

☞ Faith, Hope and Love 1 Corinthians 13:13

Last week we talked about how the Gospel is more than just words. The Gospel includes power, the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. We also saw how Faith produces work, Love prompts labor and Hope promotes endurance. If we have all of these working together we can become a model to all believers.

1. ☞ Faith Believes

2 Corinthians 4:18

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

☞ 2 Corinthians 5:7

We walk by faith, not by sight. NKJV

☞ **Sight trusts in worldly goods; Faith trusts in a Worthy God.** The rich young ruler wanted to follow Christ, but couldn't see past his possessions.

☞ **Sight focuses on how; Faith focuses on Who.** When Jesus healed a blind man, the Pharisees wanted to know how he was healed. The blind man only knew who healed him.

☞ **Sight sees the conflict; Faith sees the Conqueror.** David wasn't intimidated by Goliath's size nor strength. He trusted God to win the victory.

☞ **Sight sees problems; Faith sees possibilities.** When an army surrounded Elisha, his servant saw the problem and wondered how they were going to survive. But Elisha was seeing the army of God with them in flaming chariots.

Faith means that we keep our eyes on God who controls circumstances, not on the circumstances themselves.

☞ **Sight worries and hurries; Faith is willing to wait.** When Samuel was running late, Saul took matters into his own hands and burnt a sacrifice, even though it wasn't his place to do it and it ended up costing him dearly. But Isaiah 40:31 says, "Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." NKJV

--Corrie Ten Boom... When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer.

☞ **Sight trusts feelings; Faith trusts the Word.** When God told Abraham and Sarah they would have a son in their old age, they laughed, feeling it was impossible. But it came to pass anyway. But later on Abraham's faith had grown and he trusted God's promise in spite of circumstances. When told to kill his son, Isaac as a sacrifice, Abraham trusted God to provide, since he had promised many descendants through this boy. Faith can grow.

There are many contrasts between sight and faith. We are called to walk by faith, not by sight. We are to trust God and his word in spite of what we see. And faith tends to drive hope.

2. ☞ **Hope Beckons**

Hope expects God to be faithful because God keeps His promises. He delivers whatever he says.

☞ **Joshua 23:14**

Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

--G. K. Chesterton... *Hope means expectancy when things are otherwise hopeless.*

Remember Abraham and Isaac? Remember Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? Remember Daniel in the lion's den? Remember David with Goliath? They found God faithful. What about today? Is God still faithful?

☞ **Deuteronomy 7:9**

he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

Psalms 57:10

...your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Psalms 117:2

...the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever

I tried to let my kids know that they could count on my word. If I warned them, "you do that again, and I'll take away a privilege" or, when they were younger, "I'll spank you," they knew I would. And likewise, when I said, "we're going to go get some ice cream for a treat." They knew they could count on it. That is, most of the time. Occasionally, I failed. I'm human. Sometimes I got sidetracked or sometimes I just plain forgot. But God never

gets off track and he never forgets. God never fails. He always keeps his word and that inspires our hope since he has made some great promises to us.

Hope opens doors where despair closes them. Hope discovers what can be done instead of grumbling about what cannot be done. Hope draws its power from a deep trust in God. Hope "lights a candle" instead of "cursing the darkness." Hope regards problems, small or large, as opportunities.

Hope trusts God and expects him to keep his promises. So...

☞ **Hope endures.** Can you trust God enough to wait? Sometimes our troubles come from us trying to make our own way, rather than waiting for God's way and God's timing.

A delay is better than a disaster.

When you do not know what to do--wait.

Never become irritable while waiting; if you are patient, you'll find that you can wait much faster.

Can you trust God enough to wait? You may think you're running out of time, but **God is ☞ always right on time;** never too early and never too late, but right on time! He kept his word in the Bible and he still keeps his word. He has been faithful and he still is faithful.

☞ **God's Promises...** (just a few)

Genesis 12:2	I will bless you
☞ Joshua 1:5	I will be with you
2 Kings 20:5	I will heal you
Psalms 32:8	I will instruct you
☞ Psalms 32:8	I will counsel you
Psalms 32:8	I will ... watch over you
Psalms 50:15	I will deliver you
Psalms 132:15	I will satisfy
Isaiah 41:10	I will strengthen you
☞ Isaiah 41:10	I will ... help you
Isaiah 41:10	I will uphold you
Isaiah 42:6	I will take hold of your hand
Isaiah 42:6	I will keep you
☞ Isaiah 49:15	I will not forget you!
Isaiah 66:13	I will comfort you
Jeremiah 30:17	I will restore you

Jeremiah 31:34 I will forgive
Ezekiel 36:27 I will put my Spirit in you
Ezekiel 36:28 I will be your God
Ezekiel 36:29 I will save you
☞ **John 14:3 I will come back for you**
Revelation 2:10 I will give you the crown of life

We have a blessed hope because God always keeps his promises. Because God is so good, we have faith and hope. Faith and hope will be displayed through love.

3. ☞ **Love Blesses**

--Karl Menninger... *Love is the medicine for the sickness of the world.*

Love is the one treasure that multiplies by division. It is the one gift that grows bigger the more you take from it. It is the one business in which it pays to be an absolute spendthrift. You can give it away, throw it away, empty your pockets, shake the basket, turn the glass upside down, and tomorrow you will have more than ever.

☞ **Love is willing to Work.** God is love and God is working. John 5:17... Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

--John Powell... *Love will ask much more of us than the law could ever require. True love can never say, "I have done enough. I have now fulfilled all my obligations." Love is restless, drives us on. Love asks us to walk many miles not demanded by justice or legalism.*

1 Thessalonians 1:3
...your labor prompted by love...

--Saint Augustine... *What does love look like? It has hands to help others. It has feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.*

☞ **1 John 3:17-18**

Dear children, let us not **love** with words or tongue but **with actions** and in truth.

To love as Christ loves is to let our love be a practical and not just a sentimental thing.

☞ **Love is a Witness.** This is what Jesus spoke of in **John 13:34-35**, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **By this all men will know that you are my disciples**, if you love one another."

They are the true disciples of Christ, not who know most, but who love most.

1 John 4:10-12

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

--Lawrence Jacks... Nobody will know what you mean by saying that "God is love" unless you act it as well.

☞ **1 John 3:14**

We know that we have passed from death to life, **because we love** our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

--Robert C. Shannon... English is a strange language. There is no butter in buttermilk and no egg in eggplant. There is no ham in a hamburger and no apple in a pineapple. Quicksand works very slowly and boxing rings are square. Now, inconsistencies of language are not significant. But, inconsistencies in life are significant. Christians must act like Christians. Our words and deeds must be consistent with what we profess.

So, if we say we love God, it will be seen in our love for others. If we say we have hope for a promised future, we will wait expectantly for God's fulfilment. If we say we have faith we will believe God and see beyond our circumstances.

And now these three remain: Faith, Hope and Love.

☞ **Faith believes God and trusts his promises. Hope beckons and inspires endurance.**

Love blesses others by serving and showing Jesus to them.

☞ **Let's be filled with faith, heaped with hope, and loaded with love.**