

The Messenger

COLDWATER CHURCH OF CHRIST

April 10, 2016



FAITH - LOVE - HOPE

1 Thessalonians 1:3

In the last verse of that great 13th chapter of I Corinthians, the apostle Paul gives us a very pointed message about three very important subjects in Christianity: "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (I Cor 13:13 NKJV).

How many lessons have we had about faith, about hope, about love? We have defined them and analyzed them. We have emphasized how important they are. And, they are indeed fundamental to Christian doctrine and Christian conduct.

But, if we want to see best how faith and hope and love all work together to motivate and sustain our Christian life, then I Thessalonians 1:3 is a verse that provides great insights. Paul writes to the young church at Thessalonica that he is ... "constantly bearing in mind" their "work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope" (I Thess. 1:3 NASB). Note the way Paul pairs each of the three virtues, faith and love and hope, with a practical necessity of daily Christians living: work and labor and steadfastness.

(continued inside ...)

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you... (1 John 1:5).

VISITORS, WELCOME!

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Bible Class

10:30 a.m. WORSHIP

1:00 p.m. WORSHIP

Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Class

We have Bible classes for all ages & fellowship for lunch every Sunday!

P.O. Box 321

2008 Hwy. 306

(1.2 miles east of I-55)

Coldwater, MS 38618

(662) 622-7951

emailus@coldwatercofc.com

www.coldwatercofc.com

ELDERS

Billy Bland

Seth Daniel

Jim Jackson

W. Timothy Wilkes, Sr.

DEACONS

Jason Bayless Jared Brown

Jerry Davis Jeffrey Ferrell

Ron Johnson Andy Ratliff

Joe Owen Tim Wilkes, II

PREACHER

Clifton Angel

Let us look at the important connections between faith and work, love and labor, and hope and steadfastness.

Faith and Work

The first connection Paul makes in verse three is between work and faith. What does Paul mean “work of faith”? I believe he means a work that proceeds from, or results from, faith. Paul commends their faith: “... Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything” (I Thess. 1:8 NKJV). And, in the next verse, Paul tells us how that faith had made changes in what they did in their lives. Paul says they “...turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (I Thess. 1:9 NKJV).

Do you see here how their faith changed what they were doing in their lives? Their work had been the worship and service of idols. They served those idols because that is what they had faith in. But, when Paul preached the gospel to them, their faith changed—it changed to a faith in God. When their faith changed, their work changed.

Where you put your faith determines what you do. Remember those words of James, who says: “... I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:18 NKJV). Faith is not merely belief; it is something that changes you. So, you can look at what you are doing and tell where your faith really is. Is God’s work the focus of your life? Then your faith is in God. Is the work of the world the focus of your life? Then your faith is in idols. That is the important connection that Paul makes between faith and work.

Love and Labor

The second connection Paul makes in verse three is between love and labor. We have defined the “work” that Paul refers to here as the tasks to be done. The “labor” then is the effort we put into that task. The word “labor” means “to work arduously, to toil, to work to the point of exhaustion.” It is the attitude we have toward our work that determines the intensity with which we do the work. It should be our love that produces that intensity.

A person, or a church, that does not love will not labor. They may know what to do. They may have a faith that properly defines the work that they should be doing. But, if they do not have true love (not just affection, but true Biblical love), they simply will not do the work. The Thessalonian church had the love—and it showed in the intensity of their work for the Lord.

How important is love? Love is the thing that moves you in the direction that your faith points you. If you don’t see any motion in your life, it is because you do not love, or do not love enough.

Hope and Steadfastness

The third connection Paul makes in verse three is between hope and steadfastness. The Enhanced Strong's Lexicon tells us that in the New Testament the word "steadfastness" is used to describe "the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings." The result in our lives in this verse is described as endurance to the end, even through the most difficult times.

Now, what is it that produces that endurance in our lives? Paul said to the Thessalonians that it is hope. The word "hope" is surely one of the most misused words in our language today. When we say "hope" we usually mean "wish." We say we hope it rains—when there is not a cloud in the sky!

"Hope," at least as the Bible uses the word "hope," is something entirely different. It means a "joyful and confident expectation." What we hope for is what we expect to happen. When we speak of a "hope of heaven," but only think of heaven as a "long shot," it is no wonder we lose our endurance.

