

# TRIUMPHANT

— MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE —



Day & Time	07:00 AM to 09:00 AM	09:00 AM to 11:00 AM	11:00 AM to 11:30 AM	11:30 AM to 12:00 PM	12:00 PM to 1:00 PM	01:00 PM to 04:00 PM	04:00 PM to 04:30PM	04:30 PM to 06:00 PM	06:00 PM to 08:00PM	08:00 PM to 09:00 PM	09:00 PM to 10:00PM
6th April Thursday	Travelling to Barnstondale Centre										
7th April Friday	BREAKFAST	SESSION 2 PRAYER <small>Bro.Godfrey &amp; Fly</small>	TEA/COFFEE	ACTIVITY <small>Bro.Isaac &amp; Fly</small>	SESSION 3 PREACHING <small>PML</small>	LUNCH & BREAK	TEA/COFFEE	GAMES	SESSION 4 ROLE MODEL <small>WATFORD</small>	DINNER	QUIZ
8th April Saturday	BREAKFAST	SESSION 5 FAITH <small>ZOOM Home Grp</small>	TEA/COFFEE	T SHIRT GROUP PHOTO	SESSION 6 LOVE <small>YOUNG ADULTS</small>	LUNCH & BREAK	TEA/COFFEE	Q&A	SESSION CONCLUSION HOPE <small>YOUTH</small>	DINNER	PASSING THE PARCEL
9th April Sunday	BREAKFAST	EASTER JOINT SERVICE <small>Rayners Lane</small>	TEA/COFFEE	GROUP PHOTO	LUNCH & BREAK	TEA/COFFEE	TEA/COFFEE	TREASURE HUNT	CAMPFIRE & BBQ		
10th April Monday	BREAKFAST	Travelling Back to Harrow									
									-		-



# Contents

1. Triumphant.....	1
Events Leading to Paul's Coming to Thessalonica .....	4
The Occasion for the Epistle .....	9
The Two Compared.....	10
The Order of the Letters.....	10
Date of the Letters .....	11
Conclusion .....	12
2. Prayer .....	14
1. Praying Always! .....	16
How did they get that way?.....	17
2. Prayer for growing love more and more! .....	17
3. Prayer for being holy!.....	17
4. Prayer for accepting the Word of God.....	18
5. Prayer to walk worthy of your call.....	18
6. Prayer for Lord's name be glorified.....	19
7. Strengthened in Faith .....	19
8. Prayer for encouragement and Hope.....	19
9. Prayer for Protection from Evil one.....	19
10. Prayer for God's presence, Grace, and Peace.....	20
11. Prayer to see them in person.....	20
Conclusion .....	21
Why is this church the way it is?.....	22
3. Preaching - Proclamation .....	24
What is the greatest confirmation in my heart? .....	28
Preaching the Gospel.....	31
When Gospel comes.....	32
When Gospel comes to a city.....	32
When Gospel comes to a family.....	32
When Gospel comes to an individual.....	33

Conclusion.....	36
4. Role Model.....	38
As a mother .....	45
As a Father.....	50
1. Realize your inadequacy.....	55
2. Deep study of the Word of God.....	56
3. Accept Suffering. ....	56
4. Give your whole life. ....	56
5. Faith works.....	59
Faith and works.....	64
Paul and James on Justification.....	67
How do we have faith that works in the midst of persecution?.....	69
How do they remain faithful?.....	71
Impatient for God's Restoration.....	71
Desperate for God's Restoration. ....	72
Dependent upon God's Restoration.....	73
Conclusion.....	74
6. Labour of Love .....	76
What identifies a saved person?.....	78
Love that labours .....	78
What kind of inner and outer action did Paul call love? .....	83
What is the love which Paul saw here?.....	83
1. God will never forget our Love for Him .....	84
2. God will never forget our Service.....	85
How do we develop a ministry? .....	87
3. God will never forget the Sacrifices.....	88
Conclusion.....	89
7. Patient Hope .....	92
Patient Hope .....	95
What is hope? .....	95

What do we mean by hope? .....	96
1. Hope changes how we see ourselves. ....	99
2. Hope changes what we value. ....	99
3. Hope changes life priorities. ....	99
Rewards of Hope .....	100
How can you increase in your hope? .....	101
Conclusion .....	105



## 1. Triumphant



**1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**, 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. <sup>2</sup>We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, <sup>4</sup>knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. <sup>8</sup>For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. <sup>9</sup>For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

The city was a commercial centre.

Thessalonica, the largest, most populous city in Asia Minor.

## 1. Triumphant

Commercially thriving, economically flourishing, a trade centre. It was located at the center of the Thermaic Gulf, giving it a strategic port.

It ran right through the middle of the main highway east and west, known as the Egnatian Highway, which was the trade route. So, it was a crossroads.

It had multi-languages, multi-groups of people populating it though Greek was the dominant language.

It was founded in about **316 A.D.**, which puts it about **350 years** before Paul came there.

The city was founded by **Cassander**, who at the time was the **king of Macedonia**.

The city was named after his wife, **Thessalonica**, who was the half-sister of **Alexander the Great**.



Now, at the time, Claudius was the Roman Emperor, and Claudius was crazy.

He was a slobbering, stuttering crazy man. He had taken the throne because Gaius had been murdered and so he was not really the most fit, but despite that he was able to accommodate the Roman world with a peaceful period of time. It was during that peaceful

period of time that the ministry could occur to Thessalonica.

**Thessalonica** was a cosmopolitan metropolis like **Corinth**, inhabited by peoples from all over the known world.

- **Barbaric Germanic** peoples from the north were living there, bringing with them their pagan religion and culture.
- **Greeks** lived there, coming from Achaia to the south and from the islands of the Aegean Sea, in turn bringing their refinement and philosophy.
- **Romans** from the west also settled there. They were mostly retired soldiers, and they brought their strength of will, wealth and political power.
- **Jews** came in large numbers from the east; eventually one third of the population was Jewish. They brought with them their ethical monotheistic faith and their national prejudices.

## 1. *Triumphant*

With a population of about 200,000, Thessalonica was truly a cosmopolitan city.

It was a resort and health centre because of the hot springs.

It was a commercial centre because of its seaport, fertile plains and the proximity of the Ignatian Way.

Crime was rampant in the city of Thessalonica.

Archaeology has told us that in many of the homes built in that city there were no windows. And the indication is the crime was so rampant that the people built their houses without windows because they were so fearful.

From history that the city was a mixture of wealthy people, a very small middle class of farmers and craftsmen and shopkeepers, and then a large majority of slaves.

So, there was tension and turmoil in the city.

Immorality was rampant.

Prostitution was highly organized. Obscene pictures, they tell us, were painted all over the walls of the buildings and outside of the houses all over the city. They didn't know how to abort babies in those days but they wanted to get rid of them so babies were abandoned all over the city, particularly girl babies because they couldn't work as hard as boys.

Murder was common.

Divorce was frequent.

In the sea of paganism was this little island to the glory of God, the Thessalonian church.

Notes

## 1. Triumphant

### ***Events Leading to Paul's Coming to Thessalonica***

Many events led Paul to Thessalonica, yet behind all the physical circumstances is the direct, definite call of God.

Paul had not originally planned to enter the European continent. His desire on this second missionary journey was to revisit the churches in Asia Minor that he had established on his first journey and then to turn eastward.

Yet, just as the moment arrived to turn north-eastward, God started closing the doors.

The culmination of this was Paul's Macedonian vision.

*Acts 16:6-10, Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. <sup>7</sup> When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. <sup>8</sup> So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. <sup>9</sup> During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." <sup>10</sup> After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

This caused two things to happen: first, the continent of Europe was evangelized.

Paul, because of circumstances in Macedonia, began writing his Epistles.

After noting the above spiritual direction, the physical circumstances that led Paul to Thessalonica were.

Paul went to **Philippi**, a small town with no synagogue.

His work there was thwarted by the owners of a prophetic, demonic slave girl and the town council. Paul was beaten and humiliated yet a church was formed even in the midst of all this. Because of the opposition and physical punishment, Paul was forced to leave, possibly sooner than he had wished.

### **(Acts 16:11-40)**

These circumstances forced the missionaries to leave Philippi. So, after encouraging the new believers, the missionary team left the city (though Luke may have stayed behind temporarily) and journeyed on through Amphipolis and Appollonia to the important city of Thessalonica.

Paul's strategy took him to the larger cities and for a very good reason. It was not because they had no burden for these people, but because it was Paul's strategy to minister in the

## 1. Triumphant

larger cities with a view to having those churches reach out into the smaller communities as people naturally moved in and out of the larger and busier cities.

Thessalonica even contained a synagogue because the city had attracted Jewish merchants and Paul found this a natural place to begin.

A lot of traffic with people moving in and out of the city from the surrounding regions.

Once people were led to Christ and trained, these new converts could take the gospel to other regions and vastly multiply Paul's ministry.

Further, Paul could more easily practice his trade and support himself in a city like Thessalonica (**Acts 18:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8**).

Though Paul was commissioned to carry the gospel to the Gentiles (**Acts 9:15; Ephesians 3:1-12**), it was his policy to begin his ministry among the Jews, usually at the local synagogue where the Old Testament was known and revered.

Paul could get a sympathetic hearing in the synagogue, at least until persecution began.

Furthermore, there were always many Gentile "God-fearers" in the synagogues, and through them Paul could begin a witness to the pagan Gentiles.

Add to this Paul's great burden for the Jews (**Romans 9:1-3** and **10:1**), and the historical principle of "To the Jew first" (**Romans 1:16**), and you can see why Paul and his associates began their work in the synagogue.

***Acts 17:1-9**, When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. <sup>2</sup> As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. <sup>4</sup> Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.*

*<sup>5</sup> But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. <sup>6</sup> But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, <sup>7</sup> and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." <sup>8</sup> When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. <sup>9</sup> Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.*

## 1. *Triumphant*

The converts at Thessalonica included Jews and a great multitude of devout Greeks who were attracted by the monotheism and morality of Judaism and who had attached themselves to the synagogue (**Acts 17:4**).

Some of the believers were of the upper classes, but most were apparently of the working class since Paul refused to accept any financial aid while he was there.

This response drew people away from the Jewish community which angered the Jews and caused them to resort to violence and mob activity.

They attacked the home of Jason, Paul's host, and dragged him before the rulers where he was charged with harbouring traitors to Caesar. This charge of treason is the first recorded after the trial of Jesus before Pilate and could have been an outgrowth of the eschatological preaching of Paul at Thessalonica as seen in these epistles.

After Jason put up a bond, forfeitable if there was further trouble, Paul and his cohorts were freed and journeyed on to Berea.

They were soon driven from Berea also by Jews who pursued them from Thessalonica (**Acts 17:5-14**).

From there they went to Athens where Timothy joined the team, but he was quickly sent back to the young church at Thessalonica to check on their condition.

It is not so surprising that, due to the glorious nature of the message of the gospel, people came to Christ and churches were founded across the country.

The amazing thing, considering the pagan atmosphere in which the new converts were immersed, is that they grew, reached out, and endured.

Except for the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles who attended the synagogue, the greater body of converts came to Christ from outright paganism. They were surrounded with a culture of heathenism and gross immorality.

This led to enormous temptation to return to their old ways and significant persecution if they refused to recant their faith in Christ.

After every new conquest, annoying guerrilla warfare was set up behind them.

Heathenism and immorality, in a thousand forms, were always pressing in upon the territory that had been won.

The early converts were often made of very feeble clay.

They had only begun to understand the principles of the Christian life.

## 1. Triumphant

When Paul had left them, when they were thrown upon their resources, would they not simply drift back to their old ways?

This question must always have filled Paul with anxiety. In facing it he needed all his faith in the power of God.

Paul was driven out of a new church before his work in it was done. With what eagerness, after such a forcible departure, must Paul have awaited the first news of the youthful church!

In First Thessalonians we discover just how Paul felt when the first news arrived. First Thessalonians is the only one of the Pauline epistles which was written at just such a time. Hence its peculiar interest.

As with Philippi, the Apostle had been driven out of Thessalonica by persecution from the Jews and from there he had gone on to Berea.

But even in Berea the hatred of the Jews had pursued him, so the Berean believers escorted the Apostle to Athens. It appears that since Silas and Timothy had not been as conspicuous as Paul, they were able to remain at Berea (**Acts 17:11-15**).

Paul had been virtually expelled as a troublemaker from one Macedonian city after another.

But the missionaries had been forced to leave these young converts abruptly, quite inadequately equipped with the instruction and encouragement necessary to enable them to stand firm in the face of determined opposition.

Would their immature faith prove equal to the challenge?

It did, outstandingly so, but this could not have been foreseen.

The first gospel campaign in Macedonia, in the light of the sequel, can be recognized as an illustrious success, but at the time when Paul was compelled to leave the province it must have been felt as a heart-breaking failure.

Thessalonica to Athens and then to Corinth.

**(Acts 17:16-18:17)**

Paul instructed the returning Bereans to have Silas and Timothy join him immediately at Athens.

***Acts 17:15**, Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.*

## 1. *Triumphant*

Paul then sent Timothy back to Macedonia for the purpose of strengthening and encouraging the Thessalonian believers and to bring back a report about their faith and spiritual condition. Silas was probably sent on a similar mission to Philippi.

While these two co-workers were gone, Paul, having experienced a relatively fruitless ministry at Athens.

### **(Acts 17:16-34)**

Paul left Athens and went to the city of Corinth. There he enjoyed a spiritually prosperous ministry for a year and a half.

If the stay in Athens was about two months, his arrival in Corinth must have been in **December, A.D. 49, or January, A.D. 50**. If we allow time for Timothy's round trip to Thessalonica on foot and also time for his ministry in Thessalonica, then he and Silas probably returned to Paul from Macedonia in the spring of **A.D. 50**.

Timothy's report on Thessalonica was so encouraging that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians almost immediately.

Notes

## 1. Triumphant

### *The Occasion for the Epistle*



From Timothy's report and perhaps also as the result of a letter brought to him from the Thessalonian church, Paul learned about the situation and the needs of the believers at Thessalonica.

He learned about the spiritual stamina of the Thessalonian converts in the face of fierce persecution and opposition.

But Paul also learned the disturbing news of how the Jews had slandered him accusing him of teaching error and false motives. The nature of their slander has been accurately captured by Frame:

Among other things, the Jews had asserted (**I Thessalonians 2:1-12**) that in general Paul's religious appeal arose in error, meaning that his gospel was not a divine

reality but a human delusion.

