

## Work, Labor, Patience

When Paul, with Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy wrote the first epistle to the Thessalonian church, they were impressed with the faithfulness of the church through persecution. The Thessalonian church started with persecution from envious Jews (Acts 17:1-8). Some Jews, Greeks and leading women of the city were persuaded (Acts 17:4) and this stirred up the angst of the Jews who wanted to keep their traditional status quo. They ran the missionaries out of town. It is likely these incidents to which Paul obliquely refers in his statement that the Thessalonians had "received the word [of God] in much affliction" (1 Thessalonians 1:6 NKJV).

In the midst of several compliments regarding their steadfastness and evangelistic nature in Chapter One, Paul specifically noted an intriguing trifecta – their "work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope" (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Some have noted the parallel with 1 Corinthians 13:13. There, Paul highlighted the virtues of love among brethren, prodding the Corinthians to exercise love rather than selfishness in the exercise of their gifts in the worship of the local church (in the broader context of 1 Corinthians 12-14). He spoke of how the temporary spiritual gifts, which were miraculous, would eventually fade, but faith, hope and love would remain.

Some have also suggested a progression in this 1 Thessalonians 1:3 wording that suggests an increase in intensity. The work of faith is the beginning. Faith demands works; without works, faith is dead (James 2:14-26).

This one great truth has volumes written on it, deservedly so, for many say that works have nothing to do with faith. Even a subtle three-word reference like the one in this opening chapter of the Thessalonian epistle proves that it does. Sarcastically, James challenged, "Show me your faith without your works..." (James 2:18). Such can't be done. If there is faith, it must be accompanied by works, behavior and obedience.

The Thessalonians started with a "work of faith" but then progressed to a "labor of love." When persecution makes life difficult, it is no longer enough to simply obey; work becomes laborious in the face of opposition. That, then, progressed to the "patience of hope." Labor requires patience when there is no immediate relief from the opposition and trials one encounters.

The tentacles of the pandemic are far-reaching, testing the physical capacity of individuals and the patience of the populace. Christians are not immune from the disease, the grief and the divisive politics. Many sorrow like they've not sorrowed before in their lifetimes. It is not uncommon to hear the expression, even from the eldest, "I've not seen anything like this before."

It might be good, therefore, to take a reminder from the early Christians that not only is steadfastness possible through such circumstances, but abounding can also still be a goal. Later in the first chapter, following that trifecta, Paul complimented Thessalonian brethren for being joyfully exemplary in evangelism.

And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. 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 Thessalonians 1:6-8)

There is no need – and really, no excuse – to wait until trials pass before resuming zealous activity in the cause of saving souls. Though not easy, hearts must be stalwart and encouraged to exercise the "patience of hope."

- Andy Robison (*Gospel Gazette* Online) -

The best vitamin for a Christian — B1

## News & Notes

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES: Sunday: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 10:30 a.m., 5:30 p.m. Wednesday: Bible Study, 7:00 p.m.**

**FACE COVERINGS REQUIRED:** By request of our Elders, for **EVERYONE** in **ALL** of our assemblies regardless of where seated.

**MEETING THIS MORNING:** Following worship for those interested in teaching in our VBS in June.

**MEN'S BIBLE STUDY:** Each **Tuesday** at **7:00 p.m.**

**SECRET SISTER PROGRAM:** For those sisters interested in participating, application forms are on the desk in the foyer and need to be completed and returned in an envelope by **this Wednesday, March 16th**. See Latisha Brown for information.

**COLUMBIANA MEN'S BREAKFAST:** To resume **Saturday, April 9th**. Men interested in attending, please sign up at the desk in the foyer.

**LADIES DAY: April, 23rd** at Steelton. See details on the bulletin board.

**OUR LADIES DAY:** Any of our sisters desiring and willing to speak or have an active part in our **Ladies Day Program on Saturday, May 7th**, please see Latisha Brown.

**PANTRY:** Spaghetti sauce.

**PICTURE GALLERY OF PAST MEMBERS:** Submit pictures (black and white or color) to David Malcomson.

**REQUEST FOR PRAYERS: Dewey Moore, Jr.** (health issues). **Ethan Haught** (Skip & Sue's grandson), knee surgery: 202 Rexroad Drive, Weston, WV 26452. **Catrina Wright** (roommate of Ella Haught at YSU), brain tumor. Her address: P. O. Box 164, Mesopotamia, OH 44439. **Lori Rowand** (John Sprout's niece), Stage 4 lung cancer: 305 Bentley Ave. Newell, WV 26050.

**SICK & SHUT-IN: Weirton Medical Center:** Becky McKittrick. **Beaver Medical Center:** Sam Burdine (Willard's brother). **At Home:** Tim Adkins, Mike West, Barbara DeLong, David McCoy, Marlene Evans, Russell Martin, Claudette Miller, Jim & Linda Hall. **Weston, WV:** Rick Beck.

### GOSPEL MEETINGS

Pennsboro -----	Mar. 13-18, M-F 7:00 p.m. -----	Bob Vincent
Hillview Terr., Moundsville ---	Mar. 20-25, M-F 7:00 p.m. -----	Peter Ray Cole
Weirton Heights -----	Apr. 3- 7, M-Th 7:00 p.m. -----	Brent Gallagher
CHESTER -----	Apr. 24-28, Sun 10:30, 5:30, M-Th 7:00 ----	Eddie Cooper

*If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers,*

*Any book better than the Bible, and*

*Any house better than the house of God...*

*Any persons better than Christ, or*

*Any indulgence better than the hope of heaven...*

*Take Alarm.*

- Thomas Guthrie -