If you are discouraged and want to quit—especially when things are difficult, you need to work on your hope. If you do not have the right kind of hope, you will not endure. Faith gets us headed in the right direction. Love gets us moving. But, only hope keeps us moving when the going gets tough.

So, what the apostle Paul wrote to that relatively new and much tested church at Thessalonica was a commendation: I give thanks to God for your work defined by your faith, and your hard labor motivated by your love, and your steadfast endurance inspired by your hope.

Would that commendation be true of us? How is your faith in God—does it define what you do each week, or is your week defined by worldly idols? How is your love—does it get you moving in serving your Lord and others, or is it so weak that you are stuck in neutral? How about your hope—is it a confident expectation that drives you faithfully through the hard times, or is it a whimsical wish that lets you falter at every speed bump?

You may need to revitalize your faith, rekindle your love, and refortify your hope. This is done through a study of God's Word and fellowship with His devoted followers. If you would like to join in Bible study and fellowship with a group of Christians who truly want the best for you now and in eternity, then please come to one of our Bible study periods or Sunday worship assemblies.

**Written by Stan Crowley,
Schertz Church of Christ**

NEWS & NOTES

Please Pray

Inez Neyman, arthritis hindering her; **Tim & Lynn Wilkes**, traveling; **Wiley & Betty Tuggle**; **Several** traveling, some daily/weekly; **Jeffrey & Kaiden Ferrell**, routine cancer screenings; **Wiley Tuggle**.

NetCasters
Fishers of Men
Far East Missions

Family & Friends

Sharon Brewer, Chris' sister; **Virginia Johnson family**; **Jo Smith**, Jerry's aunt, successful hysterectomy recently; **Willie Grady**, aggressive leukemia, receiving treatments, now home; **Judy Dowelling**, Joe's mother; **Bill Fleming**, cancer in remission, but still receiving treatments and therapy; **Sue Brown**, Jared's grandmother; **Sharol Brown**, Jared's mother, to have medical procedure April 14; **Jenny Kraft**; **Deborah Williams**, Betty Duke's daughter, major eye complications; **Carl Zluticky**; **Linda McDonald**, friend of Sherry; **John Simpson** and family; **Mac Owen**; **Johnny & Joy Angel**, health problems; **Lottie McMahan**; **Sheila Culbreath Tubbs**; **Rhonda Cook**; **Wanda Coats**; **Henretta Newsom**; **Tammy Powell**; **Lawton O'Brien**; **Pat Hardison**; **Beverly Whitecotton**; **Peggy Hunt**; **Jason Spencer**; **John Smith**; **Elizabeth Baker**; **Janie Brister**; **Amanda Cummings**; **Danielle Key**; **Frankie Burfield**; **James Cooper**; **Renee Loya**; **Eli Williams**; **Ray Maples**; **Martha Hatfield**; **Bob Spurlin**.

Birthdays

4/1 Joe Owen
4/6 Ainsley Moore
4/18 Jeanna Wadsworth
4/20 Aubrey Ratliff
4/22 Chris Martin

Get Involved!

Providence Place Devo — TODAY — 2 PM

Bible Bowl — Apr 16, 4 PM @ Coldwater
John 19–21, potluck meal by all congregations

Youth Devo @ Tim & Rachel's — Apr 17 — 6 PM

Southaven Gospel Meeting — April 17–21

Coldwater Campout — April 21–23
@ Sardis Lake campground, nights of 21st & 22nd

Southaven Girl's Day, Lock-in — Apr 22 — 7 PM
See flyer in foyer for details

Privileged to Serve

Sunday, April 10

Morning

Prayer Before Class	Seth Daniel
Announcements	Andy Ratliff
Song Leader	Jared Brown
Lord's Supper:	
Preside	Jeffrey Ferrell
	Jason Bayless
Assist	Sammy Williams
	Noah Davis
Opening Prayer	Jerry Davis
Sermon	Clifton Angel
Closing Prayer	Russell Wadsworth

Afternoon

Song Leader	Jared Brown
Opening Prayer	Ron Johnson
Sermon	Clifton Angel
Lord's Supper	Jason Bayless
	Jeffrey Ferrell
Closing Prayer	Terry Davis

Wednesday, April 13

Song Leader	Jared Brown
Prayer	Jim Jackson
Invitation	Clifton Angel
Prayer	Andy Ratliff