It arose in impurity, hinting that the enthusiastic gospel of the Spirit led him into immorality.

Paul, like the pagan itinerant impostors of religious or philosophical cults was working solely for his selfish advantage.

Furthermore and specifically the Jews had alleged that Paul, when he was in Thessalonica, had fallen into cajoling address, had indulged in false pretences to cover his greed, and had demanded honour from the converts, as was his wont, using his position as an apostle of Christ to tax his credulous hearers.

Finally, in proof of their assertions, they pointed to the unquestioned fact that Paul had not returned, the inference being that he did not care for his converts and that he had no intention of returning.

The fact that Paul found it expedient to devote three chapters of his first letter to a defence against these attacks is evidence suspicion of some of the converts was aroused and that the danger of their being beguiled away from the faith was imminent.

There was also the report about the confusion that existed on the part of some regarding the return of the Lord and the Day of the Lord.

## 1. Triumphant

Some wondered how the return of the Lord might affect one or more of the converts who had since died (4:13-18).

Due to the intensity of the persecutions, it appears some thought that “the Day of the Lord” had arrived so this issue also had to be addressed (5:1-15).

Finally, Paul learned of certain weaknesses in the church that needed to be dealt with. They were under pressure to return to their former lifestyles (3:2-3; 4:1-10), some members were not working in view of the imminency of the return of the Lord (4:11-12; 2 Thess. 3:6ff.),

some were not showing the respect that was needed for their leaders, and there was confusion in regard to the public gatherings together (5:19-21).

At the time he writes he's in Corinth and he has been through persecution and hostility and pains and struggles that came along with his ministry.

Paul in the midst of the tremendous trials of his life, he has at least this about which he can celebrate, the Thessalonian church, that little island of purity in the sea of paganism.

And so, he celebrates their consecration to Christ.

In doing so, reveals in this first chapter the ingredients in a church that is to be celebrated.

The ingredients in a church for which you can really praise God.

There are basically two, just two.

A church that is worthy to be celebrated is a church where the role of the leaders is right and where the response of the people is right.

### ***The Two Compared***

The two letters are very similar, not only in ideas, but also in actual phraseology. If the opening and closing formula language are excluded, resemblances still occur in about one-third of the material.

The general tone of 2 Thessalonians is different from the first letter, being colder and more formal. Yet this can easily be understood when one sees the emotional circumstances involved in the writing of the first letter and the developed problems of the second letter.

### ***The Order of the Letters***

The trials and tribulations are at their height in 2 Thessalonians but are past in 1 Thessalonians.

## 1. Triumphant

In 2 Thessalonians the internal difficulties are spoken of as a new development of which the author of the letter has just learned, whereas in 1 Thessalonians the circumstances were familiar to all concerned.

The Thessalonians have no need to be instructed about times and seasons (1 Thess. 5:1) is very relevant if they are acquainted with 2 Thessalonians 2.

The formula "Now concerning..." in 1 Thess. 4:9, 13; 5:1, is like that in I Cor. 7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1,12, where the writer is replying to points raised in a letter sent to him.

### ***Date of the Letters***

The date for the writing of the Thessalonian Letters is one of the most certain dates we have involving Paul's letters. It is recorded that while Paul was in "Corinth he was arrested and brought before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia."

An inscription discovered at Delphi answers a question referred to the Emperor Claudius by this same Gallio. It was dated in the twelfth year of the Emperor's tribunal power and after his twenty-sixth acclamation as Emperor.

This twelfth year was from 25 January A.D. 52 through 24 January A.D. 53. While the date of the twenty-sixth acclamation is not exactly known, the twenty-seventh was before 1 August A.D. 52.

Claudius' decision would have been given to Gallio during the first half of 52.

Now, proconsuls usually took office in early summer and held office for one year. It would seem, therefore, Gallio entered his term of office in the early summer of 51.

This dating of the term of office of the proconsul does not completely solve all the problems of the dating of the Thessalonian Letters.

Paul was in Corinth for 18 months (**Acts 18:11**) but at which time he appeared before Gallio is not known. Most commentators date I and 2 Thessalonians in **A.D. 50-51**.

Notes

## **Conclusion**

This baby church excelled in every area of their Christian walk.

My prayer for our church is that we will become like the Thessalonian Church in our cities.

There are six things we will look in detail in this camp.

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Preaching**
- 3. Role Model**
- 4. Faith,**
- 5. Love,**
- 6. Hope.**

The circumstances in the first century for the Thessalonica and now for us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is similar.

The challenges are similar.

We could excel like them.

Personally I would like to celebrate our church the way you have responded during the time Covid Pandemic is commendable.

Brothers and sisters helped one another materially, physically, financially and every possible way.

This camp mainly to celebrate our church as a Triumphant Church and let us make joyful noise to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Notes

# 1. *Triumphant*

## 2. Prayer



**1** *Thessalonians 1:1-10*, 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, labour 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. **6** And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. **8** For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. **9** For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, **10** and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

As we look at particularly Paul's ministry to this church, he gives insights into the essential qualities that must be found in one who would pastor or be an elder or a leader in a church that's worth praising God for.

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

Prayer is going to be very obvious to us. The role of the pastor begins with prayer.

**Acts 6:3-4**, *Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them <sup>4</sup> and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."*

First came prayer.

Prayer puts the pastor in the role of a priest who takes the people to God. They lift the people to the presence of God and bring them with all their needs to the throne in prayer.

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

He was always praying for them!

He was always committed to remembering them in his prayers. This was the pattern for Paul.

**Romans 1:9-10**, *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, <sup>10</sup> making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you.*

**Colossians 1:3**, *We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*

In Thessalonians it's the same thing again and his prayer is filled with thanks.

Paul and his companions prayed for them.

It wasn't just Paul. *"We give thanks"* and the verse ends, *"our prayers."*

**2 Thessalonians 1:3**, *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,*

I really believe that the priority that we see in the role of the pastor in a church that's worth celebrating is a team of men committed to pray for the people.

It is essential for a church that will be blessed, a team of pastors intimately concerned about the spiritual well-being of their congregation so that regularly, personally, individually they carry them to God as priests, bearing up their needs and their burdens.

Notes

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

Paul prayed for his people.

- ? *What was the basis of his prayer?*
- ? *What was the heart of his prayer?*
- ? *What did he pray?*

It was not the physical, but spiritual.

Paul basically prayed for their spiritual strength, their spiritual mastery.

Paul prayed that they would be master over,

- the things of the world,
- the devil,
- sin,
- the flesh and
- they would know the strength of victory.

He prayed for their spiritual strength.

He prayed that they would match up their life with their calling.

He prayed that their practice would be like their position in Christ.

He prayed that they would tap all the divine resource available to them.

He prayed that they would know the fullness of potential.

The prayer of the pastor for his people is a prayer that they would have spiritual mastery, that they would cease to be victims of the world, the flesh, and the devil and that they would become victors over that.

#### **1. Praying Always!**

**1 Thessalonians 3:9-10**, *For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, <sup>10</sup> night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?*

I could just thank you and thank you and thank God for you.

You are a church that causes joy. You are a church to celebrate.

Notes

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

#### ***How did they get that way?***

He prayed for their perfection.

That's one of the elements of praying for spiritual mastery.

You pray for someone's perfection, their maturity. That's been on the hearts of your pastors.

You can thank God, you can celebrate this church, you can praise God for this church because the leaders and the brothers and sisters of this church have faithfully prayed for your spiritual maturity night and day, exceedingly, that they might see your faith brought to maturity.

#### ***2. Prayer for growing love more and more!***

Paul prayed for was their love and their love that would bring about a wonderful unity and their love that would reach out to the ones outside who were lost.

***1 Thessalonians 3:11-12***, Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

They already had love. They were taught of God to love. But they needed to abound more and more in it.

***2 Thessalonians 3:5***, Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

#### ***3. Prayer for being holy!***

***1 Thessalonians 3:13***, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

Because the call is to live like Jesus Christ and being holy.

***1 Thessalonians 4:3***, For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

***1 Thessalonians 5:23***, Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

***2 Thessalonians 2:13***, But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

#### 4. Prayer for accepting the Word of God

**1 Thessalonians 2:13**, For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

**2 Thessalonians 2:17**, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

#### 5. Prayer to walk worthy of your call.



**1 Thessalonians 2:11-12**, For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,<sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

What more we can ask from the leaders to pray for the church than to make sure that they walk according to their call.

When they walk in their call it does glorify God!

When they glorify God in their walk then it manifests His glory on the earth.

**2 Thessalonians 1:11**, Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

Notes

**6. Prayer for Lord name be glorified.**

**2 Thessalonians 1:12**, We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Thessalonians 2:14**, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**7. Strengthened in Faith**

**2 Thessalonians 1:4**, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

**1 Thessalonians 3:5-9**, For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labour might be in vain. <sup>6</sup> But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you— <sup>7</sup> therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. <sup>8</sup> For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. <sup>9</sup> For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God,

**8. Prayer for encouragement and Hope.**

**2 Thessalonians 2:16**, Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,

**9. Prayer for Protection from Evil one.**



**2 Thessalonians 3:3**, But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.

**Matthew 6:13**, And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

#### 10. Prayer for God's presence, Grace, and Peace.

**2 Thessalonians 3:16-18**, Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. <sup>17</sup> The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. <sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Paul overall wants his people to be spiritually in control by the Spirit of God, having the victory, not being defeated.

Having spiritual mastery over the world, the flesh, and the devil. To get to that end he prays for their spiritual maturity.

Paul prays for their abounding love toward one another and the lost.

He prays for their holiness.

He prays for their consistency, for their usefulness, for their peace, comfort, tranquillity, serenity of heart amidst't trial and pain and suffering and death.

#### 11. Prayer to see them in person.

**1 Thessalonians 2:17**, But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured more eagerly to see your face with great desire.

Seeing them in person not to eat or have any other agenda but to impart spiritual gifts and encouraged in each other faith.

**Romans 1:11-12**, I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— <sup>12</sup> that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

Notes

## **Conclusion**

**Henry Martyn**, great missionary to India, finished a brilliant academic career at Cambridge University, and he was impressed in his heart deeply that God had called him to the mission field.

Several lucrative vocations were offered to him. They were attractive on a worldly basis. He turned them all down and he wrote this: *"Here I am, Lord. Send me to the ends of the earth, send me to the rough, the savage pagans of the wilderness. Send me to all that is called comfort on earth. Send me even to death itself if it but be in Thy service and in Thy kingdom."*

### **A great prayer!**

*He was master over the attractions of the world.*

*He was master over the comforts of the flesh.*

*He was master over the allurements of society.*

*He was master over his fears.*

### **Send me, Lord.**

Like a lot of young men, he fell in love. He fell deeply in love with a young lady named Lydia.

He told her of his call from God to go to the mission field. He told her that he believed that God wanted him to live the rest of his life and minister in the name of Jesus Christ in India.

He asked her, "Will you go with me?"

He pleaded with her.

Lydia answered to him, *"If you stay in England, I will marry you. If you go to India, I won't."*

In heartbreak he went away to think. He said it was like a drum beating in his heart, Lydia or India, Lydia or India, Lydia or India.

Heaven will be populated with unnumbered thousands of people who will bless God throughout eternity that it was India not Lydia.

Pain-drenched and yet triumphant in his spirit, he wrote: "My dear Lydia and my duty call me different ways, yet God has not forsaken me. I am born for God alone."

Mastery over the normal desire of the heart, over the allurements of life.

He went and he spent himself.

For that Paul prays for his people that they should see themselves born for God alone.

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

#### **Why is this church the way it is?**

We are not perfect.

We are not even the best there is. But we are blessed of God and God has shown Himself in our midst.

It is in great measure related to the fact that the people of this fellowship around the world have prayed for the people.

*"I take it that as a minister one is always praying. Whenever his mind turns to his work, whether he is in it or out of it, he raises a petition, sending up his holy desires as well directed arrows to the skies. He is not always in the act of prayer, but he lives in the spirit of it. If his heart be in his work, he cannot eat or drink or take recreation or go to his bed or rise in the morning without ever more feeling a fervency of desire, a weight of anxiety and a simplicity of dependence on God. Thus, in one form or other, he continues in prayer. If there be any man under heaven who is compelled to carry out the precept 'pray without ceasing,' surely it is the Christian minister". Spurgeon*

**1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing."**

*What Paul asked the church in Thessalonica to do?*

Paul asked them to do what he himself did.

All these churches he writes to, he says, "We pray for you continually."

*Can you imagine how long his list was?*

You must believe that the man not only had times for prayer and times when he gathered with others to prayer, but there were times, all times, when his mind and his heart was open to God and there was a continual flow of petition and thanks and praise.

There are no gimmicks.

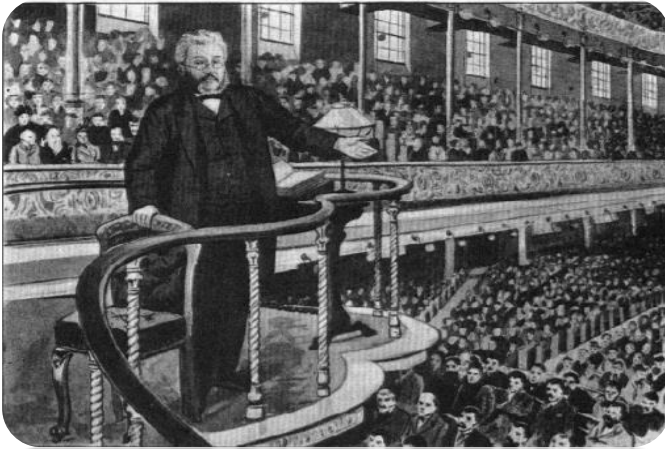
A church is a church to celebrate truly and honestly when it's a church carried to God by those who are the priests who offer up unceasing prayers on the behalf of the people.

We can thank God for such.

I thank God for those men gathered around me who are faithful to pray.

### *3. Preaching - Proclamation*

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation



**1** *Thessalonians 1:1-10, 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. <sup>2</sup> We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup> remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, <sup>4</sup> knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup> so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. <sup>8</sup> For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. <sup>9</sup> For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

**V 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.*

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

Another essential to a church that is going to be one to celebrate.

*"Our gospel."*

It isn't because he invented it, it's because he preached it.

It became his because he was its preacher, as well as the others.

**Romans 2:16**, *in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.*

**Romans 16:25**, *Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began*

**2 Timothy 2:8**, *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,*

Paul uses the word my to emphasize the difference between his calling to preach the gospel to the uncircumcised and the apostle Peter's calling to preach the gospel to the circumcised.

