

Message Three

The Labor of Love and the Endurance of Hope

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 1:2-3

I. The labor of love is the key of the fruitfulness of our work of faith—1 Thes. 1:3:

- A. Love is the intrinsic motivation, the inner life, and the real strength of our work of faith—Gal. 5:6; cf. Col. 1:28—2:1; 1 Cor. 15:58; Acts 20:20, 31.
- B. God is love; we love because He first loved us—1 John 4:8, 19:
 - 1. God’s love motivates us, His children, to love people without any discrimination—Matt. 5:43-48; cf. 9:12-13; 27:38; Luke 23:42-43.
 - 2. Love motivates us to shepherd people with the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God and the shepherding and seeking spirit of our Savior Christ—15:3-10, 17-18; John 10:11, 16; 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4.
 - 3. Love is not jealous, is not provoked, does not take account of evil, covers all things, endures all things, never falls away, and is the greatest—1 Cor. 13:4-8, 13.
 - 4. The Body of Christ builds itself up in love—Eph. 4:16; 1 Cor. 8:1.
 - 5. We need a burning spirit of love to overcome the degradation of today’s church—2 Tim. 1:6-7; 2 Cor. 5:14; 12:15.
 - 6. To overcome the degradation of the church, we need to pursue love with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 13:1.
 - 7. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ—12:31b—13:1.

II. The endurance of hope is the long life of our work of faith:

- A. The life that we have received through regeneration enables us to have a hope, with numerous aspects, for this age, for the coming age, and for eternity—1 Pet. 1:3; Titus 1:2:
 - 1. In this age we have the hope of growing in life, of maturing, of manifesting our gifts, of exercising our functions, of being transformed, of overcoming, of being redeemed in our body, and of entering into glory—Col. 1:27; 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 9; Rom. 8:23-25, 30; Phil. 3:21; 2 Tim. 4:7-8.
 - 2. In the coming age we have the hope of entering into the kingdom, of reigning with the Lord, and of enjoying the blessings of eternal life in the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens—Rev. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:18.
 - 3. In eternity we have the hope of being the New Jerusalem, when we will participate fully in the consummated blessings of the eternal life in its ultimate manifestation in eternity—Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5.
- B. The endurance of hope subdues all kinds of disappointments, discouragements, and impossibilities; it overcomes all kinds of oppositions, obstacles, and frustrations—Heb. 4:16; Phil. 2:13; 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Thes. 3:5.
- C. Such endurance consummates in gaining sinners, feeding the believers, perfecting the saints, and building up the church, the Body of Christ, for the kingdom of God and of Christ—2 Cor. 6:4; 1 Cor. 15:58.

III. Our work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope are “according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us”—2 Cor. 10:13:

- A. In spiritual work, the most important thing is to know “the pattern...in the mountain” (Heb. 8:5); if there is no comprehension of God’s plan, there is no possibility for God’s work (Acts 26:19).
- B. Every worker has a specific work which God measures to him and a pathway upon which God wants him to walk; if you are standing in your rightful position, working in your rightful service, and walking on your rightful pathway, that is the highest glory—13:25a, 36a; 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7.