"I Thank God for your Fruit!"

I Thessalonians 1:1-3
8-13-2025



INTRODUCTION:

When people think about you, what do they remember? What comes to mind?

*** You should desire to be remembered for your faith, love, and hope.**

I. THE FRUIT OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS <u>FAITH</u> <u>THAT WORKS</u> (v. 3a)



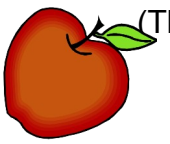
(The <u>basis</u> for your service is your <u>faith</u>)

II. THE FRUIT OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS <u>LOVE</u> <u>THAT SWEATS</u> (v. 3b)



(The <u>motive</u> for your service is your <u>love</u>)

III. THE FRUIT OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS <u>HOPE</u> <u>THAT ENDURES</u> (v. 3c)



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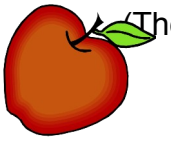

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INTRODUCTION:

"Silvanus" = Silas

"Church" = true believers make up a church, and as such they are <u>in</u> God and (in) Christ.

NOTE: God the Father and Christ are tied together (to be in one is to be in the other).

Jesus said: "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (Jn. 14:10, 11). "...Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me and I in you." (Jn. 14:20).

"Grace and peace" = the grace of God always precedes the peace of God. You will never know the peace of God until you know His grace.

Background to the Thessalonian church: Acts 17:1-15. Second Missionary journey of Paul.

Thessalonica was a large city of 200,000. Much commercial traffic because it was a seaport city.
A wealthy city (cp. Acts 17:4); <u>mixed</u> nationalities, religious, and moral standards.

Because Paul had to depart so quickly from the infant church, he was concerned about them. They lacked experienced leadership, so Paul sent Timothy to see how they were doing.

Timothy brought back good news (I Thes. 3:6), and now Paul rejoices greatly as he recalls how genuine they were when they came to Christ.

ILLUS: leading someone to Christ and wondering if they were sincere when they made a profession of faith. You wonder, "Will I ever see this person again?" EX - the man who led me to Christ never really thought he would see me again.

Paul was so excited to hear how these believers were doing after Timothy's report.
Prior to this report he was a bit anxious about these believers (cp.3:5)

What made Paul wonder [concerned about] their faith in Christ?

1) Possibly because they "received the word in much affliction" (1:6; cp. 3:3, 4)

2) They were not as noble as the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily to make sure Paul was right

3) He had only been with them for 3 weeks (Acts 17:2 - three Sabbaths)

NOTE: He gives God the thanks (salvation is of God - cp. v. 4).

ILLUS: of looking at high school or college year book and remembering what people were like.

When I think of some people, I remember someone who was: a goofball (joker), proud (always demanded his own selfish way), talented, opinionated, enthusiastic, etc.

What do people remember about you? What do they think about you?

When people think about you, what do they remember? What comes to mind?

- **You should desire to be remembered for your faith, love, and hope.**

Paul in verse 3 recalled (remembered) 3 internal evidences in the Thessalonians lives that caused him to continually thank God for them! - faith, love, and hope.

These are the same 3 virtues mentioned in I Cor. 13:13 (cp. Gal. 5:5-6 - in which context Paul is showing that salvation does not evidence itself by man's efforts of law-keeping (circumcision) but by the Spirit who gives faith, hope (v. 5), and love (v. 6).

These 3 virtues are also tied together in Rom. 5:2-5; Col. 1:4-5; Heb. 6:10-12, 10:22-24; and I Pet. 1:21-22.

NOTE: These fruits of faith, love and hope--because they are internal--cannot be seen. However, they show that they are resident (at home) because of what comes out of the person's life.

"Work" (flows out) of faith
"Labor" (flows out) of love
"Patience (flows out) of hope

Paul in verses 1-10 is describing the fruit (evidence of true salvation.

He summarizes the fruit that <u>will</u> (to one degree or another) be found in a true Christian.
"Work" = points to the <u>type</u> (kind) of fruit
"Labor" = points to the <u>quality</u> of fruit
"Patience" = points to the <u>longevity</u> (quantity) of fruit

ILLUS: of a dead tree that bears no leaves, fruit, etc.
Faith in Christ brings life (I Jn. 5:12) to the inner man - what you <u>are</u>. And where there is life there must be growth and fruit (an outworking - what you <u>do</u>)

"No man can come to Christ by faith and remain the same anymore than he can come into contact with a 220 volt wire and remain the same" (Wiersbe, <u>James</u>, p. 78)

I. THE FRUIT OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS FAITH THAT WORKS (v. 3a)

(The basis for your service is your faith)

James is not the only one who tied faith to works. Paul does it here!