Paul was destined from birth to be the first apostle to be called by God to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

That was the ministry God entrusted to him. The content of the gospel, whether to Jews or Gentiles, was the same for both audiences.

However, the Jews who became followers of Jesus Christ did not imagine non-Jews as even being worthy of the gospel, as **Peter** demonstrated so well in **Acts 10**.

So, Peter in believing Gentiles were "unclean," God had to give him the same vision three times! He finally got the message. Peter received the attitude adjustment he so desperately needed.

He went from saying "*Not so, Lord,*" to "*I should not call anyone impure or unclean.*"

Paul's gospel" did not belong to him. His ministry to his primary audience, the Gentiles.

Furthermore, until the believing Jews, including Peter, caught up with God, and were on the same page as God regarding the Gentiles. Paul would find himself defending his ministry and its message the gospel that in Christ.

Paul says, "It came not in word only."

- It wasn't a lecture.
- It wasn't just sermon.
- It wasn't a speech.

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

He didn't just deliver information.

- It didn't come that way.
- It wasn't academic.
- It wasn't dry.
- It wasn't dead.
- It came in the power of the Spirit of God.

It came with dynamite. In fact, the dynamite was so powerful it blew up all their idols.

*V 9, For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,*

The message came with power.

We have heard the insipid messages without power, not energized by the Holy Spirit though they may have been out of the Bible.

We have heard messages energized by the power of the Spirit of God and we know the difference, hopefully.

It's a tragic thing that so many times the Bible is discussed and talked about and lectured on and preached on and so forth void of the Spirit's power.

Some people have heard people teach out of the Bible but it's so dead and so lifeless and without dynamic that they think the Bible is a dull, boring, dead book.

That's why I tell pastors all the time, if your life isn't right and you are not walking in the Spirit and you can't get excited about the Word of God and preach it in the power of the Spirit of God.

Then don't preach the Bible because it's the ultimate crime to bore people with the Word of God.

The Bible should come in the power of the Spirit.

*Acts 1:8, But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

**Charles Spurgeon**, when he went to preach on Sundays, always had the same routine. He would climb those stairs to his pulpit, it was up high, and on every step, he would say,

*"I believe in the Holy Spirit, I believe in the Holy Spirit, I believe in the Holy Spirit, I believe in the Holy Spirit, I believe in the Holy Spirit."*

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

When he got to the top, he knew he believed in the Holy Spirit. He preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, energized, committed to the Spirit.

***Zechariah 4:6***, So he answered and said to me: *“This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the Lord of hosts.*

What the world needs, what the church needs is Spirit-filled pastors, pure lives so that it's the Spirit of God energizing the Word of God, so important.

When the vessel is pure, and the call is clear and the Word is rightly divided, the message comes with power, conviction.

That is cause for celebration because you are hearing God speak in the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Paul's gospel message was entirely of Christ, and so Paul stands alone in calling it “the gospel of Christ” and “Christ's gospel”, but that he also calls it “my gospel” can only be explained by the fact that Christ gave it first to Paul exclusively.

No one else in scripture could claim “my gospel”.

We learned the gospel from Paul's writings, and the twelve apostles taught the same gospel as John the Baptist and of which the prophets spoke (**Mark 1:4; Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19-21**).

Paul repeatedly says that the dispensation of the grace of God was given to him (**Ephesians 3:2; 3:7; Colossians 1:25; Rom 15:15**).

The Lord revealed to Paul a mystery kept secret since the world began.

A “dispensation of the gospel” was committed unto him.

His gospel was not received by man, nor was it of man, but given to him first by the Lord.

***Galatians 1:1***, Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),

***Galatians 1:11***, But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

Even Peter had to learn that God had given Paul further information about God's grace.

***Galatians 2:9***, and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

It was truly his gospel from Christ, and it was his responsibility to preach his gospel wherever he went.

**Ephesian 3:8-9**, *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

The result of it is marvellous.

**V 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.*

People come to a church like this because they believe in their hearts, they are assured of hearing the Word of God. That's why they are here because we teach the Word of God in the power of the Spirit of God.

Your heart says to you that's the Word of God.

I see it, I believe it.

**1 Thessalonians 2:4-5**, *But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. <sup>5</sup> For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness.*

#### ***What is the greatest confirmation in my heart?***

It is the fact that when I commit myself to the Holy Spirit.

I stand up here and I ask the Spirit of God to empower me to preach His Word.

You are out there filled with the Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit in me proclaims the Word and the Holy Spirit in you receives it as the Word with assurance, we can be confirmed that we're on the same wavelength!

It is the confirmation in your heart that this is the Word of God.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13**, *For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

Exactly that is what Paul is saying that when we preach to you, you weren't just sitting there analytically saying,

- a very nice sermon you are giving.
- really appreciate good thoughts,
- very nice illustrations.

### *3. Preaching - Proclamation*

No, but you are sensing the power of God on your heart and your heart is saying it's true, it is the Word of God.

The assurance that comes on the other end of the line.

You go to a place where a person doesn't preach the Word of God or doesn't preach the Word of God in the energy of the Holy Spirit and you are going to walk out of there and you are going to say to yourself, "I don't know whether he is telling me the truth or not."

#### **Why?**

Because it isn't energized by the Spirit.

We celebrate the reality of the fact that a Spirit-filled pastor, Spirit-filled elders, Spirit-filled teachers communicating to you the Word of God.

Holy Spirit dwelling in you affirming to your heart that it is God's message, that's assurance!

I believe people are in this church because they have a sense of assurance that they will hear the Word of God.

It is no testimony to our brilliance.

We confess like Paul that we are not going to stand on the words of men and the wisdom of men but we are going to preach the Word of God.

Many pastors don't believe it's really the Word of God in every part.

But I believe it is the Word of God in every part and I believe the God who wanted us to understand it made us able to understand it by His Spirit.

Your heart confirms that.

The great, sweeping truths of Scripture, the Spirit gives testimony in all our hearts that this is true.

In the Thessalonian church, when Paul said it, Spirit-filled and in power and when the others with him said it, their hearts were turned to it and they said, because the Spirit in them was the same Spirit, this is true.

#### **I fear two things in the ministry.**

1. I should ever deviate from the Word of God.
2. I should ever stand here without the power of the Holy Spirit.

I don't fear opposition, I welcome it.

I don't fear somebody who disagrees with me.

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

What I fear is the loss of the power of the Spirit of God in my life, or a failure to articulate His Word.

Now you know why I never want to deviate from the Bible.

You will never hear me speak on politics.

You will never hear me give opinions on stuff even though all my opinions are right.

If you ask me in private, I will give them to you.

But you are not going to hear me stand in this place which is the place of the articulating of the Word of God in the power of the Spirit of God and give you my opinion on something.

Paul says we came, and we preached.

We preached in the power of the Spirit of God.

The Word of God promises that if we teach His Word filled with His Spirit, it will come across and it will assure the hearts of those who hear.

You can't understand the truth of God without the Holy Spirit of God.

We must preach the Word, and only the Word.

*"We affirm that the only type of preaching which sufficiently conveys the divine revelation and its proper application to life is that which faithfully expounds the whole biblical text as the Word of God."*

*"We deny that the preacher has any message from God apart from the biblical text."*

There's no word from God unless it comes out of this Bible.

There aren't any visions. There aren't any loose revelations running around.

There aren't any human opinions that stand at this level. The only message we can say we have from God is His Word and the only way it comes across is when it's energized by the Spirit.

---

*"If I only had three years to minister, I would spend the first two studying and preparing and the last one preaching." **Dr. Barnhouse***

---

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

#### **Why?**

Because he wanted to make sure he got the message from God out of His Word.

#### ***Preaching the Gospel.***

To preach the gospel is to state every doctrine contained in God's Word, and to give every truth its proper prominence.

Men may preach a part of the gospel. They may only preach one single doctrine of it. I would not say that a man did not preach the gospel at all if he did but maintain the doctrine of justification by faith.

No man can be said to preach the whole gospel of God if he leaves it out, knowingly and intentionally, one single truth of the blessed God.

*Is the whole gospel intended to convert sinners?*

There are some truths which God blesses to the conversion of sinners.

But there are many other portions which were intended for the comfort of the saints.

These truths also to be a subject of gospel ministry as well as the others.

*Can you focus at one and disregard the other?*

No!

Some men purposely confine themselves to four or five topics continually. **Should you step into their church?**

To preach the gospel is to exalt Jesus Christ.

When the preacher is in a right relationship with God and the people in the pews are praying for him, then God's power flows, souls are saved, and Christians are blessed.

**1 Kings 22:14**, *And Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak."*

The Spirit promises to make clear and energize the Word of God not the word of man.

**1 Kings 17:1**, *And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."*

**Jeremiah 42:1-6**, *Now all the captains of the forces, Johanan the son of Kareah, Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people, from the least to the greatest, came near<sup>2</sup> and said to Jeremiah the prophet, "Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and pray for us to*

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

*the Lord your God, for all this remnant (since we are left but a few of many, as you can see),<sup>3</sup> that the Lord your God may show us the way in which we should walk and the thing we should do.”<sup>4</sup> Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, “I have heard. Indeed, I will pray to the Lord your God according to your words, and it shall be, that whatever the Lord answers you, I will declare it to you. I will keep nothing back from you.”<sup>5</sup> So they said to Jeremiah, “Let the Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the Lord your God sends us by you.”<sup>6</sup> Whether it is pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God to whom we send you, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the Lord our God.”*

#### **When Gospel comes.**

The important thing to notice here is that the gospel was not only known, loved, and possessed by Paul, but it was communicated by him.

There was a time when the Thessalonians were without the gospel, and then suddenly it “came” to them.

What a wonderful thing it is when the gospel comes to a city, to a family or to an individual for the first time!

#### **When Gospel comes to a city.**

*Acts 17:1-4, Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.<sup>2</sup> Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,<sup>3</sup> 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.”<sup>4</sup> 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.*

*Acts 8:5-8, Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.<sup>6</sup> And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.<sup>7</sup> For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.<sup>8</sup> And there was great joy in that city.*

#### **When Gospel comes to a family.**

*Acts 16:14-15, Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.<sup>15</sup> And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.*

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

**Acts 16:25-34**, *But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. <sup>26</sup> Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. <sup>27</sup> And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. <sup>28</sup> But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."*

*<sup>29</sup> Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." <sup>32</sup> Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup> And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. <sup>34</sup> Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.*

#### **When Gospel comes to an individual.**

**Acts 8:26-39**, Ethiopian Eunuch

**Acts 9:1-19**; Paul.

**Acts 10:1-48**. Cornelius.

Has the gospel come to you, and if so, are you communicating it?

**Mark 16:15**, *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*

#### **Deep conviction**

Paul is saying that when he preached he did so with tremendous authority, under the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Brought an overwhelming sense of conviction into the hearts and minds of those who heard the Word.

There is a desperate need for this kind of preaching and testifying today.

#### **What happens when preachers preach with deep conviction?**

- a) the people press in to hear the Word.
- b) they tremble when they listen to it.
- c) there is no room for complacency, for God's power is present in a marvellous way.
- d) we witness the Lord's work through the preaching of the Word.



### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

When we preach the gospel, whether to the crowd or the individual, if it is the gospel, God's Word?

#### ***It has power in it.***

**Romans 1:16**, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

#### ***It is living and active.***

**Hebrews 4:12**, *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

What an encouragement this is, that when we speak the Word, it will do its own work because it has power to convict.

#### ***Power to convict.***

**Acts 2:37**, *Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"*

#### ***Power to convert.***

**Acts 17:10-12**, *Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.*

#### ***Power to be born again.***

**1 Peter 1:23**, *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*

**2 Timothy 3:15**, *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

#### ***Power to nourish your soul.***

**1 Peter 2:2-3**, *as new-born babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

**Matthew 4:4**, *But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "*

### 3. Preaching - Proclamation

#### ***Power to comfort.***

**1 Thessalonians 4:18**, Therefore comfort one another with these words.

#### ***Power to make you complete.***

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

God's Word completes the believers, equipping us for every good work. It does this by teaching, convicting, correcting, and instructing us.

The correction we need doesn't come from mentally examining ourselves according to some outward standard.

It comes to us when we contact the God-breathed Scripture with our spirit.

#### ***What correction in this verse means?***

- Setting right what is wrong,
- Turning someone to the right way,
- Restoring to an upright state.

How many times, even in a single day, we need to be set right and turned back to the Lord and His way!

Thank the Lord, the living Word of God spontaneously corrects us when we are veering off course.

#### ***What this means for us?***

We need the Word of God to teach, convict, correct, and instruct us in order to complete and equip us.

As we come to God's Word, we can pray, "Lord, I want Your Word to be profitable to me today. Correct what needs to be corrected in me. Make me more complete today than I was yesterday."

The living Word of God is truly marvellous!

It is crucial for us to spend time in it every day.

There is an additional power which enforces the gospel when it is preached, and for the effective preaching of the gospel this power is essential.

## **Conclusion**

Preaching is being replaced with performance.

Exposition with entertainment.

Doctrine with drama.

Theology with theatrics.

---

*What the church needs today is a return to preaching!*

---

Christ calls and Christ sends preachers of the gospel through the church.

Preacher must be faithful in his preaching to what God has given in the Bible.

*Does the preaching speak to you?*

*Does it rebuke you?*

*Does it bring you to repentance?*

*Does it pierce to the dividing of your soul and expose you before God so that you put your faith not in yourself, but in Christ for salvation?*

So, you can thank God for pastors, beloved, who are soaked in Scripture.

You can thank God for that.

If this is a church to celebrate because these men have given themselves to prayer on your behalf for your spiritual mastery.

If it is a church to celebrate, so because they have given themselves to proclamation of the Word of God and nothing stands equal with it.

Notes

### *3. Preaching - Proclamation*

## 4. Role Model



**1** *Thessalonians 1:1-10*, 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, labour 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. **6** And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. **8** For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. **9** For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, **10** and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

#### 4. Role Model

*"He that means as he speaks will surely do as he speaks." Richard Baxter*

*V 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.*

A church worth celebrating for being a role model.

Paul says you know how we lived.

You know the manner of life we exhibited for your sake.

You became *mimētēs*, mimics, imitators of us and of the Lord."

Here Paul presents himself as the pattern that the others are to follow.

If the one who prays is the priest who takes his people to God,

The one who preaches is the prophet who brings his God to the people,

Then the one who sets the role model is the king, who sets the example for all under his care to follow.

