

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

March 25, 2018

Issue 2

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THREE WORDS

Ronnie Scherffius

From one of the greatest chapters of inspiration is found one of the most well known passages of all Scripture: “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13). Yet, this is not the only occasion in which Paul links together this timeless triplet of Christian virtues. To the churches in Galatia Paul wrote, “For we through the Spirit wait for the **hope** of righteousness by **faith**. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but **faith** which worketh by **love**” (Gal. 5:5-6). To the saints in Colosse Paul would write: “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your **faith** in Christ Jesus, and of the **love** which ye have to all the saints, For the **hope** which is laid up for you in heaven” (Col. 1:3-5). So critical are these invaluable virtues to the Christian life that the Hebrews writer (Heb. 10:22-24) and the apostle Peter (1 Pt. 1:21-22) also highlighted their significance to an enduring Christian life.

But the letter to the Corinthians was not the first occasion in which Paul speaks of love, hope, and faith. Writing to the saints in Thessalonica, we find not only Paul’s emphasis on faith, hope, and love but three words coupled together with these virtues which provide a deeper insight into the life of our first century brothers and sisters in Thessalonica and to a very real degree sums up the Christian life in three words: work, labor, and patience (i.e., endurance).

In the opening of what many scholars believe to be Paul’s first inspired letter the apostle expresses his deep gratitude for the faithfulness and enduring life of his Thessalonian brethren: “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” (1 Thess. 1:2-3). In these three short phrases the Christian life is

both summed up and yet deeply discovered to be a life of working, laboring, and enduring. In order for us fully to comprehend how these illustrate our lives as Christians, let us note each of them in turn.

The Christian life is portrayed as a work of faith. The centuries old debate of the Christian’s responsibility to work in order to obtain/maintain his salvation vs. salvation by faith only without any responsibility on the part of man is forever answered in this inspired expression. The life of a Christian is a life of working, which work is motivated by faith. James casts similar light on the debate writing, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and **have not works**? can faith *[alone (v 17) - RLS]* 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**” (James 2:14-17). A faith that is without the works of obedience is nonexistent, and yet one who is working in the cause of King Jesus who has no faith is as one walking on a treadmill—much exertion with no progress!

The Greek term translated *work* in this passage is found in the New Testament nearly two-hundred times and is translated as work(s), deeds, doing, and labors. It is used in the the sense of secular employment (Mark 13:34) as well as working for the cause of Christ (Acts 13:2; 14:26; 1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 4:12; 1 Thess. 5:13). The term is used of *good works* (Mt. 5:16; Acts 9:36; 2 Cor. 9:8; 1 Tim. 5:10; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 10:24), *evil/ungodly works* (2 John 11; 2 Pt. 2:8; John 3:19ff.; Jude 15), *works of darkness* (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:11), *works of the law* (Rom. 9:32; Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10;), *miraculous of works* (Matt. 11:2; Luke 24:19; John 5:20; 7:3), and the *works of God in creation* (Heb. 1:10; 4:3). Yet, on every occasion the *work* refers to *doing* and is defi-

ned in Greek Lexicons as “anything done or to be done; a deed, work, action.” [MOUNCE GREEK-ENGLISH DICTIONARY]

The work of the Thessalonians is clearly demonstrated in Paul’s statement: “For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing” (1 Thess. 1:8). The Christian life is a life of work **and** a life of work that springs forth from faith in Jesus Christ!

The Christian life is characterized as a labor of love. The term *labor* used here is not simply repetitive to emphasize work or action in which the Christian is engaged for the kingdom, but rather carries the sense of pain. This is laboring with trouble—the Christian life filled with trials, tribulations, and persecution which one willingly accepts because of his deep love for Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. Luke records the tribulations the Thessalonian Christians endured: “But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people” (Acts 17:5), and Paul highlighted them in this epistle: “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in **much affliction**...For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for **ye also have suffered** like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews” (1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14). Christians in Judaea were stoned, beaten, and cast into prison. So great, in fact, was the persecution that the saints were scattered throughout land (Acts 8:1-4).

Nevertheless, the trouble endured by the people of God will be rewarded with peace and rest: “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled **rest with us**” (2 Thess. 1:6-7). Consider also how John connects the work of faith and the labor of love of the Christian life: “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may **rest from their labours [trials/tribulations endured for their faith]**; and **their works [obedient works/deeds motivated by faith]** do follow them” (Rev. 14:13). The work of faith of the Christian life which brings about labors joyfully accepted by one’s love for Jesus will one day bring great reward for the people of God! Even as our Lord instructed: “Blessed

are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for **great is your reward in heaven**: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Mt. 5:11-12).

The Christian life is maintained by an enduring hope. How is it possible for one to endure the challenges, sacrifices, and even persecutions that may come as we strive faithfully to live the Christian life? How is it possible for one to endure being forsaken and cast off by their own family? (Mt. 10:34-37) What can serve as anchor for our faith when we are mocked and ridiculed for our beliefs and practices as a Christian? (Acts 17:32; 26:24) Where do we draw the strength to hold our heads up high when we are held in contempt and despised as fools by the world? (Psalm 123:4; Prov. 23:9) Is it not our enduring, steadfast hope of eternal life that we have in Christ?! Christians have been born again “unto a **living hope** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **To an inheritance** incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, **reserved in heaven** for you” (1 Pt. 1:3-4). And because this hope is sure and steadfast (Heb. 6:19) founded upon the immutability of God, it serves as an anchor for our souls!

The summing up of the Christian life! It is working the works of God through faith in His Son; it is toiling while joyfully accepting the trials and tribulations because of the love we have for our Savior who first loved us; it is a life lived daily with an enduring hope of an eternal life in heaven that is our earnest expectation without doubting. Are you living the Christian life?

Bible Q&A

This evening, Ronnie will answer the following Bible questions:

1. Acts 17:30-31: God overlooked the ignorance — now all have to repent (believe, repent, confess, etc.); how or what does the overlooking do to those re: their salvation before now?
2. Is hope and kingdom the same?
3. Is faith stronger than God because you have faith to love God?
4. Is God ever sad?
5. What if everyone in this world was good and not fighting?
6. Explain 1 Corinthians 11:10; “because of angels”

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of March 25, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Lupe Escojido
Fruit of the Vine: Doug Jobes
Offering: Don Lynn
Assist: B.J. Davis; Scott DeDear; Dennis Bryson

Sunday Evening: Lupe Escojido & Doug Jobes

Prayer

A.M. Opening: Mark FitzSimmons
A.M. Closing: Robert Powers
P.M. Opening: Bryant Siegel
P.M. Closing: Kevin Sheeran

Ushers: Steve Randle
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Bryant Siegel

Open/Close Building: Pitchford

Sound System: Curtis Scherffius

Greeters:

Will Cleveland
Allen Clifton
Steve Randle

Prepare Communion: Jerri Jeffres

BAPTISM

We rejoice in the baptism of Letty Hernandez last Wednesday night and pray that her walk with Christ will bear much fruit.

YOUTH NEWS

Be making plans for F.U.E.L. 2018! Todd Clippard of Hamilton, AL, will be our speaker at this year's annual youth rally and our theme is: In The World But Not Of The World. An itinerary for the week-end and a sign-up sheet is in the Jr/Sr High class room—please sign up if you will be attending AND note how many guests you will be bringing.

F.U.E.L.
YOUTH RALLY
APRIL 20-21
In The World But Not Of The World

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

TRENTON JENKINS who has been ill; BARBARA WITHERS who responded to the invitation last Sunday. BERT HAYNES, father of Pam Stryker, who is in Hospice care; ALENE TURNER, mother of Steve Turner, who is in the hospital in Sulfer Springs.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 27: Men's & Ladies' Bible Class (10am)
April 20-21: F.U.E.L. Youth Rally; speaker: Todd Clippard

IN THE AREA

April 21: Riverside Church of Christ (in Corpus Christi) Ladies Day @ 9am
May 6-9: Gospel Meeting @ Fort Lavaca; various speakers 7pm nightly
May 5-10: Focal Point @ University (San Marcos)
May 23-28: Young Men's Development Conference @ Bryan-College Station
Sept 8: Adams St. Ladies Day (Beeville) @9am

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Connie Cleveland(25); Sandra Daltry (29); Faye Henderson (29); Ann Pantel (29); Bob Smith (31)
Happy Anniversary: Bob & Yvonne Smith (26)

PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED:

Our pantry is in need of canned vegetables. Please see Nina Siegel if you would like to donate.

SPECIAL NOTE:

If you would like to add items to the bulletin, please see Nina Siegel or email :
office.midtownchurch@gmail.com

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady	Sandy Malone
Les Daltry	Ann Pantel
Pat Davis	Glenodine Pitts
Dee Gilpatrick	Bob Smith
Lucille Hawkins	Clark Withers
Faye Henderson	

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Mary Lou Arguelles (sister of Virginia Escojido)	Cole Ohrt (friend of Ann Pantel)
Buster Bailey (former MidTown member)	Vikram Gottam (brother-in-law of Archana Verma)
Victor Benitez (brother of Virginia Escojido)	Mary Younglove (grandmother of Naomi Flonnory)
Kim Neel-Farthing (daughter of Joyce)	Cynthia Sneeringer (mother of Angela)
Scarlet O'Neill (friend of Yvonne Smith)	Antonio Benitez (brother of Virginia Escojido)
Sarah Randle (mother of Steve)	

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Elders:

Will Cleveland
Tom Pitchford

Deacons:

Adrian Cannady
Mark FitzSimmons
Doug Jobes
Bryant Siegel

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius**Secretary:** Nina Siegel**TIMES OF SERVICES**

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of March 18, 2018

Bible Class.....113
A.M. Worship.....129
P.M. Worship.....104
Wednesday Bible Study.....113

Offering \$4,579

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE

Did you know that devoting 30 minutes each day you can read through the New Testament in one month? Here is a schedule to help you get started:

- Day 1: Luke 7-11
- Day 2: Luke 12-18
- Day 3: Luke 19-24
- Day 4: John 1-6
- Day 5: John 7-13
- Day 6: John 14-21
- Day 7: Acts 1-7

**SUPPORTED WORKS**

- India - Mani Pagidipalli
- New Zealand - James & Emily Cammock
- Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
- Southwest School of Bible Studies - Cody Kilgore

GO PAPERLESS!

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