

March 10

Scriptures: Read 1 Thessalonians 1

Key Verse: “We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 1:3) (NIV)

Overview

I don't think I should be dogmatic about this, but what I see in the key verse certainly gives room for some good constructive thinking. Paul commends the Thessalonian Christians for their faith which has produced “work” (probably referring to moral conduct), their love which has prompted “labor” (probably referring to physical toil), and their hope which has inspired “endurance”.

Any theologian worth his salt will tell you that you cannot have faith in God without it affecting your moral behaviour. As you read the Bible, you see that God places eternal value on the human soul. Because it is so valuable, any activity that separates a soul from God is called sin. That's why His Word has much to say about ordering our private lives according to His will. We obey, mainly because we “fear” Him, but also because we love Him.

Why do we love Him? First of all, because He has created us with a profound need and capacity to love; secondly, because He has revealed His love for us in Christ. We love Him because He first loved us. That's why we labour in good works — not to gain points, but to share the richness of His love with others. Love compels us, and hope inspires us.

And what is our hope? That “God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb.11:6). We trust what He has done in Christ and what He has promised us about the future. He is preparing “a place for us” and Jesus is coming back to take us to that place (John 14:3). We have a Father who loves us and is soon taking us to be with Him forever. That's why we “endure”. Hanging in there makes a lot of sense.

Prayer

Lord, we join in prayer as Paul did, thanking You for all our brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank You for their love, faith, patience, and hope in our Lord Jesus Christ and in Your sight, our God and Father.