So, Paul set an example. Paul said you are a church to celebrate because you imitated us.

Hebrews 13 it tells the congregation of Jewish Christians that they are to follow the faith of their leaders, they are to pattern their lives after them.

*Hebrews 13:7, Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.*

*1 Corinthians 11:1, Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*

*1 Timothy 4:12, Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

*Acts 20:17-21, From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. <sup>18</sup> And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, <sup>19</sup> serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; <sup>20</sup> how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, <sup>21</sup> testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Acts 20:29-31, or I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. <sup>30</sup> Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. <sup>31</sup> Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

#### 4. Role Model

If this church is a church to celebrate, it is because the men of God who have been in leadership here have set a pattern.

A church can never be what God wants it to be where you have one message but another conflicting lifestyle.

You can't preach one thing and live something else.

If there is a holy word from God, there ought to be a holy life behind it.

If a man cannot maintain that kind of life, he cannot serve in leadership in this church. He cannot.

If you preach a message but don't live it, you didn't really mean your message!

When you look at so many churches and wonder why things aren't the way they are and if you look closely you would see that there are pastors, elders, leaders in that church who do not live the message they affirm to believe.

**Charles Spurgeon** called them "graceless pastors."

*"A graceless pastor is a blind man elected to a professorship of optics, philosophizing about light and vision while he himself is absolutely in the dark.*

*A graceless pastor is a dumb man elevated to the chair of music.*

*A deaf man fluent on symphony and harmony, he is a mole professing to educate eagles."*

The most effective praying and the most effective proclaiming comes from those who live their passions out. They are the message in human flesh.

We are not perfect but when we fall we seek restoration and we give you the pattern of how to fall and get up again.

It's not that we are better than others. It's that we have endeavoured to be what God wants us to be with all our failings.

The chief characteristic of integrity is that it is willing to suffer personally for what it believes without compromise.

---

*"You must be a man of God after God's own heart and men will strive to be like you if you be like to God. But when you only stand at the door of virtue for nothing but to keep sin out, you will draw into the folds of Christ none but such as fear drives in." **Jeremy Taylor.***

---

#### 4. Role Model

He meant that if you don't have that winsome godliness in your life, you don't attract people. You just collect the ones that were scared of going to hell.

#### ***What is a proper evaluation of our church?***

In a day care centre basically, people are hired to become substitute mothers for children. The current assessment of day care is that it is for the children generally debilitating, mentally, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Workers are usually instructed not to pick up crying babies because if you pick up a crying baby then the baby will cry to be picked up and so will all the other babies and that's an impossibility.

Not to give undue attention to a crying child or you will have all the children crying and be unable to give them all due attention.

Furthermore, in day care centres not only is there a lack of affection, a lack of tender loving care for each child, but there is a changing cast of characters.

These substitute, care-taking would-be mothers come and go so that the little child about the time he or she has made some kind of significant attachment to one or another finds that person immediately out of their life forever only to have the place taken by a stranger and the process repeated.

The turnover in employees is very high and so it is very common for little children to learn that relationships are very short and end totally and you never see the person again.

So, there is a potential fear factor in even building a relationship being instilled in them at a very early age.

Generally, the best worker-to-children ratio is five children for one worker. That's for the very smallest children and it gets even further apart as they grow older.

They are conducted in groups and little herds, so that there is not a full attention given to any individual as such. The children are often unhappy and lonely.

When you think about the fact that a tiny baby is a helpless, lonely, confused, vulnerable life exposed potentially to hunger, thirst, fear, needing constant love and care, direction, instruction for survival and growth, the potential for a debilitating kind of experience is very high.

Notes

#### 4. Role Model

That is simply why God created a family and that's why God designed a mother. There is no substitute for that.

It is essential to the well-being of children that there be a mother.

It is also God's perfect plan and design that there be a father.

There is in that the perfect balance of gentle, nurturing care and loving example and authority.

Mothering and fathering is God's design for the raising of children.

When God created the church, He created the church very much like a family. The church is not to be taken care of by surrogate mothers and fathers. Those in spiritual leadership are not to view the church with the indifference and with the independence that surrogate caretakers view little children in a day care centre.

- They are not to deal with those in the church as if they were groups, but they are to love them as individuals.
- They are not only to herd them around, but they are to love them and nurture them personally.
- They are not just to command them but also to disciple them.

The church is to be a family.

Just like a family must have a mother and a father to have the perfect balance of leadership, so spiritual leaders in the church must mother and father the church. That is precisely what is on the heart of the apostle Paul.

**1 Thessalonians 2:7**, *"We were among you as a nursing mother."*

**11 Thessalonians 2:11**, *"We were imploring each one of you as a father."*

We treated you like a mother treats her children.

We treated you like a father treats his children.

Paul gives us then the parental pictures of spiritual leadership.

Paul was the model for all spiritual leaders, both by his precepts, principles and the patterns of his life.

He set leadership as a pattern for us to follow.

Thessalonian church was a church that was in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, truly regenerated. It was a church for which he could give thanks.

#### 4. Role Model

It was a church in **V 6** that became imitators of the apostles and of the Lord.

It was a church in **V 7** that was an example to all other churches. It was a church in **V 8** that was evangelistic, trumpeting out the gospel.

It was a church in **V 9** that had been totally transformed from serving idols to serving the true God.

It was a church in **V 10** looking for the return of Jesus Christ.

This was a great church.

It was a great church because of the power of God through a remarkable leader.

*1 Thessalonians 2:1-6*, the inside was marked by tenacity, integrity, authority, accountability, and humility. Those were virtues in his life. That was the inside view, the x-ray view.

*1 Thessalonians 2:7-12*, we get the outside, this is a photograph, not an x-ray.

Paul says if you want to see what the image looks like, what the picture looks like of a true spiritual leader, you need a picture of a mother and a picture of a father, for we in the role of spiritual leadership must be mothers and fathers, and thus he establishes the parental pictures of spiritual leadership.

Now there are many pictures that he might have chosen, there are many. In fact, the New Testament gives us several metaphors for spiritual leaders.

- **1 Peter 5:1-4**, spiritual leaders are called shepherds, who have the responsibility to feed the flock of God and take the oversight of the flock.
- **1 Corinthians 4:1-2**, spiritual leaders are called stewards, household managers who manage resources and assets to care for a household under the direction of the owner.
- **1 Timothy 2:7**, the spiritual leader is a herald, proclaimers of the King's message.
- **2 Timothy 2:2**, leaders are teachers with a responsibility to impart truth to our people.

Notes

#### 4. Role Model

**1 Corinthians 3** leaders are slaves.

All those metaphors are loaded with meaning.

In Thessalonica Paul moves to a more intimate and more compelling metaphor to illustrate the picture of spiritual leadership, that of a mother and a father. This because he wants to emphasize intimacy, he wants to emphasize primary care,

Some were attacking his credibility.

They were attacking his sincerity.

They were attacking his integrity.

They were accusing him of being just another religious charlatan.

They hated the gospel.

They resented Jesus Christ.

They resented Paul and what he had done and so they decided to attack him.

They had come to the Thessalonians and said, that man Paul who brought you that message, he was no different than the rest of the spiritual phonies in our world.

Spiritual fakers were on every corner, espousing their theories. Every marketplace was their platform, and they were there to capture the bodies and the minds and the money and the possessions of the gullible public.

They were emissaries of Satan who is disguised as an angel of light. They were there to pluck off the easy prey.



Notes

#### 4. Role Model

They were the living testimony of Paul's credibility and effectiveness as God's man. They were in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. They were producing a faith that works, a love that labours, a hope that endures.

They were imitators of the Lord.

They were all they needed to look at to see the validity of his ministry.

These are not new metaphors for Paul. Back in ***Galatians 4:19***, *My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*

He was once in labour to give them birth and now he is almost in labour again to bring them to spiritual maturity.

***1 Corinthians 4:15-16***, *For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. <sup>16</sup> Therefore I urge you, imitate me.*

Paul views himself as a father. So, these are familiar metaphors for spiritual leadership.

- A mother illustrates gentle care,
- A father illustrates strong authority.

This is the balance of spiritual leadership.

The tenderness and the gentleness of the motherly care, the strength and the fortitude and the courage and the leadership of fatherly care, that is the balance to spiritual leadership.

The balance must be there for us to be what God wants us to be as spiritual leaders.

#### ***As a mother***

Paul says as we moved among you, we were kind to you.

- We didn't come to abuse you.
- We didn't come to take from you.
- We didn't come to exploit you.
- We didn't come to manipulate you.
- We moved among you with kindness.
- We were gentle.

MY CHILDREN, FOR WHOM  
I AM AGAIN IN THE PAINS  
OF CHILDBIRTH UNTIL  
CHRIST IS FORMED IN  
YOU,  
- GALATIANS 4:19

#### 4. Role Model

##### ***How gentle?***

*V 7, "We proved to be gentle among you as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children."*

The term here definitely refers to a nursing mother because of the phrase "*her own children.*"

This is no surrogate here.

This is no day care worker.

He says we were to you as a nursing mother tenderly caring for her own children.

The metaphor is marvellous.

Paul picks out of all the human realm the most intimate, tender, cherishing, human relationship. There is none to match it. There is no human relationship that is as tender, gentle as the nursing mother and the infant child, the tenderest relationship in all human life.

This illustrates the personal care that he gave to the church. There's no authority in that metaphor. The mother doesn't hold the little one in her breast with any authority.

There's no dominance there. There's no prominence on her part. There's no seeking of honour.

There is only the simple giving of life, that's all. It's a spending of oneself for the child. It is the love that spares nothing, the nursing mother.

The verb "*tenderly cares*" literally means to warm with body heat.

How graphic as the mother takes the little one in her arms and warms the little life with her own body heat and passes on her life to that life?

The intimacy of that, the beauty of that, the tenderness of that has no equal.

So, Paul authority was balanced with tenderness.

From the opening picture here in verse 7, then Paul proceeds into verses 8 and 9 where he unfolds the role of mother in the beauty of its metaphorical meaning.

*V 8, So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.*

We would say that a mother who doesn't have this kind of affection somehow lost touch with the intention of God's design for normal motherly love.

But a mother with a little child in her arms has a fond affection. That's normal. That's very natural. That's God-given.

#### 4. Role Model

What motivates her nursing, her gentle care is love. As every mother knows there are no awards for mothering. All you get is crying babies, dirty diapers, sleepless nights, runny noses, illnesses. It's hard; it's consistent, endless watchful care.

Grandparents say, "Oh we love our grandchildren so much," when it becomes fussy time, we hand them over."

A simple reflection of the hard part of parenting.

Even though we love our grandchildren, they are one step removed from that intimate bonding. A mother does what she does because she has a fond affection.

Longing to feed her child is what makes that mother want that little life in her arms. That's the way God designed it.

Paul is saying that's a picture of a spiritual leader's responsibility to have a longing for a tender relationship with his people, a yearning, a motherly compulsion. That should be in the heart of the spiritual leader.

Paul says when we came to you it wasn't just duty, or delegated authority, but it was passion.

We had a fond affection for you so we were well pleased.

You are not a burden, but joy.

In fact, in verse 20 of this chapter he says you are our glory and joy.

Paul imparted the gospel of God.

You give them the gospel but even though you have given it to them, you still possess it,

Paul is saying, we had a fond affection for you and consequently we were well pleased to share with you the gospel of God.

A mother who is faithful to being what a mother ought to be, she sets aside her life for the life of her beloved baby.

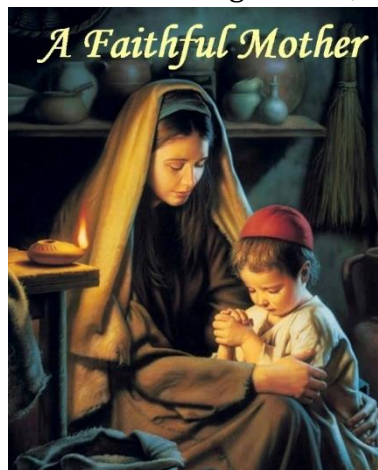
She is sacrificial.

She is utterly unselfish.

She is generous.

She is profuse with that life.

That life dominates her life.



#### 4. Role Model

You can't have a baby and go on living your own life and fulfil God's intention for a mother. That baby consumes your life. You are there to feed it, to love it, change it, to put it to sleep, to wake it up, to dress it, to care for its every need. That's what God intended.

There are many women, they don't want to have a baby because they are afraid it might affect their figure.

They are afraid it might affect their lifestyle.

They are afraid it might affect their career.

*Do you want to know something?*

It will affect all of that.

You will give away your life for that little life. But God said a woman finds her place in this world if God is so gracious to grant her that privilege in bearing children and raising them to love to love the Lord.

Gladly then does a woman give her life for her child.

Paul says like a mother we were so well pleased to give you not only the truth we gave you but to give you our lives!

Not only were we like a nursing mother pulling you to our breast and dispensing you the life-saving milk of the Word, but we also would give you our lives, time, energy, and everything.

**2 Corinthians 12:14-15**, *Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. <sup>15</sup> And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.*

What a heartbreak it is for a mother who has loved a child and the child grows up to be what Proverbs called a thankless child who is sharper than a serpent's tooth.

When a sacrificial mother has so loved a child who grows not to love in return, that is the deepest pain a mother's heart will ever know.

Paul felt some of that pain himself as a spiritual leader and so does any spiritual leader.

*Why does a mother do this?*

Because you had become very dear to us!

The essence of a mother's love, a strong compelling sense of the preciousness of the child.

#### 4. Role Model

There is a longing that fills my heart for you, not out of duty but because you were dear to me.

*V 9, For you remember, brethren, our labour and toil; for labouring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.*

There is a mother, working, labouring night and day, providing for her children so that she is no burden for them.

*2 Corinthians 6:10, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

Our lives were marked by poverty, disrespect, disrepute, trouble, persecution.

We weren't takers, we were givers.

**Acts 16**, how it was when he came to Thessalonica, how difficult it was. It was always sacrifice for Paul.

It was always sacrifice for Silas and Timothy.

It was always a life-giving kind of ministry.

*What does a mother want?*

*What can a child give a mother?*

Absolutely nothing.

*What price can a child pay for a nursing mother?*

*What price can a child pay for deep affection?*

*What price can a child pay for the longing of a mother's heart that lifts it up and embraces it in love?*

There's no price.

The child has nothing to give, and nothing can be given.

