

## Examples: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3

### I. Imitation

- a. 1 Thessalonians 1:6–7 (ESV) <sup>6</sup> And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup> so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.
- b. “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery” – “that mediocrity can pay to greatness”  
Oscar Wilde
  - i. Boys walk in daddy’s steps
  - ii. Girls put on mommy’s clothes and make up
  - iii. We are constantly looking to imitate ‘greatness’
  - iv. Imitating people can lead to problems
- c. We must imitate the great example of Jesus
- d. 1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (ESV) <sup>2</sup> We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup> remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

### II. Work of Faith

- a. Religious institutions have continually tried to separate works from faith
  - i. The Roman road to salvation uses a series of texts from the book of Romans culminating in 10:13
  - ii. Romans 10:13 (ESV) <sup>13</sup> For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- b. The Bible does not support the separation of faith and works
  - i. Peter uses this text from Joel’s prophecy in Acts 2, but then answers the unspoken question, how do you call on His name.
  - ii. Philippians 2:12–13 (ESV) <sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
  - iii. James 2:14–17 (ESV) <sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
  - iv. James 2:18–24 (ESV) <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! <sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God,

and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.<sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

v. James 2:26 (ESV)<sup>26</sup> For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

vi. Faith without works is an incomplete faith, a dead faith

c. What is your faith in right now?

d. God's sacrifice demands an answer from us; work produced by faith

### III. Labor of Love

a. Our society, today, has an incorrect understanding of love

i. It is not some warm, fuzzy feeling we get when we see someone – that is lust, passion

ii. Love expresses itself in hard, strenuous, and exhausting labor

iii. Love seeks the best for the other and labors for the other's benefit

iv. Jesus' love for us is seen in His hard choice to become our sacrifice, His strenuous path to the cross, and His exhausting final hours of His crucifixion

v. Romans 5:8 (ESV)<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

b. We are supposed to show that same love to each other

i. 2 Thessalonians 1:3 (ESV)<sup>3</sup> We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

ii. Romans 12:9–10 (ESV)<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.<sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

c. We are supposed to show that same love to the lost

i. 1 Thessalonians 3:12 (ESV)<sup>12</sup> and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,

ii. Jesus' mission was to love the lost (by sacrificing Himself for them [us])

iii. Luke 19:10 (ESV)<sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

iv. Matthew 9:36 (ESV)<sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

d. Are you laboring in your love?

e. God's sacrifice demands an answer from us; labor prompted by love

### IV. Steadfastness of Hope

a. Steadfast – the capacity to hold our or bear up in the face of difficulty

i. Our perseverance does not come from some inner resolve or personal strength

ii. Our perseverance comes from hope (a confident expectation in the resurrection of Jesus)

iii. Romans 5:3–4 (ESV)<sup>3</sup> Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,<sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

- iv. Romans 8:25 (ESV) <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.
    - v. Romans 15:4 (ESV) <sup>4</sup> For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
  - b. What are you suffering through right now?
  - c. God's sacrifice demands an answer from us; endurance inspired by hope (in the resurrection of Jesus)
- V. Faith, Love, Hope
- a. We see this triad quite often in Scripture (1 Corinthians 13 for example)
  - b. Communities look at their churches with a critical eye
  - c. We must emulate Jesus and show each other and our communities works of faith, labors of love, and steadfastness of hope