in the letter Paul strongly warned them against the failings in regard to sexual impurity.

2. **NOT completely accurate in all their doctrine.**

He had to correct some of their wrong ideas in that area also.

Why was Paul so thankful for them, and grateful to them?

Verse 3 Tells us.

1:3 work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope

1 Thes 1:3

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,

A. Your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ:

Despite the problems, Paul was so grateful to God for the Thessalonians because there was an undeniable work of the Holy Spirit and a marvelous change in their lives.

The three great Christian virtues were evident among them: **faith, love, and hope.**

Quote: (Hiebert)

“Here for the **first time, chronologically**, in **Paul’s writings** we have this **famous triad: faith, love, hope.**”

Most of us are most familiar when Paul writings in 1 Cor 13, on the Love chapter:

1 Cor 13:13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

B. Hiebert’s quote continues...”But Paul’s stress is not on these virtues alone, but rather upon WHAT THEY PRODUCE.”

1. Therefore, their faith produced “WORK” – which is the “nature” of **true FAITH.**
2. Their love produced LABOR – which is the “nature” of **true LOVE.**
3. Their hope produced PATIENCE (long-suffering, endurance) – which is the “nature” of **true HOPE.**

These are three magnificent traits that All Christians should be known by – faith, hope, and love.

C. 3 QUESTIONS FOR ALL OF US:

What does having these “Godly Traits” in one’s life, look like?

1. Does **faith** just sit on the couch, “trusting” God will fix everything?

2. Does hope only last ten minutes and then one gives up?
3. Does love come easily and comfortably?

The Thessalonians understood how these traits worked.

1. Work of faith

1 Thes 1:3a remembering without ceasing your work of faith,

A. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith:

Work: The Greek word, (ergon) – toil, work, deed, doing, labor

B. The idea of “FAITH” with the word, “WORK” can produce controversy.

- There’s a long-standing argument in Christianity over faith and works.
- There are many who think that these two entities are mutually exclusive.
- By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast.
- Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (**Rom 3:28**)

Important Clarification:

So often as Paul is speaking of works he is referring to the works of the law, whereby, the Pharisee's were attempting to obtain a righteous standing before God.

Gal 2:16

16 "knowing that a man is **NOT justified by the works of the law** but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, **that we might be justified by faith in Christ** and **NOT by the works of the law;** for **by the works of the law NO flesh shall be justified.**

- The works of the law can never make you righteous.
- Our righteousness is imputed to us by God through our faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Answering this question:

Are we saved by faith? OR Are we saved by works?

Answer:

We are saved by faith, but it’s a faith that works.

C. However controversial it maybe, “Paul is commending them here for their WORK of FAITH”

1. If I have true faith, my faith will be manifested by my works.

- Sometimes we get the idea that having “faith” means doing nothing.
- But when you genuinely trust the Lord, it results in action in your life.
- Read in **Hebrews 11**, the “**Hall of Faith**”, all of them **showed their Faith** bystepping out in Faith, and/or ...walking by Faith.

2. My works are **NOT** my endeavor to obtain favor from God or to develop a righteous standing before Him, **but they are an expression of my appreciation for all the goodness that God has bestowed upon me.**
3. **My works are a natural response to the grace of God.**

Note:

Some imagine that Paul and James are at variance with each other. Not at all.

1. **Paul speaks of the kind of faith that produces works.**
2. **James speaks of the kind of works that demonstrate true faith.**

James 2:14

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone **says he has faith** but **does not have works**? Can faith save him?

James 2: 17-18

17 Thus also **faith by itself, if it does NOT have works, is dead.**

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works."

Show me your faith without your works, and **I will show you my faith by my works.**

3. **True faith is manifested by our works.**

1 Cor 15:10

10 But **by the grace of God I am what I am**, and His grace toward me was not in vain; **but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**

4. **The very declaration that Jesus is the Lord of my life, implies my submission to His will.**

- This "submission in and of itself" is a "Work" of my obeying His commands.

Also:

- He commands me to **deny myself, to take up my cross** and to follow Him.
- He **commands me to be His witness.**

In which all of His commands, we joyfully comply!

Important Note of clarification:

In doing those things, **they are not works to seek to be righteous before God, but they are Joyful and Willing obedience of faith**, in which "produces" a "Work of Faith!!