Paul says we just gave, don't you remember how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

Notes

#### 4. Role Model

Paul was a tent maker and when he went to Thessalonica, he was there three Sabbaths, but he must have stayed a few weeks after that, long enough to sort of set up shop and get some business. Do some work to support himself and those with him.

The church, by the way, in Thessalonica was very poor.

Paul didn't want to put an undue burden on them.

Also, he didn't want people to think that there was a price for the gospel.

The Philippian church did send some money to help him in his ministry.

***Philippians 4:16***, *For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.*

It is so very hard sometimes when a woman has been a godly mother and she gets to the point in her older years when she can't support herself, she finds it very difficult to be supported by her children.

She finds it very hard to accept that because she has always known that she was fitting the role of never being a burden but always lifting the burden of her children.

But it is by God's design that her children in gratitude be able to meet her need if that comes.

So, Paul said we made the maximum effort to feed our spiritual children.

#### ***As a Father***

Paul acted like a man.

There was a side of him that acted like a mother but there was another side of him that acted like a man, like a father with strength and courage.

Paul never flinched from the immeasurable risks of life and the challenges that he faced.

Paul was assured of God's presence.

Paul knew the cause was just.

Paul trusted an unfailing sovereignty.

Thus, this man fit for spiritual leadership.

***V 11***, *as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,*

How devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers. That's a father's responsibility.

#### 4. Role Model

A father's responsibility is to set the standard of integrity in the family. That's a spiritual leader's responsibility.

The first word, "devoutly," means holy.

It has to do with my life before God.

I did my duty to God devoutly.

The word "uprightly," righteously, refers to how a man responds to the law of God, which is doing his duty to God and man for the law requires that we deal with God in a certain way and man as well.

So, he says from the perspective of my relationship to God, I was devout.

From the perspective of my relationship to the law which considers God and man, I was upright, righteous.

Then he says, "blamelessly." That word refers to one's reputation before men.

- Before God devout
- Before God and man, upright.
- Before man blameless.

That's a spiritual father

You set a pattern, living an uncompromising life of fortitude, consumed by what is right, aware of the presence of God and trusting in unfailing sovereignty, you live the life.

So, fathering starts with modelling.

You model virtue.

It's not just modelling but also teaching.

God has designed the father in the family to set the pattern of virtue to live the life. He brings his wife under that pattern of virtue, and she becomes so secure.

You provide for a woman a devout, upright, and blameless life and she will find the haven of her security.

That's the father's role. He lives the virtuous pattern the children are to follow.

The word "exhorting" means to come alongside, to move someone in a specific line of conduct. The Holy Spirit is called the *paraklete*. It's the same word, *parakale*, the one who comes alongside to move us in a specific course of conduct.



#### 4. Role Model

A father gets alongside his child and moves that child in a specific course of conduct. Now whatever it takes it takes to do that, strong exhortation.

Then he says encouraging.

Move from instruction to motivation.

The father's role also is to come alongside, to encourage the emotion and the will to act in that course.

Moving you in that direction and encouraging you to keep moving because of your own will, your own choice, because the way is hard.

Exhortation says this is the way to walk.

Encouragement says I know it's tough but keep doing it.

As a father, imploring each one of you.

**Marturomai**, witness.

A father is supposed to witness to his son.

Father must tell his son that I am a personal witness to the fact that if you keep doing that this is what's going to happen.

So, you don't need to fall into the same hole I have been in.

You have a responsibility to a solemn charge. You are summoned as a witness to witness to the fact that any deviation from the prescribed course of conduct has very serious ramifications.

Every spiritual leader, every pastor is here to love his people, to embrace his people, to treat them with tender compassion, affection, kindness.

But on the other hand, there's that balance that says this is the way you're to live.

I encourage you to do it even if it's hard and I'm telling you if you don't do it the consequences are severe.

- You must encourage them to be faithful to it when the choices are hard.
- You have to tell them, if you violate it I am going to discipline you. Because that's exactly true in the spiritual dimension, and you will build someone with courage.
- You will build someone with a conviction.
- You will build someone who can act like a man.

So, the father gives this enthusiastic affirmation and exhortation to his children.

#### 4. Role Model

The mother is there for the tender security.

You get your son, and you give him that impassioned speech and you call him to courageous and strong conduct. A few minutes later you see him in the kitchen and his mom has got her arm around him and he is run for a little balance. That's the way it is.

*V 11-12, as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, <sup>12</sup> that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

*Does this sound like a father?*

Paul says the spiritual father is trying to produce the product.

The difference between the mothering and the fathering is the mother wants to provide what is needed in the moment.

The father wants to produce the product at the end.

That's the balance.

The mother wants to cherish and nurture and love and hold and affirm.

The father comes along and says that's all wonderful but we want to be sure at the end that he's living according to God's standards.

A father wants you to walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you.

When you were saved you came into the kingdom.

You are now ruled by the King, Jesus Christ.

You are not yet in the glorious fulfilment of that kingdom.

You haven't yet seen the millennial kingdom.

You haven't yet seen the eternal kingdom,

but you are in the kingdom.

You are in the kingdom of God where God rules.

You are in the kingdom of Heaven.

Every Christian dwell in the kingdom.

We have the indwelling Spirit of God, who is the glory of God. Yet we wait for the full glory of the kingdom when Jesus reveals His glory and the full eternal glory when we share His glory.

#### 4. Role Model

But we have been called to His kingdom and called to His glory, all because He chose us before the foundation of the world.

A father says, with all that has been done for you, don't you think you ought to walk like this?

*Does that sound like a fatherly speech?*

So, spiritual leader is a balance.

He has a tender side, a mothering side, and

He has a strong courageous side in which he demands the highest and lives by the highest and uncompromising life.

That's the balance.



The mother comes along with her tender love and

The father comes along exhorting to the conduct God requires, motivating the heart to respond, solemnly showing the consequence of failure.

Then he lives the life that he demands of his children.

Beautiful balance God has designed.

A spiritual leader is not enough to just be compassionate and tender and caring. There's got to be that uncompromising, pure life that sets the standard to live by.

There is got to be the courage of conviction that comes alongside someone and exhorts and encourages and implores and demands that you live in a worthy way of the God who has called you to such glory.

Notes

#### 4. Role Model

That's leadership by God's design.

- On the one hand a concern for the person,
- On the other hand, a concern for the process.
  
- On the one hand a concern for kindness,
- On the other hand, a concern for control.
  
- On the one hand a concern for affection,
- On the other hand, a concern for authority.
  
- ✚ On the one hand embracing,
- ✚ On the other hand, exhorting.
  
- ❖ On the one hand cherishing,
- ❖ On the other hand, challenging.

Where there is that balance God can work in a glorious way.

Where there is that tender, considerate, gentle mothering brought alongside a holy, righteous, blameless, exemplary life and commanding and persuading with fatherly authority, you have a leader who stands head and shoulders above.

You have a Paul and because you have a Paul you have a Thessalonian church.

*Is anybody sufficient to be this leader?*

##### **1. Realize your inadequacy.**

If you're ever to be this kind of spiritual leader it starts when you admit you're not!

**2 Corinthians 12:9-10**, *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Realize your insufficiency, realize your insufficiency.

## 4. Role Model

### 2. *Deep study of Word of God.*

Be intense in the study of the Word because it's only the Word that can produce this balance.

**2 Timothy 3:17**, *that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Paul speaks about a man of God, which is a technical term for a spiritual leader, not just a generic term for anybody. But

Paul speaks about a man of God being perfect, and equipped for every good work. He says what equips him is the inspired Scripture.

Realize your weakness because in that humility you will generate a life of prayer and study the Word.

### 3. *Accept Suffering.*

Accept suffering as God's tenderizing process.

**1 Peter 5:10**, *But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*

But it can't happen until you have suffered a while. You will be perfected, strengthened, confirmed, and established in this life, but not until you've suffered.

### 4. *Give your whole life.*

Give your whole life to the process of becoming the leader God wants you to be.

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**, *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup> And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. <sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

He says I run in such a way,

I box in such a way,

I buffet my body.

#### *4. Role Model*

Make it my slave because I don't want to be disqualified.

- One, realize your weakness; that will drive you to prayer and trust in God.
- Study the Word, because it is the tool which produces the spiritual balance in the spiritual leader.
- Let God come to you in any form of trouble He chooses to come so that you might be tenderized in the process.
- Give your whole heart, soul, mind and strength to the process of spiritual development and leadership.

That's the leader God wants.

Notes

#### *4. Role Model*

## 5. Faith works



*1 Thessalonians 1:1-10, 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. <sup>2</sup> We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup> remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, <sup>4</sup> knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup> so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. <sup>8</sup> For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. <sup>9</sup> For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

## 5. Faith Works

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

Apostle Paul identifies the distinguishing marks of the elect.

The reality of a person who have come to faith in Christ.

The whole letter is a letter of encouragement to some true and noble Christians living in a wretched, immoral, wicked, pagan city.

They were very young in the faith, only weeks old in Christ. They were living in an immensely hostile society overpowering them. They had very limited or almost no leadership at all.

Paul was there only a matter of few weeks and left them. They were on their own after that to fend for themselves.

New Christians coming out of paganism in the middle of a sea of immorality. Living in a city that was a trade centre filled with sailors and merchants from all over the world very difficult society in which to cultivate Christianity.

Yet Paul writes back and says,

I know you are genuine,

I know you are brethren,

I know you are beloved by God,

I know you're elect,

I know you are in God the Father, in Christ.

I know you are recipients of grace and peace and

I thank God all the time for all of you.

It is a remarkable thing that God has done in that city, with very little time, very new people and almost no leadership.

Yet Paul writes back this letter of commendation.

*Why didn't Paul stay longer?*

Those who hated the gospel drove him out.

Three Sabbaths in the synagogue, a little longer than that reaching more Gentiles and bringing them to Christ, and he was soon driven out of the city.

## 5. Faith Works

No doubt the same people that drove him out also harassed the Christians.

So here they are, this group of brand-new, baby Christians in a very difficult culture, without leadership, being harassed by people who are hostile toward what was so very new to them.

Paul was concerned and so a couple of months have passed, he sends Timothy back and he sends him back with a very explicit goal of getting a report on the condition of the Thessalonian church because he fears the worst.

When Timothy comes back to him, Timothy gives an absolutely amazing report about the church in Thessalonica.

The whole report is good and so Paul writes back 1 Thessalonians to a noble church, maybe the best church in all of his ministry.

Paul pours out his thanks to God for their true and genuine salvation.

Paul releases his gratitude toward God for these wonderful people. He reveals in that gratitude the marks that identify them as the elect.

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

Beloved by God, your election because I am constantly bearing in mind these three things:

- Your work of faith,
- Your labour of love, and
- Your steadfastness of hope.

Those are the first three great realities that had convinced Paul this was truly an elect church.

*1 Thessalonians 3:10, night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?*

They weren't perfect.

They were remarkable but not perfect.

But he knew they were elect.

*"Constantly bearing in mind in the presence of our God and Father."*

I continue to go to God as I remember your spiritual quality and I go to God in thanks. I go to God in prayerful gratitude, stimulated by the memory of your virtue. Your virtue makes me praise God.

## 5. Faith Works

This was a church that literally filled his heart with thanks. Whenever he remembered it in the presence of God, because he had to lift up thanks for what God had done.

They mark the elect.

The elects are marked by a faith that works.

*What identifies a saved person?*

Paul has just really made that crystal clear here in verse 3.

You have a faith that works.

A true saving faith is always revealed and manifest in how we live our lives. You cannot divorce them. You cannot say you have a faith in God, but it just doesn't affect your life.

A true and deep and saving belief in Jesus Christ is always going to cause a change in the life.

A faith that works means a faith that produces something which is representative of that faith.

The elect are marked by holy, righteous deeds.

Their faith works.

**“Ergon”** is the Greek word translated as work meaning,

- to the deed done,
- to the action,
- to the achievement,
- to the function itself.

You are elect because your faith produces function. There are righteous deeds in your life.

Paul doesn't tolerate a works salvation. No one is stronger on the fact that it is faith alone apart from any human work that saves. Paul makes that clear again and again.

**Romans 3:20-21**, *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,*

Salvation is not a result of any human work.

## 5. Faith Works

**Romans 3:25-26**, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**Ephesians 2:8-9**, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

No place for works in the saving act.

**Romans 4:4-5**, Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

If you did something to earn it, it wouldn't be grace, it wouldn't be mercy and you would have earned it.

Paul says there's no place for works.

**Romans 5:1-2**, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

No one is more clear or adamant that salvation is purely by grace through faith without works than Paul.

But no one is clearer and more adamant than Paul that saving faith always produces works.

He makes that equally clear that where you have saving faith, it produces works.

**1 Thessalonians 1:9**, For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

Paul speaks of turning to God from idols. This is the first action of faith. Anyone who has faith will turn to God from idols.

The work of faith includes all the actions that issue out of our living faith. This includes our relationship with others and all our behaviour.

Before a certain person was saved, he may have been unkind to others and harsh in many aspects of his behaviour. But once he has faith in the Lord, this faith will not allow him to treat others in such an unkind way.

Furthermore, it will be difficult for him to behave in a harsh way.

## 5. Faith Works

Those who have faith are very different from those who do not have faith. Before they had faith, some indulged in sinful things. Now that they have faith, they can no longer indulge in these things.

Spontaneously, as an action, a work, of faith, they refrain from those things.

Others before they were saved were not good neighbours. But after they were saved and came to have faith, they became very kind, gentle, loving, and considerate.

No one taught them to be different. The change was produced by the faith within them.

The faith caused them to be helpful to others, especially to other believers. This is another illustration of the work of the faith.

### ***Faith and works***

**How do the two seemingly contradictory functions of faith and works relate, interact, and complement each other?**

By faith alone, in Christ alone, we are saved.

Faith is the instrument. Christ is the Saviour.

By works we prove the genuineness of our faith.

We are saved by faith alone, but not by the faith that is alone.

Christians are justified before God as they place their trust in Jesus Christ, the Sin-bearer, the Substitute who bore God's wrath in our place.

***Galatians 2:16***, 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.

Notes

## 5. Faith Works

The Christian starts and lives his life by faith.

**2 Corinthians 5:7**, *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

He does not look inside him but outside, to Christ. By faith his hope is sustained (**Hebrews 10:35-12:3**).

Faith is not simply a feeling, a mere sentiment that results only in positive speech.

Faith is not an optimistic decision.

Faith is a response, directed towards Christ as it is satisfying object. That is why faith must have content.

Truths about Christ must be understood and believed.