Faith must always lead to works (Jms. 2:14-26). We are not saved by faith plus works, but by a faith that works.

A dead faith paralyzes the arm from helping, paralyzes the hand from giving, and paralyzes the leg from going.

Paul said to Titus: "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him" (Tit. 1:16).

Salvation is not seen by words of lips, but by works of life.

I call Hebrews 11 "The Hall of Faith." The heroes of the faith are described as believers whose faith affected their behavior.

1. They worshipped by faith as Abel.
2. walked . . . . . Enoch
3. worked . . . . . Noah
4. lived . . . . . Abraham
5. governed . . . . . Moses
6. followed . . . . . Israel
7. fought . . . . . Joshua
8. conquered . . . . . Gideon
9. subdued kingdoms . . . David
10. closed mouths of lions-Daniel
11. walked through the fire by faith as the 3 Hebrew children

By faith they were patient in suffering, courageous in battle, made strong out of weakness, and were victorious in achieving God's will for their lives.

I would have no desire to pastor a church if I did not believe that Christ was real, salvation was real, the Bible was real, hell was real, and Heaven was real.
The bottom line of your Christian life is faith! ("This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" - I Jn. 5:4).

II. THE FRUIT OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS LOVE THAT SWEATS (v. 3b)

(The motive for your service is your love)

Because God is love and He lives in you (I Jn. 4:7-8), His love will flow out (if indeed it is in you to begin with)

The love described ( ) is not a feeling; it is a determination to do right.

It is not doing for someone because they are worthy, but because they have a need.

It is not conditional, it has no strings attached.

This love is a decision to love because of God. You see, love is built on "faith" in God.

You need to mature to the point where you can say: "Lord, I don't feel like loving my mate (fellow believers, lost, etc.), but I will because of You. I will for Your sake, and for the honor of your name.

(TURN TO: Heb. 6:9-11 - "Work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward His name (v. 10) ... hope (v. 11)

"Labor" = wearisome toil involving sweat and fatigue.
"The word emphasizes the weariness which follows on this straining of all one's powers to the utmost" (Trench's Synonyms, p. 378).

When you love someone you will:
1) go the extra mile for them!
2) go beyond the call of duty for them!
3) sweat a bit in your service!

(We are so unloving and lazy and selfish that we don't service in church, etc., if it means the sacrifice of some time and energy)

Just like there is "no pain, no gain" in exercise, so if there is "no pain, there will be no reward" at the Judgment Seat.

III. THE FRUIT OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS HOPE THAT ENDURES (v. 3c)

(The length of your service depends on your hope)

"Hope" = confidence. To look to the future with confident expectation.

Our hope is described in verse 10 - we are waiting for Christ to return.

The return of Christ is the dominant theme of I & II Thess.

Every chapter in I Thes. closes with a statement about Christ's return (1:10, 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23).

The expectancy of Christ's return is a mark that you are really saved. Unsaved people are not eagerly awaiting the Lord's return.

"Patience" - an ability to remain under pressure. This church was undergoing opposition. Right from the start of their Christian lives, they underwent "affliction" (v. 6)

The only thing that will bring us through those real tough times of struggle, opposition, etc., is our hope which is in Christ.

ILLUS: of fleeting thoughts of just giving up, quitting, etc. -- washed away because of our hope!

We are looking for that "blessed hope and glorious appearing..." (Tit. 2:13).

Your having an enduring hope is a mark of true salvation. The one who forsakes Christ is not losing his salvation, but is indicating that he never had it to begin with.

I Jn. - "They went out from among us because they were not of us..."

CONCLUSION:

What do you want to be remembered for?

Your intelligence, looks, neatness, organization, achievement in worldly endeavors?

What we should want others to notice about us is our faith, love, and hope. You don't have to be talented (gifted), etc., to display these.

These virtues are for all believers! And they will be in your life if you are truly saved. But are they in your life to the degree that God wants them?

You measure what is inside you by what comes out.

The amount of your work (for Christ) reveals the amount of your faith

The amount of your sweat (for Christ) reveals the amount of your love

The amount of your patience (for Christ) reveals the amount of your hope

What causes Christians (ex. your pastor) to thank God for you?

It's when he can look back at your life and honestly say: "You know, so & so wasn't perfect, but I know he was real.

1) He was a Christian whose faith did something
2) He was a Christian whose love went the extra mile
3) He was a Christian whose hope made him faithful to the end

Jn. 15:8 - "Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit"