

Message Two

The Work of Faith

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 1:2-3

- I. Faith, love, and hope are the structure of a holy life for the church life, which is the genuine Christian life and the content of Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonians—1:2-3; 1 Cor. 13:13:**
- A. Faith is the nature and strength of the work; love, the motivation for and characteristic of labor; and hope, the source of endurance—1 Thes. 1:3.
 - B. Faith is toward God (v. 8), love is toward the saints (3:12; 4:9-10), and hope is in the Lord's coming (2:19).
 - C. To turn to God from the idols is accomplished by faith infused into the new converts through their hearing of the word of the gospel; to serve a living and true God is by love produced within the believers by the Triune God as the all-inclusive Supplier who lives in them; to await the Son of God from the heavens is the hope that strengthens the believers to stand steadfastly in their faith—1:3, 9-10.
- II. The work of faith is the foundation of our Christian life and service—v. 3:**
- A. The word *faith* refers both to the things the believers believe in (the objective faith—Eph. 4:13; 1 Tim. 1:19b; 2 Tim. 4:7) and to the believing action of the believers (the subjective faith—Gal. 2:20).
 - B. The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith—Rom. 3:22 and note 1; Gal. 2:16 and note 1.
 - C. Faith comes out of hearing, hearing is through the word of Christ, hearing equals seeing, and seeing equals knowing Christ—Rom. 10:17:
 - 1. When the word of the Bible is spoken to us and heard by us, we contact Christ as the living Word in the written Word, and He becomes the applied word as the life-giving Spirit in us—John 1:1; 5:39-40; 6:63.
 - 2. When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit imparts Himself as the believing element into us that He may believe for us; hence, He Himself is our faith—Heb. 12:2a.
 - D. Faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen; nothing is impossible to faith—11:1; 2 Cor. 4:18; Matt. 17:20b.
 - E. Faith is the indicator of the believers' life in the enjoyment of the Divine Trinity—1 Thes. 1:3, 5, 7-8; Rom. 1:8:
 - 1. Faith is God's word accepted by us; because this faith is living and active, it results in the work of faith, which includes all the proper actions that issue out of our living faith—1 Thes. 1:7-10.
 - 2. Faith is to believe that God is; to believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Heb. 11:6; Gen. 5:24; John 8:58; 2 Cor. 5:7.
 - F. The way to receive such a faith is to contact the source, the Lord, the processed and consummated God, by calling on Him, praying to Him, and pray-reading His word—Heb. 4:16; Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Eph. 6:17-18.
 - G. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe in and to speak forth the Lord; faith is in our spirit, which is mingled with the Holy Spirit—2 Cor. 4:13.