Christian faith is trust in the eternal God as revealed in Scripture and His promises secured by Jesus Christ. It is the gospel made understandable through the supernatural and free work of the Holy Spirit.

Christian faith is not inherited or passed mechanically.

It is a personal act, involving the mind, the heart and will.

Faith involves three steps or aspects:

- Knowledge,
- Agreement,
- Trust.

Redemptive facts must be made known so that they may be accepted.

**Romans 10:14**, *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*

A firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour towards us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds and sealed on our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Through faith we run to Christ and hold fast to Him, who satisfied the law on our behalf.

**Romans 10:4**, *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

In this way we are accounted righteous in the sight of God through faith alone, without doing the works of the law.

But since faith unites to Christ it cannot be lifeless.

## 5. Faith Works

Faith works through love.

**Galatians 5:6**, *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

It seeks to do all the "good works, which God prepared beforehand" for us.

**Ephesians 2:10**, *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

James rightly says, faith without works is dead, being by itself. He is here describing a faith that knows the gospel and even agrees with it but has fallen short of trust in God.

Failure to grow, develop, and bear the fruits of righteousness shows that the free gift of God in Christ has never been received.

James is concerned about those who merely say they believe but do not actually and genuinely believe.

If they did, their behaviour would be holy, manifesting their heart-faith.

In this sense faith and works are inseparable, but as regards the obtainment of salvation, it is not what is done in us, but what is done for us on Calvary that matters.

But if we really look upon the crucified and risen Saviour, our lives would necessarily be transformed.

Protestantism urges that it is by faith in Christ that we are reconciled to God.

But if it is asked, what kind of faith?

Then the answer will be, a live faith, a faith that bears good fruit.

Even when we have believed, the good works we do are never perfect. They are acceptable to God only because of the mercy of Christ.

We express our love for God through doing what pleases Him, and He in His kindness promises to reward us for what we do.

In this we are not making God our debtor, any more than when we first believed in Him. God in rewarding us is graciously crowning His own gracious gifts.

Notes

## 5. Faith Works

### **Paul and James on Justification**

Paul and James harmonize on the doctrine of justification, even though at first glance they may seem to be at loggerheads.

Paul taught as follows.

**Romans 3:28**, *“We conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law”*.

James taught us.

**James 2:24**, *“You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only”*.

Roman Catholicism clings desperately to James’ exposition while disregarding and even contradicting Paul’s theology on justification.

The balanced Christian view on justification must listen to both apostles. Together they present the whole picture.

We are justified by faith alone, but works justify our faith, and declare that we are justified. Men cannot see our faith, except by our works.

The key to reconciling the doctrines of faith and works is understanding the full context of these verses in James.

**James 2:14-26**, *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? <sup>17</sup>Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! <sup>20</sup>But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? <sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup>Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? <sup>23</sup>And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. <sup>24</sup>You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. <sup>25</sup>Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? <sup>26</sup>For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

## 5. Faith Works

James is comparing two different types of faith.

Genuine faith which leads to good works,

Empty faith which is not really faith at all.

True faith is alive and backed up by works.

False faith that has nothing to show for itself is dead.



Abraham's faith was not merely an empty confession but a principle of action. He showed his faith through his willingness to offer Isaac.

The same was true of Rahab, who demonstrated her faith by helping the spies.

Faith and works cannot exist separately or alone. They must go together.

Faith and works are as inseparable as sun and sunlight. Faith is the sun and good works are its rays.

Both faith and works are important in salvation.

However, believers are justified, or declared righteous before God, solely by faith. Jesus Christ is the only One who deserves credit for doing the work of salvation. Christians are saved by God's grace through faith alone.

Works, on the other hand, are the evidence of genuine salvation. Good works demonstrate the truth of one's faith. They are the obvious, visible result of being justified by faith. Authentic "saving faith" reveals itself through works.

Faith is by nature turned and toned toward obedience. So, good works are inevitable, showing the presence of salvation. Faith always manifests itself in a measure of obedience.

Now we will fail, and we will disobey, but we never cease from having the disposition to obey and manifesting some fruit of obedience.

Obviously, it's the Father's will in John 15 that you bear much fruit, but we will all who are truly saved have some fruit, some fruit.

So, we can say then, true faith is evidenced by production. That's a good word to write down. True faith is evidenced by production.

Here the church in Thessalonica their faith worked very well. Timothy comes back with a good report.

## 5. Faith Works

**1 Thessalonians 3:6-7**, *But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you— <sup>7</sup> therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith.*

### **How do we have faith that works in the midst of persecution?**

**Psalms 119:81-88**, *My soul faints for Your salvation, But I hope in Your word. <sup>82</sup> My eyes fail from searching Your word, Saying, “When will You comfort me?” <sup>83</sup> For I have become like a wineskin in smoke, Yet I do not forget Your statutes. <sup>84</sup> How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me? <sup>85</sup> The proud have dug pits for me, Which is not according to Your law. <sup>86</sup> All Your commandments are faithful; They persecute me wrongfully; Help me! <sup>87</sup> They almost made an end of me on earth, But I did not forsake Your precepts. <sup>88</sup> Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.*

Psalmist has hit bottom.

**V81**, *“My soul languishes...”*

**V82**, *“My eyes fail...”*

**V83**, *“I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,”*

**V85**, *“The arrogant have dug pits for me...”*

**V86**, *“They have persecuted me with a lie...”*

**V87**, *“They almost destroyed me on earth,”*

Have you ever wondered if you are the only Christian who is sick and tired of living in a sin cursed world?

Are there times when you wished that the Lord would choose today to call His bride home?

Have you ever grown tired of putting on a brave face and stiff upper lip and just wanted to cry out to God how much longer?

What we have here is a genuine lament where the psalmist just pours out his heart before the Lord and calls things like he sees them.

Notes

## 5. Faith Works

There's a noticeable change in this stanza.

Just eight verses ago the psalmist was,

- Praying for God's grace and mercy (**V 76-77**),
- Praising God for His righteousness and praying for His justice (**V 75&78**),
- Asking to become a viable example to the watching faithful (**V 74&79**), and
- Requesting discernment and holiness (**V 73&80**).

His focus was forward.

He was praying in such a way to zero in on what he desperately needed most.

But now he is tired. He's tired of waiting.

Whoever wrote this psalm was experiencing great difficulty at the hands of evil men.

He was persecuted unjustly and came close to being killed for no good reason.

He was hunted like a criminal yet had done nothing to deserve such treatment.

The stress of these turbulent times had worn him out and he was in a state of physical and mental exhaustion – *"I am like a wineskin in the smoke"* (v. 83).

However, he never lost his faith in God or his hope in the Word of God.

He clung to his God with unshakeable perseverance.

He cried out for help and longed for God to save him and punish his enemies.

**V 84**, *"When will you punish my persecutors?"*

**V 87**, *"They have almost wiped me from the earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts"*

Certainly, David experienced times like these, especially early in his life when he was the innocent victim of King Saul's erratic outbursts of violent jealousy.

Regardless of who wrote this psalm, verses 81-88 are unique in that all eight verses of this stanza contain a unique combination of the author's frustration and faith in the midst of a crisis over which he had no control.

So, we are given a stellar example of grace under fire.

We have much to learn from this man's example of faithfulness, for all believers have been promised a life of persecution.

## 5. Faith Works

**2 Timothy 3:12**, “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”.

Jesus told the disciples, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first” (John 15:18).

Certainly, the nature and degree of anti-Christian hostility vary greatly around the world.

Christians in western nations face much less persecution than Christians in Asia and the Middle East.

But opposition will be there, and we can count on it. We would do well to trust in the unfailing love of God in the midst of tribulation, continuing to “put my hope in your word” (v. 81) regardless of our circumstances.

This is easier said than done, and I admit that as a U.S. Christian I have little experience with the type of persecution that our brothers and sisters are going through on the other side of the world.

So, we pray for the persecuted church.

Provide opportunities for us to support those in need.

### ***How do they remain faithful?***

How do persecuted believers stay the course when the temptation to jump ship grows stronger every day?

How did the author of Psalm 119 continue to trust God no matter what?

These eight verses hold the key.

Note how the psalmist is locked in on the character of God and the Word of God.

Every verse in this stanza mentions something about God and/or his truth.

While running for his life, he is keenly aware of who God is.

He spends much time meditating on the attributes of God and the fact that his God is the source of salvation, hope, comfort and justice because God is trustworthy, helpful, life giving and loving.

### ***Impatient for God's Restoration***

**V 81-84**, *My soul faints for Your salvation, But I hope in Your word.* <sup>82</sup> *My eyes fail from searching Your word, Saying, “When will You comfort me?”* <sup>83</sup> *For I have become like a wineskin*

## 5. Faith Works

*in smoke, Yet I do not forget Your statutes. <sup>84</sup> How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?*

The psalmist is saying in the most straightforward of terms that his soul (the totality of his person to include both physical life and immaterial spirit) and his eyes are at an end, finished, used up, and utterly exhausted.

He is completely used up and is languishing as he waits for God's salvation and looks for the fulfilment of His promise.

Despite his desperation he continues to wait (or hope) in God's Word. He has not become an apostate. But he is certainly growing impatient. When will You comfort me?

Psalmist gives us a vivid picture of his circumstances in **V 83**.

A wineskin is nothing more than a leather water bottle, probably made from a tanned and conditioned animal stomach. In order to remain useful, the leather needs to maintain its elasticity.

He likens himself to a wineskin that is left beside the fire to smoke. He has been left out to dry, consumed by his adversaries. Now cracked and dry beyond use or recognition.

Even as he hangs beside the fire to suffocate in the smoke, he remembers the rules and regulations written down in stone by the finger of God.

He is like Job who even now holds on to his integrity.

It is not that he is tempted to apostatize, to curse God and die.

He knows that his redeemer lives and that at the last He will take His stand on the earth. It's that he grows impatient waiting for Him.

### ***Desperate for God's Restoration.***

*V 85-87, The proud have dug pits for me, Which is not according to Your law. <sup>86</sup> All Your commandments are faithful; They persecute me wrongfully; Help me! <sup>87</sup> They almost made an end of me on earth, But I did not forsake Your precepts.*

Once again, the psalmist refers to his enemies as those who are arrogant, proud, insolent, or presumptuous. Those who are overly confident in themselves and have no fear of God before their eyes.

They are in complete contrast to God's own holy character. While His commands are faithful, true, and trustworthy.

## 5. Faith Works

God is faithful and his enemies are not that this urgent plea comes; help me! This is a distress call of the highest order.

The enemies were nearly successful in their objective, to eradicate our psalmist from the land.

Even in the face of unprecedented danger, retreat and surrender are not up for discussion. What is needed now is complete and total dependence upon the only One who can help.

### ***Dependent upon God's Restoration.***

*V 88, Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.*

The request is not for a comforting shoulder hug, but for God to pull him out of the deep.

Each time that request was made the psalmist usually modified it and supported it through God's own testimony.

- ✓ According to Your word,
- ✓ In Your ways,
- ✓ Your word has revived me.
- ✓ According to Your lovingkindness.

Yet here the psalmist does not appeal to the Word of God, but to the very nature and character of God.



Notes

## 5. Faith Works

### **Conclusion**

This passage teaches us that strong faith is the result of a mind saturated with the Word.

**Romans 10:17**, *“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ”.*

There is a cause-and-effect relationship between spending time in the Word and strengthening our faith.

The church in Thessalonica understood this, and they kept their faith in the midst of the crisis.

**1 Thessalonians 2:14**, *For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,*

This is how any believer in any age can persevere in the midst of any crisis.

Notes

5. Faith Works



## 6. Labour of Love



**1** *Thessalonians 1:1-10*, 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, labour 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. **6** And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. **8** For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. **9** For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, **10** and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

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

## 6. Labor of Love

Apostle Paul identifies the distinguishing marks of the elect.

The reality of a person who have come to faith in Christ.

The whole letter is a letter of encouragement to some true and noble Christians living in a wretched, immoral, wicked, pagan city.

They were very young in the faith, only weeks old in Christ. They were living in an immensely hostile society overpowering them. They had very limited or almost no leadership at all.

Paul was there only a matter of few weeks and left them. They were on their own after that to fend for themselves.

New Christians coming out of paganism in the middle of a sea of immorality. Living in a city that was a trade centre filled with sailors and merchants from all over the world very difficult society in which to cultivate Christianity.

No doubt the same people that drove him out also harassed the Christians.

So here they are, this group of brand-new, baby Christians in a very difficult culture, without leadership, being harassed by people who are hostile toward what was so very new to them.

Paul was concerned and so a couple of months have passed, he sends Timothy back and he sends him back with a very explicit goal of getting a report on the condition of the Thessalonian church because he fears the worst.

When Timothy comes back to him, Timothy gives an absolutely amazing report about the church in Thessalonica.

The whole report is good and so Paul writes back 1 Thessalonians to a noble church, maybe the best church in all of his ministry.

Paul pours out his thanks to God for their true and genuine salvation.

Paul releases his gratitude toward God for these wonderful people. He reveals in that gratitude the marks that identify them as the elect.

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

Beloved by God, your election because I am constantly bearing in mind these three things:

- Your work of faith,
- Your labour of love, and
- Your steadfastness of hope.

## 6. Labor of Love

Those are the first three great realities that had convinced Paul this was truly an elect church.

**1 Thessalonians 3:10**, *night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?*

They weren't perfect.

They were remarkable but not perfect.

But he knew they were elect.

*"Constantly bearing in mind in the presence of our God and Father."*

I continue to go to God as I remember your spiritual quality and I go to God in thanks. I go to God in prayerful gratitude, stimulated by the memory of your virtue. Your virtue makes me praise God.

This was a church that literally filled his heart with thanks. Whenever he remembered it in the presence of God because he had to lift up thanks for what God had done.

They mark the elect.

The elects are marked by a faith that works.

***What identifies a saved person?***

Paul has just really made that crystal clear here in verse 3.

You have a faith that works.

***Love that labours***

Before your children were old enough to drive, you often found yourself in the position of being a late-night chauffeur. Stay up past your bedtime, drinking plenty of coffee, driving through the dark night.

Not because you would be paid or applauded. You would get a "Thank you, Dad," from your kids.

But, otherwise, you drove them at considerable cost to yourself because you care for them and wanted them to have friends and fun while being safe. You might say that your late-night transportation service was a labour of love.

The phrase, "labour of love," refers to work done without financial compensation. It is work motivated by commitment, passion, or pleasure.