Conclusion on this topic:

1. Paul's labor for the Lord was **NOT** an endeavor to obtain a righteous standing before God, nor was it an attempt to earn him salvation.
2. **It was simply his response to the grace of God** that was bestowed upon him.
3. A real true life of "Faith" is when we are able to live it out in such a way that others can see it!
4. Our Faith should be a "**WORK of faith**".

THEIR WORKS OF FAITH WERE also produced “LABORS OF LOVE”.

2. Labor of love

1 Thes 1:3b remembering without ceasing your work of faith, **labor of love, ...**

A. **remembering without ceasing your, labor of love, ...**

Labor:

The Greek word, (kopos) – labor, **troubling, weariness**

This word is a stronger word for than (ergon) – ...“WORK of Faith”
(*Kopos*) - **“implies toil that is strenuous and sweat-producing.”** (Hiebert)

Interesting that “Loving people”, is a far harder work than “walking by Faith”. I think we all know that this is true! (LOL)

B. **It seems that love is supposed to be one of the strongest motivators in this world.**

Example:

We remember the love that Jacob had for Rachel.

He longed to have her as his wife, and because he had nothing to give for the dowry, he struck a deal with his uncle that he would serve him for seven years that he might take her as his bride,

we then read that beautiful verse in Genesis:

Gen 29:20

20 So Jacob served (**i.e. Labored**) seven years for Rachel, **and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her.**

C. **Our work for the Lord must be motivated by love for Him if it is to be recognized by Him.**

1 Cor 13:1-3

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, **but have not love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing.**

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, **but have not love, it profits me nothing.**

D. **Must be from a “motivation” of LOVE!**

Before Jesus commissioned Peter to the ministry His question was, "Do you love Me?"

- With Peter affirming that it was love. Jesus then said, **then (do the work)**... "Feed my sheep, tend my lambs."

E. **The labor of love is never a burden, but a joy.**

There is an old song, that Pastor Chuck sometimes read:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=song+I+traveled+down+a+lonely+road+And+no+one+seemed+to+care&oq=song+I+traveled+down+a+lonely+road+And+no+one+seemed+to+care&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i160l3.2571j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:d7722671,vid:f9VeQjSRI1o>

Song/Hymn: "I traveled down a lonely road And no one seemed to care"
By Ira Stanphill (Song Writer)

1 I traveled down a lonely road And no one seemed to care;
The burden on my weary back Had bowed me to despair,
I oft complained to Jesus How folks were treating me,
And then I heard Him say so tenderly,
"My feet were also weary, Upon the Calv'ry road;
The cross became so heavy, I fell beneath the load,
Be faithful weary pilgrim, The morning I can see,
Just lift your cross and follow close to me."

2. "I work so hard for Jesus" I often boast and say,
"I've sacrificed a lot of things To walk the narrow way,
I gave up fame and fortune, I'm worth a lot to Thee,"
And then **I hear Him gently say** to me.
"I left the throne of glory And counted it but loss,
My hands were nailed in anger Upon a cruel cross,
But now we'll make the journey With your hand safe in mine,
So lift your cross and follow close to me.

2 Cor 8:9

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

3. Oh, Jesus if I die upon A foreign field someday,
'Twould be **no more than love demands** No less could I repay,
"No greater love hath mortal man Than for a friend to die"
These are the words He gently spoke to me,
"If just a cup of water I place within your hand
Then just a cup of water Is all that I demand,"
But if by death to living They can thy glory see,
I'll take my cross and follow close to thee.

F. Let "LOVE" be our only motive and goal, and once we have it, then kindle it, and don't let it go!

1. In the book of Revelation the complaint that Jesus had with the church in Ephesus was that though they had great works and labored for Him, **they had left their first love.**

Rev 2:2-5

2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found

them liars; 3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

4 "**Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.**

5 "**Remember** therefore from where you have fallen; **repent** and **do (i.e. repeat)** the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place-- unless you repent.

