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# Words of Truth

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## I Thessalonians 1:2-3

By: Brian A. Yeager

*“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father”* (I Thessalonians 1:2-3). Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were thankful for their brethren in Thessalonica. In several letters Paul was involved in writing, he expressed thanksgiving regarding the brethren (Romans 1:8-9, Romans 16:3-4, I Corinthians 1:4, Ephesians 1:15-16, Philippians 1:3-4, Colossians 1:3, II Timothy 1:3, and Philemon 1:4). Thanksgiving was expressed concerning the saints in Thessalonica multiple times (I Thessalonians 2:13, I Thessalonians 3:9, II Thessalonians 1:3, and II Thessalonians 2:13).

There are a great number of reasons that Christians ought to be thankful for one another. Without brethren, we could not please God. Consider how that having faithful brethren to assemble with is necessary for many instructions we have to obey (Acts 20:7, Romans 15:5-6, I Corinthians 11:17-33, Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:15-16, I Thessalonians 4:18, Hebrews 10:23-25, etc.). If you do not have faithful brethren in your life, who is looking out for you spiritually (Galatians 2:11-17, Galatians 6:1-2, I Thessalonians 5:11-14, Hebrews 3:12-13, and James 5:19-20)? We need faithful brethren to share our lives with, to be in fellowship with (Acts 2:41-42). The world cannot provide that (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, Ephesians 5:6-11, James 4:4, and I John 5:19). The list of why we need brethren could go on and on. Therefore, so could the list of why we should be thankful for one another.

With the mindset of thanksgiving, Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were remembering the work of faith performed by those brethren in Thessalonica. We will see these brethren were good examples to others through their good works (I Thessalonians 1:7-10). Let's be mindful of these inspired words penned by James: *“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou*

*how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:14-26).*

The saints in Thessalonica were also remembered for their “*labour of love.*” Faith works by love (Galatians 5:6). As we just read in the above paragraph, works occur through faith. Thus, the three (faith, works, and love) are inseparable. Faith and love are shown through what Christians do. The Christians in Thyatira were told: “*I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first*” (Revelation 2:19). Love for God is shown by actions (John 14:15-24 and I John 5:1-3). Even when it comes to the love of the brethren, actions show that love. Notice: “*For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (I John 3:11-18).*

We also see the phrase “*patience of hope*” in the text we are looking at in this article. The Greek word that is translated “patience” [ὑπομονή] is defined as: “Cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy: - enduring, patience, patient continuance (waiting)” (Strong's # 5281). So, these brethren are being accredited with being a people who are cheerfully looking forward to the hope they have in Christ (I Peter 1:3-9). Interestingly, they were joyfully looking forward to the hope we have in Christ without even having a full understanding of that hope. We know that because of what is later written in this letter (I Thessalonians 4:13-5:10).

All that there was to be thankful about concerning these saints in Thessalonica was, “*in the sight of God and our Father.*” They can take that statement and know that God is seeing the good that is coming from them. That is important. The point is often made in the negative, that is God is watching and you will answer for what you do. That is certainly true (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 and Romans 14:10-12). God is also watching our good works. That should be comforting. God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love (Hebrews 6:10-12). The good that is done is had in remembrance in the sight of God (Acts 10:31). Therefore, whether it is they or us who are faithful; we know our works are not unnoticed.