## 6. Labor of Love

Raising children is a good illustration of a labour of love.

Mothers know that caring for a child is a labour, not merely a work. After giving birth, a new mother will have a tender love for her infant. For a while she will work happily to care for the child.

Eventually, however, that work will become a labour that presses and exhausts her.

How good it is that the Lord has created within this young mother a mother's love for her child?

Without such a love, she would not be able to bear the burden of caring for her child over the years. This love motivates her to care for her child.

It is also the characteristic, the expression, of her labour. This illustrates that in the Christian life first we have a work of faith and then this work becomes a labour of love.

We are touching some very essential things here in the essence of what it means to be a Christian.

"Labour," that word looks not at the deed done, not at the achievement, like *ergon* does. It looks at the effort expended, not the result but the effort involved.

Not only is a true Christian marked by what he does, but he is marked by what he is motivated to do.

*Why is it important to make that distinction?*

Because sometimes we are motivated to do things we don't do.

**Romans 7**, "The things I want to do I don't do, the things I don't want to do I do, oh wretched man that I am."

He got in touch with the fact that he had still unredeemed human flesh which debilitated his deepest desires.

A true Christian will produce the labour of love.

There will be an effort expended born out of love for Christ and love for God.

The word "labour," *kopos*, denotes an arduous kind of labour, kind of wearying toil to the point of exhaustion, sweating it out.

It doesn't look at the deed,

it looks at the effort involved.

## 6. Labor of Love

Straining all of one's energies at the maximum level to achieve something and it's motivated by **agape**, love.

Paul is referring to spiritual effort to serve the Lord because you love the Lord. It is the kind of love, agapao, that level of love is the love of the will.

The elect then can be known not only by the product of their life but can be known by the tremendous effort they make because of their love for Christ.

The true Christian loves the Lord, and that love motivates.

**1 Corinthians 16:22**, *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*

People go to hell because they don't love the Lord.

People go to heaven because love the Lord.

So, Christianity is a matter of loving the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15**, *For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; <sup>15</sup>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.*

**Galatians 5:6**, *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

It is a faith that works, motivated by love for Christ.

When you want to evaluate someone's claim to be a Christian, look at their life.

**Do you see the deeds of righteousness?**

**Do you see the maximum toiling effort of love for Christ?**

Paul saw both in the report that he got from the Thessalonians.

They were straining their energy to live out their love for Christ at the maximum level.

**1 Thessalonians 4:9-10**, *But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; <sup>10</sup>and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;*

## 6. Labor of Love

**John 13:34-35**, *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

The mark of a Christian is love.

Love for one another what identifies us. As Christians.

The church in Thessalonica has grown in such love for another.

Paul could not help himself but to thank God that God had answered his prayers for this little baby church.

**2 Thessalonians 1:3**, *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,*

Not only their love for one another has grown, which was reported by Timothy but there were reports to Paul from the region.

The north of Greece known as Macedonia.

Southern part known as Achaia.

The whole of Greece knows what a loving church they have become.

**1 Thessalonians 1:7-8**, *so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. <sup>8</sup> For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.*

**1 John 3:11**, *For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,*

**1 John 3:15**, *Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

John says If you don't love your brother you are not a Christian.

If we are marked then by the love of our brother, certainly we must be marked by the love of our Lord.

**1 John 4:19**, *We love Him because He first loved us.*

## 6. Labor of Love

We are the lovers of Christ, that is who we are, that is what identifies us, that is what marks us, we love Jesus Christ. That's our character.

So we have a work of faith and an effort of love.

**2 Thessalonians 1:11**, *Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,*

Christians have a desire for goodness.

That's the labour of love.

The faith that works.

The desire for goodness is that motivating, straining effort of love and the work of faith is that faith which produces righteous deeds.

**1 Thessalonians 5:8**, *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*

The elect, how can you identify them? They have a faith that works, that's production. They have a love that labours, that's affection, affection, that's another good word to write down, affection. They are known by their affection for Christ.

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

Paul says your election is also known because you have a hope that perseveres. He calls it the steadfastness of hope, or the endurance of hope. It is a hope that perseveres.

Fix in your mind how crystal-clear this is in this text and how this text ought to act like a magnet to literally collect the filings of years and years of your understanding of Scripture into an absolutely definitive context.

**1 Thessalonians 3:12-13**, *And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,<sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints..*



## 6. Labor of Love

### *The Love of the Macedonians*

#### ***What kind of inner and outer action did Paul call love?***

**2 Corinthians 8:1–2**, *Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: <sup>2</sup>that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.*

**2 Corinthians 8:8**, *I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.*

Paul gives the Macedonians as an example of earnest love to see if the Corinthians will imitate them.

#### **Now what is love according to verses 1 and 2?**

It results from God's work of grace.

The experience of God filled the Macedonians with an "abundance of joy."

The joy was not because God had made them materially rich.

In fact, they were in "extreme poverty" according to verse 2.

So, their joy was not in things, but in God.

Their abundant joy overflowed in liberality when Paul took up a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

#### ***What is the love which Paul saw here?***

Love is the overflow of joy in God which meets the needs of others.

**2 Corinthians 8:4**, *implored us with much urgency <sup>[a]</sup>that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.*

We mustn't think that when they gave liberally their relation to God was compelling them to act against their main desires.

When your children beg for one more ride on the roller coaster, it's not because they are driven by some moral ideal contrary to their wishes.

When poverty-stricken Macedonians beg Paul for the privilege of giving money to a benevolence fund, we may assume that's what they want to do.

## 6. Labor of Love

They are denying themselves whatever food and clothing that money might have bought them, but their self-denial is not for the sake of some sterile, joyless act of duty.

They are giving up the pleasure of extra food for the joy of sharing God's grace with others.

These people are so full of joy in God that giving even out of poverty is not a burden, but a blessing.

They have discovered the labour of love!

Love is the overflow of joy in God which meets the needs of others.

**Hebrews 6:10**, *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

### **1. God will never forget our Love for Him**

We are all familiar with how much the Bible speaks much about God's love for us.

**John 3:16**, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

**Romans 5:8**, *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

God loves us very deeply and that love has been proven by Christ's death on the cross.

**But what about our love for God?**

**Is it important that we love God?**

Think about a conversation Jesus had one day with Simon Peter. Though Peter had professed that he would rather die than deny the Lord, scripture teaches us that Peter denied Him not once, but three times.

After the resurrection Jesus met Peter and asked him this question.

**John 21:15**, *So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"*

Peter answered Him.

Again, Jesus asked him this same question and yet another time. Three times Jesus asked Simon.

*"Do you love Me?"*

Each time Peter replied, *"Yes Lord you know that I love you."*

## 6. Labor of Love

We all know that Jesus asked the question three times and three times Peter responded with a yes.

But what we often overlook is what Jesus said after each of Peter's responses.

Rather than rebuking Peter, Jesus commands him to get busy doing the work that Christ had called him to do. *"Feed My sheep."*

The Bible teaches us that if we love God, we will serve Him.

**John 14:15**, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments."*

### **What has Christ commanded us to do?**

He has commanded us to care for His people.

We can't say that we love God if we don't love His people.

We can't say that we are serving God if we are not serving His people.

**Hebrews 6:10**, *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

Notice that our labour of love is to minister to God's saints.

That's how we show our love for God by loving and caring for His people.

## **2. God will never forget our Service.**

**Hebrews 6:10**, *For God is not unjust to forget your work*

God created our physical bodies to do something. We need a certain amount of physical activity in order to stay healthy.

The same is true for us spiritually.

**Ephesians 2:10**, *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."*

When a person is born again by the Holy Spirit, the Lord recreates them for the purpose of serving Him.

We are new creations in Christ.

We are His workmanship, created unto good works which God has already prepared for us to do.

## 6. Labor of Love

The word 'works' is an interesting word. It is part of the foundation from which we get the word – 'energy.'

At salvation God places His energy in us for the purpose of doing His will. This word also speaks of our business or employment as a part of the body of Christ. The word we would use is ministry. God places His energy within us for the purpose of ministry.

Every Christian should have a ministry within the body of Christ. Every believer should search for ways that they can glorify God through their faithful service.

Notice the reason for our service.

**Hebrews 6:10**, *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name,*

**Colossians 3:17**, *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

Serve in the name of Jesus Christ.

We do what we do for the glory of Christ.

We do what we do in His power, for His glory, and out of our love for Him.

Whenever I think about serving in the body of Christ, I am reminded of a man named Stephanas.

**1 Corinthians 16:15-16**, *I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints— <sup>16</sup> that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labours with us.*

They have assigned to themselves the special task of caring for God's people.

We should note also that it was not just Stephanas who got involved, but his entire family.

Paul refers to the 'household of Stephanas.' Dad, mom and children were all a part of their service to the Lord.

It is very important that we learn how to develop a ministry within the body of Christ and to pass this knowledge down to our children.

It is a statistical fact that children who get involved somehow in the ministry of the church are more likely to stay attached to the church once they enter into adulthood.

## 6. Labor of Love

### ***How do we develop a ministry?***

There are three basic ways people develop their ministry within the church. Each is important in their own way.

#### ***a) Diligent Servants.***

They are always like 'Johnny on the Spot' when it comes to getting involved.

They find somewhere to serve in almost everything we do. They are involved in every area of the ministry.

If there is a floor to be swept or a dish to be washed, they are there doing it.

Praise God for Diligent Servants who are always looking for what needs to be done and then do it.

#### ***b) Developing Servants.***

A Developing Servant is someone who begins somewhere in the ministry and over the years they develop in their abilities and thus take on more and more responsibility as time goes on.

Timothy is a perfect example of this.

When Paul first met Timothy, he was a very young man, perhaps only a teenager. Young Timothy travelled with Paul and Silas and helped them in their missionary journeys.

But then as time went on, Paul gave to young Timothy more and more responsibility. Timothy was maturing both physically and spiritually and therefore Paul gave him more opportunities to serve in a more significant way.

Finally, towards the end, Paul addressed Timothy as a pastor of a church.

Timothy became the pastor of the church at Ephesus which was probably one of the more prominent churches of the early church era.

But this didn't happen overnight. As a matter of fact, Paul told Timothy to not put a person in a position of authority too quickly less he gets the big head and wind up falling into the hands of the devil.

In other words, let the man season so that he might be prepared for the tasks at hand.

Let the office seek the man and not the man the office.

If a person is faithful in what he or she has been given and continues to grow and develop.

God will open doors for them at the right place and the right time.

## 6. Labor of Love

### c) *Dedicated Servants.*

These are absolutely essential for the development of a strong, vibrant church.

#### ***What is a Dedicated Servant?***

A Master Teacher is someone who through years of experience and education has developed skills that not only excel the average teacher, but also puts them in a position to help mentor those around them.

God loves servants and He has promised to reward them.

### 3. ***God will never forget the Sacrifices.***

***Hebrews 6:10***, For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name,

The word 'work' refers to our ministry in general.

The word 'labour' refers to the effort we put into it.

This word speaks of intense effort that is often accompanied with trials and trouble.

Ministry isn't always easy. It often requires hard work.

---

*The first ability God is looking for is our availability.*

---

God is looking for dedicated people who will say here I am.

Isaiah said.

***Isaiah 6:8***, "Here am I Lord, send me."

As Jesus asked you can answer Him saying that I have counted the cost and I am ready to make the sacrifice that will be required for me to become one of Your disciples.

Jesus will never forget or overlook those who have paid to price in order to serve Him.

One of my favourite stories about sacrificially serving God involves an elderly missionary couple who had spent their entire adult as missionaries in Africa. After years of service, the couple finally retired and came back home to America.

## 6. Labor of Love

They were completely worn out physically and they had no pension awaiting them in their retirement. Shortly after boarding their ship that would bring them back to America, they discovered that another passenger aboard named Teddy Roosevelt who was returning after an African hunting expedition.

As the ship near the docks in New York, crowds stood on the dock, cheering the President. But not a single person was waiting for the couple. For a moment the man was overwhelmed with discouragement, and he cried out, "Oh God, surely someone could have been here to welcome us home."

But then his sweet wife softly said, "Honey, we are not home yet."

Regardless of what you do at **WCF**, I want to thank you. Whether it is singing a solo or changing a diaper in the nursery I want to say thank you.

Perhaps sometimes you think it's not worth it and you feel like quitting, but just remember you are not home yet.

### ***Conclusion***

Many of you have listened to this message today and I pray that you have felt either a sense of pride in your service, or a renewed energy.

I hope you felt both.

But perhaps some of you heard this and feel a little bit of shame. You have been made aware of the fact that you have been burying your talents in the sand, rather than investing them in the kingdom of God.

I have got good news for you.

It is never too late to start.

Colonel Sanders didn't open his first **Kentucky Fried Chicken** restaurant until he was over seventy years of age.

If you want to be used by God, He will use you.

## 6. Labor of Love

### So where to you begin?

#### **1. Pray to God and ask Him for opportunities to serve**

Like a priest who would bring a special offering to the Lord in the Temple, offer your life to God.

#### **2. Expect God to open doors**

If you are sincere about your desire to serve God, He will open doors for you.

It may not be the doors you want at first, but He knows where you and I need to start. Be faithful in whatever it is that God gives you to do and over time, other doors will open.

#### **3. Step out in faith and start serving**

It has been my experience that the Lord often gives us opportunities to serve that takes a huge amount of faith.

If we could do it without faith, we would think that we are doing it on our own.

But when we have to pray out to God continuously for His strength and guidance, we know that the power and ability comes from Him.

All about bringing glory to our great God and Saviour!

Notes

6. *Labor of Love*

## 7. Patient Hope



*1 Thessalonians 1:1-10, 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. <sup>2</sup>We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, <sup>4</sup>knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. <sup>8</sup>For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. <sup>9</sup>For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

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

## 7. Patient Hope

Apostle Paul identifies the distinguishing marks of the elect.

The reality of a person who have come to faith in Christ.

The whole letter is a letter of encouragement to some true and noble Christians living in a wretched, immoral, wicked, pagan city.

They were very young in the faith, only weeks old in Christ. They were living in an immensely hostile society overpowering them. They had very limited or almost no leadership at all.

Paul was there only a matter of few weeks and left them. They were on their own after that to fend for themselves.

New Christians coming out of paganism in the middle of a sea of immorality. Living in a city that was a trade centre filled with sailors and merchants from all over the world very difficult society in which to cultivate Christianity.

No doubt the same people that drove him out also harassed the Christians.