2. Like Paul let us all be able to say, "that it was the love of Christ that constrained us".

2 Cor 5:14-15

14 **For the love of Christ compels us**, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Advice from an "Advice Columnist":

The story is a wife you was fed-up with her husband and wanted to divorce him. She wrote to an "Advice Columnist" for advice. His advice ended up being wise and humorist. First he told her before you hand him the divorce papers, first greet him every morning with a big kiss and a joyful spirit and hand him the daily News Paper. Before he heads off to work give him another kiss and cheer him on with having a great day at work. Each night when he gets home, be dress stunningly and prepare his favorite dishes for dinner. Repeat this for 3 weeks and on the final night with his dinner hand him the divorce papers to let it burn that he has lost the best wife in the world. That will get him good. He asked if he could call her after the deed was done, to hear all about it. The lady took the advice. After 3 weeks, the "Advice Columnist" called her and asked, "so have you successfully divorced the bum"? She replied as he thought she would by saying, "don't call my wonderful husband a bum, and of course we are not getting a divorce we have the best marriage in the world." The lesson learned is, if you give in a "labor of love" you will have the whole relationship joyfully healed and made new!

3. Patience of hope

1 Thes 1:3c 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,

- A. remembering without ceasing your, **patience of hope...**

patience

The Greek word, (hypomone) – enduring, patience continuance, patience waiting, sustaining, perseverance, steadfastness

...which is the **long-suffering endurance**

- needed to not only survive hard times,
- but to triumph through them.

hope

The Greek word, (elpis) – an expectation of good, a joyful and confident expectation

Note:

Not like the English word “hope” – idea it may or may not happen.

The Greek word is certain (great faith and trust) that it will happen. The Greek word for hope is, the waiting until it does happen and brings great joy and comfort in the waiting.

Peter, in the **very “1st Christian Sermon”** after the cross quotes David in the Psalms, but in the New Testament uses this word, “Hope”:

Acts 2:25-26

25 "For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;

Moreover (i.e. on top of everything) my flesh also will rest in HOPE.

B. in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

The most important part of this “Hope” is what it is in!!!

The hope was for the glorious appearing of our great God, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

1. They were living in the hope of His immediate return.
2. This is alluded to through the whole epistle.
3. They were patiently waiting for the Lord to return.

The Bible does exhort us to be patience as we wait “in this certainty of “HOPE”, for the return of the Lord.

James 5:7-8

7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, **waiting patiently** for it until it receives the early and latter rain. 8 You also be patient. **Establish your hearts**, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Rom 8:24-25

24 For **we were saved in this HOPE**, but **HOPE** that is seen is not **HOPE**; for why does one still **HOPE** for what he sees? 25 But if we **HOPE** for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

Once you see it and are experiencing it, there is no longer a need for Hope.

Especially for us who are living through these last days, we need to hang onto HOPE:

2 Peter 3:3-10 (we see here, those who have **lost their “Hope”, very sad**)

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack

concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

- ***It is sad, but many have given up the hope of the return of Jesus Christ. Peter said the question, "Where is the promise of His coming?"***
- ***We see here the importance of the POWER of our HOPE in God and His word, especially His word of Prophecy.***

C. "Hope"... gives sustaining power.

When a person gives up hope they can enter into despair:

Psalms 27:14

14 Wait on the LORD;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!

Psalms 37:7

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

Psalms 42:5

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
For the help of His countenance.

Jeremiah said,

Lam 3:26

26 It is good that a man should both **hope and quietly wait** for the salvation of the LORD.

Paul spoke to the Romans about "**rejoicing in hope**" (Rom 12:12), as they were patient in tribulation.

In Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians he will prays:

2 Thes 3:5

5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God **and into the patience (i.e. steadfastness, endurance in HOPE) of Christ.**

In the book of Hebrews Paul exhorts us:

Heb 6:12

12 that you do not become sluggish, but **imitate those who through faith and patience (i.e. steadfastness, endurance in HOPE) inherit the promises.**

Paul speaking of Abraham said:

Heb 6:15

15 And so, **after he (Abraham) had patiently endured (i.e. steadfastness, endurance in HOPE), he obtained the promise.**

Paul also exhorts in chapter 12 of Hebrews:

Heb 12:1c ... and let us run **with endurance (i.e. patience, steadfastness, endurance in HOPE)** the race that is set before us,

Conclusion

FAITH, LOVE, HOPE.

1. Work of Faith;
2. Labor of Love;
3. Patience (**long-suffering endurance**) of Hope.

Let's conclude by asking the obvious questions:

- Are these qualities being manifested in **my** life?
- In **your** life?
 - Are there works of faith?
 - Labor of LOVE, for the LORD?
 - Is there a real patience of Hope? That is not despairing, not losing heart, but joyful in...?
- In the life of **our church**? Is this how you would describe our Fellowship here?

I pray so, let us all pray for this and that these qualities may abound in us all !!!!