So here they are, this group of brand-new, baby Christians in a very difficult culture, without leadership, being harassed by people who are hostile toward what was so very new to them.

Paul was concerned and so a couple of months have passed, he sends Timothy back and he sends him back with a very explicit goal of getting a report on the condition of the Thessalonian church because he fears the worst.

When Timothy comes back to him, Timothy gives an absolutely amazing report about the church in Thessalonica.

The whole report is good and so Paul writes back 1 Thessalonians to a noble church, maybe the best church in all of his ministry.

Paul pours out his thanks to God for their true and genuine salvation.

Paul releases his gratitude toward God for these wonderful people. He reveals in that gratitude the marks that identify them as the elect.

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

Notes

## 7. Patient Hope

Beloved by God, your election because I am constantly bearing in mind these three things:

- Your work of faith,
- Your labour of love, and
- Your steadfastness of hope.

Those are the first three great realities that had convinced Paul this was truly an elect church.

*1 Thessalonians 3:10, night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?*

They weren't perfect.

They were remarkable but not perfect.

But he knew they were elect.

*"Constantly bearing in mind in the presence of our God and Father."*

I continue to go to God as I remember your spiritual quality and I go to God in thanks. I go to God in prayerful gratitude, stimulated by the memory of your virtue. Your virtue makes me praise God.

This was a church that literally filled his heart with thanks. Whenever he remembered it in the presence of God because he had to lift up thanks for what God had done.

They mark the elect.

The elects are marked by a faith that works.

*What identifies a saved person?*

Paul has just really made that crystal clear here in verse 3.

You have a faith that works.



Notes

## 7. Patient Hope

### ***Patient Hope***

The third thing he says that marks the elect, the true brethren, beloved of God, is they have a hope that perseveres. They never lose their hope in Christ. They never bail out. They are steadfast.

#### ***What is hope?***

*Is it a wishy-washy maybe or a kind of unsure optimism?*

The modern idea of hope is “to wish for, to expect, but without certainty of the fulfillment; to desire very much, but with no real assurance of getting your desire.”

In Scripture, according to the Hebrew and Greek words translated by the word “hope” and according to the biblical usage, **hope is an indication of certainty.**

“Hope” in Scripture means **“a strong and confident expectation.”**

In modern terms, hope is akin to trust and a confident expectation.

Hope may refer to the activity of hoping, or to the object hoped for.

By its very nature, hope stresses two things:

1. futurity,
2. invisibility.

It deals with things we can't see or haven't received or both.

***Romans 8:24-25***, *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? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*

Biblically, from the standpoint of the object hoped for, hope is synonymous with salvation and its many blessings, past, present, and future, as promised in Scripture.

This is true even with what we have already received as believers because these blessings come under the category of what we cannot see.

We may see some of the results, but it still requires faith and hope.

For example, we do not see the justifying work of God, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to our account, nor do we see the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when we are saved, nor our co-union with Christ.

We believe this to be a reality, but this is a matter of our hope.

We believe in the testimony of God in the Word and hope for the results in our lives.

## 7. Patient Hope

In summary, hope is the confident expectation, the sure certainty that what God has promised in the Word is true, has occurred, and or will in accordance with God's sure Word.

### ***What do we mean by hope?***

The anticipation of future glory.

Every true believer is looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.



***Titus 2:11-13***, For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,

It instructs us to deny ungodliness and produce godliness.

It instructs us to turn from worldly desires and love the things of the Lord and then to live sensibly, righteously, godly in the present age.

It is looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus.

True believers have a love that labours, a faith that works and a hope that perseveres.

- It doesn't die,
- It doesn't fade.
- It may become blurred.
- It may become distant,
- It is real.

They never lose it, and they hold to it.

They have a faith that works, they have a love that continues to labour even when it fails, they have a broken heart over their failure like Romans 7 and they have a hope that never ever dies.

***Romans 5:1-2***, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> and perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

## 7. Patient Hope

Every true Christian has that hope in his heart.

**Is that a human work?**

No, God puts it there.

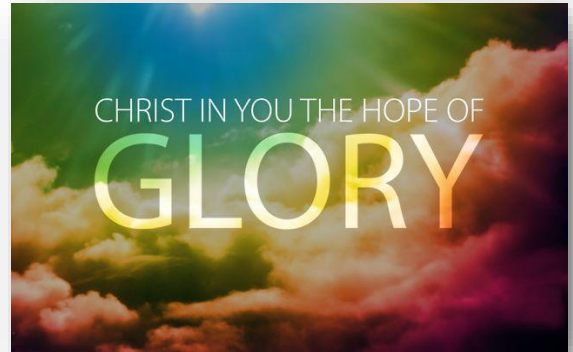
God puts the power to produce the work.

God puts the love to labour and

God puts the hope to endure.

God's work and that's evidence of true salvation.

***Colossians 1:27***, *To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*



Paul is saying the mystery, the thing never seen in the past was that Christ would live in you and with Christ living in you.

You have the Hope of glory.

The hope of glory that goes along with the presence of Jesus Christ.

***Ephesians 1:11-12***, *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup> that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.*

When you become a Christian you hope in Christ, you hope in Christ.

***1 John 3:2-3***, *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

Paul comes to the end of his life, and he says about his future.

***2 Timothy 4:8***, *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

## 7. Patient Hope

### **Do you know what the crown of righteousness is?**

It is the crown which is eternal righteousness.

It goes to every Christian because every Christian is marked as one who loves His appearing, to all who love His appearing.

We are looking for Christ.

We are hoping in Christ.

That is a mark of a believer.

The word *hupomon* means we can remain under the pressure.

We can stay under it.

We can endure it.

The idea is perseverance.

The true Christians will hold fast to their hope until the end. No defection, we could call it spiritual staying power. They are the overcomers.

There is nothing in the world that causes a true Christian to lose his faith.

No.

A true Christian doesn't lose his faith.

**1 John 5:4**, *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

*Who is the one who overcomes the world?*

The one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Faith will always triumph because it is a hope that endures, that perseveres, that remains.

It is a seed that cannot die.

It is a seed that cannot be killed by trouble.

You remember the seed that went into the ground in

**Matthew 13:20-21**, *But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.*

When the heat came and the pressure and the tribulation and it died because it had no real root. That's the false believer, makes a superficial acknowledgement of Christ.

## 7. Patient Hope

As soon as the pressure's on, they are gone.

The true seed with true roots produces fruit and overcomes the pressure.

Biblical hope is never a static or passive thing but dynamic, active, directive and life sustaining.

This is everywhere obvious as we read the Word.

Take a concordance, look up the word "hope" and you will find reference after reference pointing out the active results of hope in the lives of those who truly have a biblical hope and live accordingly.

A biblical hope is not an escape from reality or from problems.

It doesn't leave us idle, drifting or just rocking on the front porch. If our hope is biblical and based on God's promises, it will put us in gear.

### **1. Hope changes how we see ourselves.**

It changes us into pilgrim persons, people who see this life as temporary sojourn.

**2 Peter 1:13**, *Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,*

**1 Peter 2:11**, *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,*

### **2. Hope changes what we value.**

Hope, if biblical, makes us heavenly minded rather than earthly minded.

Our Lord's words here blast our deception away.

**Matthew 6:19-21**, *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

### **3. Hope changes life priorities.**

It affects what we do with our lives, our talents, time, treasures.

**Titus 2:1-13**, *But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: <sup>2</sup> that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; <sup>3</sup> the older women*

## 7. Patient Hope

*likewise, that they be reverent in behaviour, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—<sup>4</sup> that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,<sup>5</sup> to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,<sup>7</sup> in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,<sup>8</sup> sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*

*<sup>9</sup> Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back,<sup>10</sup> not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. <sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,<sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,<sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,*

The Christian life, if it is grasped according to God's truth, is a magnificent obsession with an eternal hope, a hope that does not lead to an escapist attitude.

But to the pursuit of life on a whole new dimension.

It makes you bullish, on the potentials of this life as stewards of God.

It gives us power to live courageously, to be all God has called us to be in Christ.

**Why are we so quick to opt for earthly treasure and so slow to be obsessed with the heavenly?**

Perhaps it is because we do not believe in heavenly realities.

The person who believes in this heavenly hope and who is so fixed on it, he or she can have such a light grip on the things of this world that he or she is able to put first things first.

A biblical hope is never an escape from reality or from problems.

It doesn't leave us idle, drifting or just rocking on the front porch.

### ***Rewards of Hope***

*It gives us joy and peace.*

***Romans 15:13***, Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

***Romans 5:2***, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

## 7. Patient Hope

*It gives us protection.*

**Psalm 33:18**, Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness,

*It gives us strength, courage, boldness.*

**Psalm 31:24**, Be strong, and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the LORD.

*It gives us endurance, comfort, confidence in the face of death.*

**1 Thessalonians 4:13**, But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope.

*It gives us confidence in ministry.*

**1 Timothy 4:10**, For it is for this we labour and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of believers.

### **How can you increase in your hope?**

*Hope depends on knowing the Word of God.*

**Romans 15:4**, For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

**Colossians 1:5-6**, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth;

*Hope depends on knowing and resting in God's Grace.*

**2 Thessalonians 2:16**, Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,

*Hope depends on the Spirit Filled life.*

**Romans 15:13**, Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.



## 7. Patient Hope

**1 Peter 1:13**, *Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

To persevere under persecution,

- A. Believe God's Word,
- B. Imitate other persevering believers, and
- C. Trust God will judge those who persecute His people.

### **A. To persevere under persecution, believe God's word.**

**1 Thessalonians 2:13**, *For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

Believing God's word means receiving the gospel as God's word.

Paul was constantly thankful to God because the Thessalonians had responded favourably toward the gospel, which he here calls, "the word of God."

Paul has repeatedly referred to his message as "the gospel of God" (**1 Thess 2:3, 8, 9**).

Emphasizing that it is good news that comes to us from God, not from any human source.

But he also has referred to it as "the word" or "the word of the Lord" (**1 Thess 1:6, 8**).

**Hebrews 1:1-2**, *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

**Acts 17:2-3** tells us that when Paul was in Thessalonica, he went to the synagogue and "reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.'"

The Jews already accepted the Scriptures as God's word, so Paul used it to reason with them.

Believing God's word requires letting the word do its powerful work in you.

Paul adds that the word of God "also performs its work in you who believe."

"Believe" is in the present tense, indicating the ongoing process of belief.

For God to give us the strength to endure persecution, we must continue to believe in the gospel and in all of God's revealed word of truth.

If you truly believe that God's word is not the word of men, but rather, the word of God, you will study it diligently to learn what it means and how it applies to every area of your life.

## 7. Patient Hope

If you are going through trials, the word gives real life stories of men and women of faith who endured trials and persecution, so that we can imitate their faith.

**B. To persevere under persecution, imitate other persevering believers.**

**1 Thessalonians 2:14**, *For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,*

Sometimes when we suffer, whether it is a health problem, an emotional problem, a family conflict, or persecution, we tend to think that we're the only one in the world with this problem.

Even the godly prophet Elijah when he was under persecution complained to God that he was the only one left who followed the Lord (1 Kings 19:10).

Because of this tendency, Peter wrote to persecuted Christians.

**1 Peter 4:12**, *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;*

**1 Peter 5:8-11**, *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. <sup>10</sup> But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. <sup>11</sup> To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

It's important in a time of suffering or persecution to know that you are not alone.

The same experiences of suffering are happening to your brethren who are in the world. As Peter reminds us, God is in charge. He is sovereign over our suffering.

Bible has many stories of persecuted believers. The Psalms often describe a situation where the psalmist is being slandered or his life is in danger. But he rehearses God's attributes and how God has been faithful to His saints in the past.

By the end of the psalm, his perspective has changed to praise.

To persevere under persecution, believe God's Word and imitate other persevering believers.

Notes

## 7. Patient Hope

### **C. Trust that God will judge those who persecute His people.**

**1 Thessalonians 2:14-16**, *For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,<sup>15</sup> who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men,<sup>16</sup> forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.*

Paul had faced almost continual opposition from the Jews. They would have killed him while he was still in Damascus immediately after his conversion, but he narrowly escaped.

When he first went to **Jerusalem**, they again tried to kill him, so that he had to flee to Tarsus (**Acts 9:30-31**).

While he served the church in **Antioch** and then wherever he went, the Judaizers dogged his steps, trying to undermine his gospel (**Acts 15:1-5; Galatians**).

When Paul preached the gospel in **Pisidian Antioch**, the Jews opposed him and drove him and Barnabas out of that region (**Acts 13:45-46, 50**).

At Iconium, the disbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles against those who had believed, attempting to stone Paul (**Acts 14:1-2, 5**).

At Lystra, the Jews who had followed him from Antioch and Iconium, persuaded the Gentiles to stone Paul, whom God miraculously raised up (**Acts 14:19-20**).

The same fierce opposition happened in Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth (**Acts 17:5, 13; 18:4-6, 12-13**).

Later, after Paul had expended much effort to raise and deliver a generous gift to help the suffering Jews in Israel, the Jews falsely accused him and would have killed him in the temple if the Roman soldiers had not rescued him.

They then formed a plot to ambush Paul. When that failed, they tried to convict him before the Romans as a traitor (**Acts 22-23**).

So, Paul had quite a few reasons to indict the Jews, as he does here!

Not only the Jews, but also all of us are guilty of killing the Lord Jesus because of our sins. If someone goes farther and tries to hinder the gospel from going to the lost, they add to their guilt before God.

## **Conclusion**

The lesson for persecuted believers is:

Keep believing in the gospel. Despite your suffering, know that nothing can separate you from God's love (**Romans 8:31-39**).

Look at others who have faithfully suffered and died for the gospel and imitate their faith.

Trust that God has a sovereign purpose for your persecution and that in His wise time, He will right every wrong and bring every wrongdoer to just punishment. None will escape (**Revelation 20:11-15**).

Paul is saying the only way I know you are a Christian is by those three things.

The faith that He gives works.

The love that He gives labours.

The hope that He gives perseveres.

Now if you have got some faith you generated on your own, it isn't going to work.

If you have got some love you tried to muster up on your own, it isn't going to labour.

If you have got some hope that you have designed, it isn't going to persevere.

But the kind that God gives will.

That's a very basic understanding of salvation.

The true hope can't be killed, it overcomes everything.

*What motivates the faith that works?*

**Love.**

*What motivates the effort?*

**Love.**

*What motivates the looking for and hastening to the coming of Christ?*

**We love His appearing.**

---

*Love is the driving force, love for God, love for Christ.*

---

## 7. Patient Hope